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Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office

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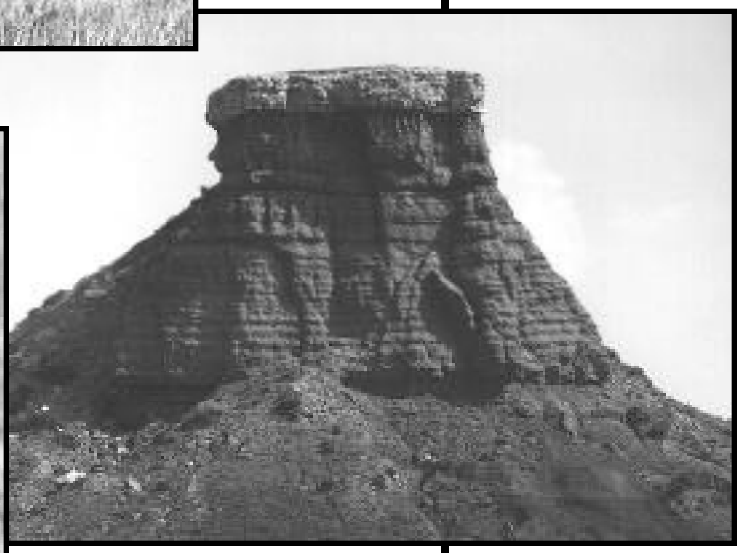
RECORD OF DECISION and APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN for Public Lands Administered by the Newcastle Field Office



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.

BLM/WY/PL-00/027+1610

RECORD OF DECISION

AND

APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR THE

NEWCASTLE FIELD OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Prepared by:

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Newcastle Field Office
Newcastle, Wyoming

August 2000

Alan R. Pierson
State Director

8-25-00
Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS v

RECORD OF DECISION
- DECISION 1
- THE SELECTED RMP 1
- ALTERNATIVES 2
  - Management Options Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail 2
  - Resources Not Addressed in the Newcastle RMP 2
- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSISTENCY 2
- PROTESTS 2
- MONITORING AND EVALUATION 3
- PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF THE NEWCASTLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 3

NEWCASTLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
- INTRODUCTION 5
- PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS (BY RESOURCE) 7
  - Air Quality Management Decisions 7
    - Management Objectives 7
    - Management Actions 7
  - Cultural Resources Management Decisions 7
    - Management Objective 7
    - Management Actions 7
  - Fire Management Decisions 8
    - Management Objective 8
    - Management Actions 8
  - Forest Resources Management Decisions 8
    - Management Objectives 8
    - Management Actions 9
  - Hazardous Materials Management Decisions 9
    - Management Objective 9
    - Management Actions 9
  - Lands And Realty Management Decisions 10
    - Management Objective 10
    - Management Actions 10
  - Livestock Grazing Management Decisions 10
    - Management Objective 10
    - Management Actions 11
  - Mineral and Geology Resources Management Decisions 12
    - Management Objective 12
    - Management Actions 12
      - Leasable Minerals 12
        - Management Objective 12
        - Coal-Management Actions 12
        - Oil and Gas-Management Actions 12
        - Other Leasable Minerals-Management Actions 12
      - Locatable Minerals 12
        - Management Objective 12
        - Management Actions 12

Contents (Continued)

Mineral and Geology Resources Management Decisions (Continued)
- Salable Minerals . . . 12
  - Management Objective . . . 12
  - Management Actions . . . 13
- Geologic Hazards . . . 13
  - Management Objective . . . 13
  - Management Actions . . . 13
- Geophysical Exploration . . . 13
  - Management Objective . . . 13
  - Management Actions . . . 13
- Paleontological Resources . . . 13
  - Management Objective . . . 13
  - Management Actions . . . 13

Recreation Resources Management Decisions . . . 14
- Management Objective . . . 14
- Management Actions . . . 14

Off-Highway (or Off-Road) Vehicle Management . . . 15
- Management Objective . . . 15
- Management Actions . . . 15

Soil Resources Management Decisions . . . 15
- Management Objective . . . 15
- Management Actions . . . 15

Vegetation Resources Management Decisions . . . 15
- Management Objective . . . 15
- Management Actions—Noxious Weeds . . . 16
- Management Actions—Special Status Plant Species . . . 16

Visual Resources Management Decisions . . . 17
- Management Objective . . . 17
- Management Actions . . . 17

Watershed And Water Resources Management Decisions . . . 17
- Management Objective . . . 17
- Management Actions . . . 17

Wildlife Habitat Management Decisions . . . 18
- Management Objectives . . . 18
- Management Actions . . . 18

Planning And Management Decisions For Special Management Areas . . . 19
- Stateline Special Recreation Management Area . . . 19
  - Management Objective . . . 19
  - Management Actions . . . 19
- Whoopup Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern . . . 19
  - Management Objective . . . 19
  - Management Actions . . . 19

GLOSSARY OF TERMS . . . 35

APPENDICES

Appendix 1—WYOMING BLM MITIGATION GUIDELINES FOR SURFACE-DISTURBING AND DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES 39
Appendix 2—STANDARDS FOR HEALTHY RANGELANDS AND GUIDELINES FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT FOR PUBLIC LANDS.... 43
Appendix 3—SPLIT-ESTATE LANDS 51
Appendix 4—LANDOWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT STRATEGY.... 61
Appendix 5—WILD AND SCENIC RIVER REVIEW 67

MAPS

Map 1—General Location Map 21
Map 3—Classifications and Withdrawals. 23
Map 2—Generalized Geologic Hazards Map“ 25
Map 4—Recreation Development Areas Map” 27
Map 5—Visual Resource Management Map” 29
Map 6—Deer Critical Winter Range Map” 31
Map 7—Grouse Nesting and Raptor Concentration Areas Map 33

The Surface Ownership Map is located in the back pocket

TABLES

Table 1—Land and Mineral Ownership in the Newcastle RMP Planning Area[1]/ 5
Table 2—Proposed Special Status Plant Species 16

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	area of critical environmental concern
AUM	animal unit month
BLM	Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior
CAA	Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations. Numbers refer to title and part; that is 40 CFR 1500 refers to Title 40, part 1500.
CWA	Clean Air Act
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality, State of Wyoming
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
E&P	exploration and production
EIS	environmental impact statement
EO	Executive Order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ERMA	extensive recreation management area
ESA	Endangered Species Act of 1973
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FOCRA	Federal Onshore Control and Reclamation Act of 1987
HA	Homestead Acts
IBLA	Interior Board of Land Appeals
IOGCC	Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission
MLA	Mineral Leasing Act of 1920
mmbf	million board feet
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NNL	national natural landmark
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSO	no surface occupancy
PSD	prevention of significant deterioration
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purpose Act
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, amended
RMP	resource management plan
ROD	record of decision
ROW	right-of-way
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer, State of Wyoming
SRHA	Stockraising Homestead Act of December 29, 1916, as amended
SRMA	special recreation management area
TSDF	treatment, storage, and disposal facilities
UIC	underground injection control
USDI	U.S. Department of the Interior

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RECORD OF DECISION
for the
NEWCASTLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DECISION

It is my decision to select and approve the accompanying Newcastle Resource Management Plan (RMP) as the future direction for management of the public lands and resources administered by the Newcastle, Wyoming Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The term "public lands" as used in this document, refers to all BLM-administered public land surface and/or federal mineral estate under the jurisdiction of the Newcastle Field Office.

In accordance with the Newcastle RMP, the Whoopup Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is expanded to 1,439.39 acres (BLM-administered public land surface only).

Also in accordance with the Newcastle RMP, selected tracts of public land surface within T. 43-46 N., R. 60 W. (6th principle meridian), are designated the Stateline Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The remainder of the public lands in the planning area (except for the Whoopup Canyon ACEC) are designated an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA).

The coal classifications that segregate 194,520 acres of federal coal from transfer to nonfederal ownership will be removed since they no longer serve the purpose for which they were intended.

The Newcastle RMP was prepared in conformance with the federal regulations (43 CFR 1600) for implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared for the Newcastle RMP, in conformance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (CFR 40 1500) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). A copy of the EIS is on file in the Newcastle Field Office.

This record of decision (ROD) approves the decisions reached by the BLM for managing approximately 292,168 acres of BLM-administered public land surface and 1,698,866 acres of BLM-administered federal mineral estate within in the Newcastle RMP planning area. The selection and approval of the Newcastle RMP is based on the analysis of environmental impacts of four alternative management plans, public comments, and consultation with federal, state, and local governments and agencies, and on the consideration of the following four planning issues regarding public land surface and federal mineral estate.

1. Retention or Disposal of Public Lands
2. Surface Disturbance
3. Special Management Area Designations
4. Control of Prairie Dogs.

The Newcastle RMP is the same as the proposed RMP presented in the Final EIS for the Newcastle RMP, published in June 1999. Minor editorial modifications have been made to reflect agency policy changes and wording clarification. The Newcastle RMP provides a balance between resource production on public lands and protection of the environment. It represents BLM's preferred management plan alternative for the Newcastle planning area and one of the environmentally preferred alternatives in terms of minimizing environmental impacts and guiding the uses of the public lands in the planning area. This alternative best meets the BLM's statutory mission under the FLPMA to provide for multiple use of the public lands, and identifies actions to protect resources and avoid or minimize environmental harm.

THE SELECTED RMP

There were many considerations that pointed toward selection and approval of the Newcastle RMP. The selected Newcastle RMP considers the land use and resource management plans, programs, and policies of local and state governments, other federal agencies, Native American tribes, and the ideas and comments provided by the public. The RMP represents a mix of actions that best resolves the issues and management concerns that were raised during the planning process. The public land and resource uses will be managed under the multiple use concept by integrating ecological, economic, and social principles in a manner that safeguards long-

term sustained yield, diversity of use, and productivity of the public lands and resources.

ALTERNATIVES

To begin the planning process for the Newcastle RMP, the BLM and the public identified issues, concerns, and land and resource use conflicts on the public lands that needed to be addressed during preparation of the RMP. The matters of most concern revolved around management and protection of the public lands in the Lance Creek Fossil Area National Natural Landmark (NNL), administration of the federal mineral estate underlying private and state land surface ownership (split estate) (Appendix 3 of the approved resource management plan), federal oil and gas development, grazing administration on the public lands (implementing the Wyoming BLM Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing (Appendix 2 of the approved resource management plan), prairie dog control on the public lands, and management and protection of threatened and endangered plant and animal species or their habitat.

These, and other issues were addressed in four alternatives that were analyzed and documented in the Draft EIS for the Newcastle RMP issued in March 1998. The alternatives were: The BLM's Preferred Alternative; Alternative A–Continuation of Existing Management (or the No Action Alternative); and Alternatives B and C which suggested different combinations of emphasis for management of the various public land and resource uses on the basis of needs, opportunities, and public demand. These alternatives and their analyses were presented for public review and comment in the Draft EIS for the Newcastle RMP issued in March, 1998. The Final EIS, containing the Proposed Newcastle Resource Management Plan (RMP), was published in June 1999.

Management Options Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail

Management options which were considered but not analyzed in detail were (a) eliminating livestock grazing; (b) eliminating timber harvesting; (c) closing the planning area to federal mineral leasing and sale of federal mineral materials; (d) eliminating restrictive or protective stipulations from development and surface-disturbing activities; (e) eliminating oil and gas leasing in areas with high hydrogen sulfide potential; (f) restricting development or activity in areas containing high amounts of selenium; and (g) maximum unconstrained alternatives that exclude other resource values.

Resources Not Addressed in the Newcastle RMP

Certain public resources administered by the BLM in other areas are not found within the boundaries of this planning area. Three of the more conspicuous of these resources include Wilderness, Wild Horses and Burros, and Wild and Scenic Rivers. Consequently, there are no management decisions developed for these resources.

An extensive review was conducted to determine if any of the public land surface along waterways in the planning area met the wild and scenic rivers eligibility criteria and suitability factors. There were no public lands along waterways that were found to meet the wild and scenic rivers suitability factors. Thus, no interim management decisions are developed for wild and scenic rivers. Documentation of the complete Wild and Scenic Rivers review process conducted for this planning effort is presented in Appendix 5 of the approved resource management plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSISTENCY

The views of the public were solicited and considered throughout development of the Newcastle RMP. Public participation in the process is summarized in Chapter 5 of the Final EIS for the RMP. The Final EIS also includes an accounting of the public comments received on the Draft EIS and the responses that were developed by the BLM in reply to those comments.

The Wyoming Governor's Office was supplied copies of the Final EIS for review by state agencies and to satisfy the Governor's consistency review required by the planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.3-2(e)). No inconsistency problems between the Proposed Newcastle RMP and State of Wyoming plans and programs were identified.

The public is invited to continue to participate in the management of public lands and resources through involvement in the activity and implementationplanning phase of the planning process. This next planning phase deals with site-specific, detailed implementation of the land and resource-use management objective and action decisions presented in the RMP.

PROTESTS

One protest was submitted to the Director of the Bureau of Land Management during the 30-day

protest period for the Proposed Newcastle RMP. The Sierra Club submitted a protest citing that BLM's failure to recommend designation of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for the BLM-administered public land surface in the Lance Creek Fossil Area NNL would jeopardize the protection of the valuable paleontological resources within the boundaries of the NNL.

After a thorough review, the Director of the BLM responded to this protest and the issue was resolved without any change to the Proposed Newcastle RMP.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Management actions and decisions of the Newcastle RMP will be monitored and evaluated to determine their effectiveness and to determine if the objectives of the RMP are being met. If evaluation indicates that the RMP is not working as expected or needed, or if situations in the planning area change, it may become necessary to amend or revise the RMP. Intervals and standards for monitoring and evaluation will be established as necessary.

All mitigation measures identified directly or referenced in the Newcastle RMP are adopted. Additional or revised mitigation identified through activity or implementation planning or individual analysis will be considered a supporting part of the Newcastle RMP.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF THE NEWCASTLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Copies of the Newcastle RMP are available upon request from the Newcastle Field Office, 1101 Washington, Newcastle, Wyoming, 82701, telephone (307) 746-6600.

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NEWCASTLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This Resource Management Plan (RMP) provides the management direction for approximately 292,168 acres of BLM-administered public land surface and 1,698,866 acres of federal mineral estate administered by the Newcastle Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Crook, Niobrara, and Weston counties in northeast Wyoming (Map 1, "General Location Map" located at the end of the "Planning and Management Decisions" section.) This Newcastle RMP supersedes all previous land-use planning decision documents for the planning area.

The term "public lands" as used in this document, refers to all BLM-administered public land surface and/or federal mineral estate under the jurisdiction of the Newcastle Field Office.

There are also some public lands in Nebraska that are administered by the Newcastle Field Office. These public lands are covered under the Nebraska Resource Management Plan (USDI, BLM 1992).

As provided by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the BLM has the responsibility to plan for and manage the public lands. As defined by the Act, public lands are those federally-owned lands, and any interest in lands (for example, federally-owned mineral estate), administered by the Secretary of the Interior, specifically through the BLM. Within the planning area, there are varied and intermingled land and mineral ownerships. The approved Newcastle RMP does not include planning and management decisions for privately-owned land surface or private minerals, state-owned land surface or state minerals, or for federally-owned lands administered by other federal agencies (including no decisions for the federal mineral estate in these federal lands). Table 1 provides a summary of the land surface ownership, mineral ownership. and the related administrative relationships for the planning area. (See the "Surface Ownership Map" located in the back pocket).

Table 1
Land and Mineral Ownership in the Newcastle RMP Planning Area[1]/

	Areas the Newcastle RMP Decisions Cover	Approximate
A.	Areas where both the land surface and mineral estate are federally owned and administered by the BLM (Crook County, 92,024 acres; Niobrara County, 124,085 acres; and Weston County, 75,059 acres).[2]/	291,168
B.	Areas where the land surface is federally owned and administered by the BLM and the mineral estate is owned and administered by private individuals, the state of Wyoming, or local governments.[3]/	1,000
C.	Areas where the land surface is owned and administered by private individuals, the state of Wyoming, or local governments and the mineral estate is federally owned and administered by the BLM (Crook County, 359,211; Niobrara County, 622,237; and Weston County, 426,250).[4]/	1,407,698
Total BLM-administered federal land surface covered by RMP decisions (A + B)		**292,168**
Total BLM-administered federal mineral estate covered by RMP decisions (A + C)		**1,698,866**

Table 1 (Continued) Land and Mineral Ownership in the Newcastle RMP Planning Area[1/]	
Areas the Newcastle RMP Decisions do NOT Cover	**Approximate acreage**
D. Areas where the federal land surface is administered by the Forest Service (Black Hills National Forest) and the federal mineral estate is administered by the BLM.[5/]	174,743
E. Areas where the federal land surface is administered by the Forest Service (Thunder Basin National Grassland) and the federal mineral estate is administered by the BLM.[5/]	228,627
F. Areas where the federal land surface is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and the federal mineral estate is administered by the BLM.[5/]	16,863
Total BLM-administered federal mineral estate NOT covered by RMP decisions (D + E + F)	**420,233**
G. Areas where the land surface and minerals are both owned by private individuals, and the state of Wyoming or local governments and the BLM has no jurisdiction or administrative authority.	2,452,473
Total land surface in the Newcastle RMP planning area (all ownerships) (A + B + C + D + E + F + G)	**4,572,572**

[1] For the purposes of the Newcastle RMP planning effort, areas where one or more of the mineral resource categories are federally owned were addressed as if all minerals in the area were federally owned. Where mixed minerals ownership occurs (for example, privately owned oil and gas overlapping with federally owned coal), minerals planning and management decisions in the RMP pertain only to the federally owned minerals.

[2] In these areas, the RMP includes planning and management decisions for both the federal land surface and the federal mineral estate.

[3] In these areas, the RMP includes planning and management decisions for only the BLM-administered federal land surface. While the federal surface management decisions may have some effect on the ability to manage and develop the nonfederally owned minerals, the RMP planning and management decisions do not pertain to the non-federal mineral estate. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas were taken into account for purposes of cumulative impact analysis in the EIS for the Newcastle RMP.

[4] In these areas, the RMP includes planning and management decisions for only the BLM-administered federal mineral estate. While the land and resource uses and values on the nonfederal surface may have some effect on the ability to manage and develop the federally-owned minerals, the federal mineral decisions do 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 were taken into account for purposes of cumulative impact analysis in the EIS for the Newcastle RMP.

[5] In these areas, the land surface planning and management decisions are the responsibility of these "other" federal surface management agencies. Any BLM-administrative responsibilities within these areas (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 Newcastle RMP does not include planning and management decisions for the federal minerals in these areas. At the same time, surface and minerals management actions and development activities anticipated in these areas were taken into account for purposes of cumulative impact analysis in the EIS for the Newcastle RMP.

The following multiple-use planning decisions consist of management objectives and management actions. The objectives and actions are designed to maintain environmental quality while meeting the foreseeable needs of the people of the United States and the local communities within the planning area. Implementation of the RMP decisions and related projects will be done through detailed and site-specific activity planning and any necessary environmental analysis that will be completed prior to implementation. The authorization of specific uses of the public lands will be based on the RMP decisions and completion of site-specific environmental analysis.

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS (BY RESOURCE)

The following RMP decisions are presented in alphabetical order of the specific resource or land use.

Air Quality Management Decisions

Management Objectives

Maintain or enhance air quality, protect public health and safety and sensitive natural resources, and minimize emissions that could result in acid rain, violations of air quality standards, or reduced visibility.

Management Actions

All BLM-administered public lands will be managed to maintain the air quality at the current prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) Class II standard. All BLM-initiated or authorized actions, such as the use of prescribed fire, will avoid violation of Wyoming and national air quality standards.

Mitigation or conditional requirements will be applied to authorized actions and activities on a case-by-case basis to avoid air quality problems. These requirements could include, but are not limited to, limiting emissions, restricted spacing of project locations, and controlling dust from surface-disturbing activities.

The BLM will coordinate with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on air quality standards and regulations as needed.

The BLM will coordinate and cooperate with other federal and state agencies in monitoring and collecting air quality data.

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to air quality management activities.

Cultural Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Protect, preserve, interpret, and manage significant cultural resources; manage cultural resources for information potential, public and educational values, and conservation.

Management Actions

The previous designation of Whoopup Canyon as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC) is retained. (See "Planning and Management Decisions for Special Management Areas, Whoopup Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern.)

Site-specific inventories for cultural resources will be required before the start of surface-disturbing activities. Adverse effects on significant resources will be mitigated, or the resources themselves will be avoided by surface-disturbing activities.

Data will be collected on the nature and condition of significant cultural sites on public lands. Site protection measures will be initiated for significant sites as needed. Cultural resource mitigation plans will be developed for the more sensitive sites.

Sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) will be protected. Suspected violations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act will be investigated.

The BLM will cooperate with other agencies and private landowners to identify and interpret historic trails.

Areas within 0.25 mile, or the visual horizon, whichever is closer, of significant segments of historic trails that are listed on the NRHP, or that are eligible for listing on the NRHP, are avoidance areas for surface-disturbing activities.

As appropriate, specific sites on public lands will be managed for their traditional Native American cultural values.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with permitted collection of cultural resources or stabilization of cultural sites or with constructing and using interpretive sites and facilities will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to cultural resources management activities.

Fire Management Decisions

Management Objective

To cost effectively protect life, property, and resource values from wildfire and to use prescribed fire to achieve multiple use management goals (Also see Appendices 1 and 2).

Management Actions

Suppression activities for wildfires will be conducted as described in the Eastern Wyoming Zone Fire Management Plan.

Full suppression will be used on fires endangering human life or that spread to within 0.25 mile of state or private lands, structures and facilities, oil and gas fields, important riparian habitat, or other sensitive resources.

Some methods of suppression will be restricted in sensitive areas. This may include, but is not limited to, restricting heavy equipment on cultural or historic sites.

Fires in limited-suppression areas will be monitored to ensure they do not threaten human life, structures and facilities, state or private lands, oil and gas fields, important riparian habitat, or other sensitive resources.

All wildfires will be evaluated to determine the need for rehabilitation or restoration measures. Restoration of burned areas will be by natural succession unless a special need is identified to prevent further resource damage.

Using bulldozers in riparian and wetland areas, areas of significant cultural resources or historic trails, and in important wildlife birthing areas generally will be prohibited.

Aerial fire retardant drops and fire retardants containing dyes or chemicals are prohibited within the Whoopup Canyon ACEC.

Fire retardants containing dyes or chemicals are prohibited within 200 feet of flowing water, lakes and ponds.

Prescribed burning will be used as a resource management tool on BLM-administered public land surface. Activity plans and environmental analyses will be prepared for prescribed burning proposals to address site-specific applications and to develop burning prescriptions under which the fires could be contained.

Prescribed burning will be conducted in accordance with, and to enhance, multiple use resource management objectives. A Wyoming DEQ permit will be secured before initiating a prescribed fire project. Smoke and pollution will be minimized as described in the *Smoke Management Guidebook* (USDI, BLM 1985)**.**

Use of fire for disposal of slash and residue from timber sales and thinning activities will be allowed when necessary to reduce the danger of wildfire and to reduce the volume of slash and debris or hazardous fuel levels in an area.

Fire line construction will be avoided if natural fire breaks can be used.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of fire management will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to fire management activities.

Forest Resources Management Decisions

Management Objectives

Maintain and enhance the health, productivity, and biological diversity of forest and woodland ecosystems. Provide a balance of natural

resource benefits and uses, including opportunities for commercial forest production (also see Appendix 1).

Management Actions

The public lands available for management of forest products (11,935 acres) will be managed by implementing sound silvicultural activities that include two- or three-cut shelterwood harvest, and commercial and precommercial thinnings.

The maximum allowable harvest level is 4.7 million board feet (mmbf) per decade. Timber will be harvested on an evenflow basis.

Road construction for harvesting timber or for conducting forest management practices will not be allowed on slopes greater than 25 percent, unless site-specific environmental analyses demonstrate that adverse effects can be mitigated or avoided.

Skidder-type yarding will not be allowed on slopes greater than 45 percent. Other logging operations on slopes steeper than 45 percent will be limited to technically and environmentally acceptable methods such as cable yarding.

Management of forest products on approximately 3,864 acres will be limited because of slope restrictions or inaccessibility for mechanical harvest methods.

About 9,084 acres will be made available for forest products harvesting only when tailored specifically to benefit other identified resource values.

About 417 acres of forest lands will not be available for management of forest products to protect unique riparian areas.

Roads and landings developed for forest products removal will be rehabilitated unless it is determined that they would be useful for other management purposes.

About 600 acres of timber stand improvement and precommercial thinning will be conducted per decade.

To maintain biodiversity and the old growth component of the forest ecosystem, forested areas on public lands will be managed to maintain approximately 5 percent old growth.

Minor forest products (firewood, posts, poles, Christmas trees) will be made available on a demand basis.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of forest management practices will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to forest resources management activities.

Hazardous Materials Management Decisions

Management Objective

Protect public and environmental health and safety on BLM-administered public lands, comply with applicable federal and state laws, prevent waste contamination due to any BLM-authorized actions, minimize federal exposure to the liabilities associated with waste management on public lands, and integrate hazardous materials and waste management policies and controls into all BLM programs (also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

For BLM-authorized activities that involve hazardous materials or their use, precautionary measures will be used to guard against releases or spills into the environment.

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

The BLM will provide appropriate warnings and establish precautions for safety hazards associated with the use of any areas on BLM-administered public lands where safety hazards are identified.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of hazardous materials and waste management will be subject to, but not limited to, appropriate mitigation measures

determined through use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to hazardous materials management activities.

Lands And Realty Management Decisions

Management Objective

Support the multiple-use management goals of the various BLM resource programs; respond to public requests for land use authorizations, sales, and exchanges; and, acquire access to serve administrative and public needs (also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Utility/transportation systems will be located adjacent to existing utility/transportation systems whenever practical. Areas to be avoided for new facility placement and routes will be identified on a case-by-case basis, rather than attempting to establish utility corridors.

Areas within 0.25 mile of developed or semideveloped recreation sites are avoidance areas for development activities such as roads, power lines, pipelines, and well pads. However, these areas will be open to development activities specifically for the purpose of recreation site facilities.

Projects will be designed to meet the objectives of established visual resource management (VRM) classifications and will include appropriate mitigation. Facilities, including those related to existing or new wells, structures, power lines, and linear rights-of-way, may require screening, painting, or design that blends with the surrounding landscape. Other mitigation requirements will be determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

There will be no requirement to avoid reduction of public land acreage in the planning area.

Areas within 500 feet of 100-year floodplains, wetlands, or perennial streams on BLM-administered public lands are avoidance areas for surface-disturbing activities unless modified by the authorized officer.

Landownership adjustment actions involving BLM-administered public lands (exchanges or sales, recreation and public purpose [R&PP] leases and patents, withdrawals and transfers of administrative jurisdiction of public lands) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The preferred method of landownership adjustment will be through land exchanges. Appendix 4 outlines the landownership adjustment strategy to be followed.

The BLM-administered public lands in the planning area are open to operation of the public land laws, except for the 1,152 acres closed to mineral location, sale, or entry under the land laws (437 acres power site classification; 715 acres Forest Service withdrawal (see Map 3 "Classifications and Withdrawals.").

The coal classifications that segregate 194,520 acres of federal coal from transfer to nonfederal ownership will be removed since they no longer serve the purpose for which they were intended.

As determined on a case-by-case basis, easements will be pursued to provide access to public lands to support the objectives of other resource programs.

The BLM-administered public lands in the planning area are open to consideration of rights-of-way location. Proposals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis with emphasis on avoiding land use or resource conflicts and sensitive areas.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of right-of-way construction and maintenance will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to land and realty management activities.

Livestock Grazing Management Decisions

Management Objective

Maintain or improve forage production and range condition to provide a sustainable resource

base for livestock grazing on the public lands while improving wildlife habitat and watershed conditions (see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Livestock grazing on BLM-administered public lands will be authorized in a manner consistent with sound range management principles and to be consistent with other resource values.

The authorized grazing use on the BLM-administered public lands will not exceed recognized active preference (48,818 animal unit months [AUMs]).

Implementation of grazing management plans, monitoring studies, and the construction of range improvements, based on identified need, will continue unless documented damage to other resource values is shown.

Prescribed fire and mechanical or biological vegetative treatments will be given preference over chemical treatments to help meet vegetation management goals.

The BLM will coordinate efforts with other federal authorities and with state and local authoritiesto implement safe and effective prairie dog control measures on public lands when prairie dogs are determined to be a threat to human health and safety or are causing resource damage. Resource damage will be documented by BLM personnel when reported by the grazing lessee, adjacent landowners, or other interests. This could include resource damage occurring on private or state lands from prairie dog towns located on BLM-administered public lands.

Animal damage control activities will be subject to established procedures and policies as outlined in the national and state level memoranda of understanding between BLM and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the animal damage control plan for the planning area. Human health and safety determinations will be made by the State of Wyoming, Department of Health or by officers of the US Center for Disease Control.

Unless one of the above situations were to occur, prairie dog control on BLM-administered public lands in the planning area will not be allowed. Prairie dogs and their towns are an important component of the prairie ecosystem and are valuable in providing habitat and a food source for a number of wildlife species, some of which are species of special management concern.

There will be no control of the size of prairie dog towns on BLM-administered public lands unless resource damage were to occur or human health and safety were to be threatened.

New prairie dog towns will be allowed to become established on public lands.

Permitting livestock grazing use up to recognized active preference will continue until a change in resource conditions indicates that an adjustment is needed. The numbers of grazing allotments in the Improve (I), Maintain (M), or Custodial (C) categories are also subject to change as ecological range conditions change.

Any adjustments in livestock grazing use will be made as a result of monitoring and consultation with grazing permittees. Monitoring studies will be conducted using the current BLM-approved methodology.

Monitoring will be continued following adjustments in grazing use to assure that grazing and other management objectives are being met.

Interdisciplinary rangeland monitoring studies will be established and conducted on BLM-administered public lands, including riparian areas, on a grazing allotment priority basis. The priority order, respectively, is "I", "M", and "C" category allotments. Studies on riparian areas in category "M" and "C" allotments will be established as workload allows or as needs are identified. These monitoring studies will be used to detect changes in range condition and trend, and to determine if vegetation management objectives are being met for all resource uses (livestock grazing, watershed, riparian, and wildlife).

Based on monitoring, the effectiveness of on-the-ground management toward meeting RMP and various resource activity and implementation plan objectives will be evaluated. Any rangeland studies will be carried out in accordance with approved standards and guidelines. Kind of livestock and seasons of livestock use may be modified to meet established multiple use objectives or to prevent resource damage.

In conjunction with the wildlife habitat management and water resources management programs, specific riparian management

guidelines will be developed and implemented in all grazing allotments, with priority given to category "I" grazing allotments. These guidelines could apply to such things as protective fencing, changes in livestock seasons of use, and project work to enhance and improve riparian zones.

Developed and semideveloped recreation sites are closed to livestock grazing.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of range improvement project construction and maintenance will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to livestock grazing management activities.

Mineral and Geology Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values (Also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of minerals exploration and development and with geophysical exploration will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

A plan of operations will be required for any mineral related surface-disturbing activities, regardless of size, in designated ACECs, and in areas closed to off-road vehicular travel.

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to geology and mineral resources management activities.

Leasable Minerals

Management Objective

Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values (also see Appendix 2).

Coal

Management Actions: Coal classifications on about 194,500 acres of federal coal lands will be terminated. These land classifications were intended for the protection of the federal coal and are no longer needed to serve that purpose.

As coal lease applications are received, the coal screening process, including application of the coal unsuitability criteria and determination of mitigation needs, will be conducted on a case-by-case basis. The Newcastle RMP will be amended, if necessary.

Oil and Gas

Management Actions: Federal oil and gas leases will be issued with appropriate stipulations for protection of other resource values.

Other Leasable Minerals

Management Actions: Leasing of other leasable federal minerals will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the same or similar resource protection and mitigation requirements as those applied to oil and gas leases and rights-of-way.

Locatable Minerals

Management Objective

Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values (also see Appendix 1).

Management Actions

Other than lands withdrawn from mineral location, the planning area will be open to mineral location, exploration, and development.

A plan of operations will be required for any surface-disturbing activities, regardless of size, in designated ACECs and in areas closed to off-road vehicular travel.

Salable Minerals

Management Objective

Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values (also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Other than areas that are closed, the BLM-administered federal mineral estate in the planning area will be open to mineral materials sales and development subject to appropriate conditional requirements.

Whenever possible, preference will be given to the extraction of mineral materials from BLM-administered public land surface to avoid use of private lands where the mineral materials are federally-owned (split estate) (see Appendix 3).

Free use of mineral materials from split-estate lands (non-federal surface over federal mineral) will be discouraged whenever possible and will be allowed only when BLM-administered public land surface sites are not available.

Mineral material sale areas, free use areas, community pits, and common use areas will be established as needed, in accordance with other resource uses and values.

Reclamation plans will be required for all mineral material extraction sites. Reclamation of private land surface (split estate) will be developed in agreement with the private surface owner.

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to visual resource management activities.

Geologic Hazards

Management Objective

Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development while maintaining other resource values (also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

All requests for a permitted activity on public land surface in a landslide or land slump area will be evaluated to determine if there is a threat to public health or safety (see Map 2 “Generalized Geologic Hazards Map“ located at the end of the "Planning and Management Decisions" section.). **A “no surface occupancy” stipulation or construction specifications may be required in these areas.**

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to geologic hazards management activities.

Geophysical Exploration

Management Objective

Provide opportunity for exploration of mineral resources and geologic data while protecting other resource values on BLM-administered public land surface (also see Appendices 1 and 2).

Management Actions

All parts of the planning area that are open to oil and gas leasing, exploration, and development will be open to geophysical exploration subject to appropriate mitigation requirements. Mitigation may include, but is not limited to, seasonal use restrictions, restrictions during wet or muddy periods, explosive charge restrictions, and other restrictions where disturbance in an area is determined to be undesirable.

Explosive charges will not be allowed if environmental analysis shows that unacceptable adverse impacts could occur.

On lands where surface-disturbing activities will be prohibited or on public lands closed to off-road vehicular (ORV) travel, casual use geophysical exploration will be allowed. (Casual use for geophysical exploration is described in 43 CFR 3150.05(b).)

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to geophysical exploration management activities.

Paleontological Resources

Management Objective

Manage BLM-administered paleontological resources to enhance their informational, educational, scientific, and recreational uses.

Management Actions

Vertebrate fossils will only be collected from public lands under a Paleontological Resources Use Permit issued by the BLM.

A Paleontological Resources Use Permit, issued by the BLM, is required for the collection of note-worthy plant and invertebrate fossils from public lands.

Individuals may collect up to 25 pounds of petrified wood, plus one piece, per day from public land surface. Individuals may collect a total of 250 pounds of petrified wood per year without a permit. However, this material is for personal use only and may not be sold, bartered, or traded.

Individuals may collect common invertebrate fossils and plant fossils (such as leaves) from BLM-administered public land surface for personal use. This material may not be used for commercial purposes.

Assessment and mitigation of impacts to paleontological resources will be required on federal mineral leases in accordance with BLM policy. If suspected fossil materials are uncovered during construction, the operator will be required to stop work immediately and contact the BLM authorized officer. Activities will be brought to a halt until the authorized officer can assess the situation and advise whether any mitigating measures need to be undertaken before the operations can continue. If fossils are found and operations are adversely affected, a suspension of operations will be granted.

Mitigation measures for surface-disturbing activities associated with the collection of fossils from the BLM-administered public land surface will be determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

Recreation Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Provide outdoor recreational opportunities on BLM-administered public land while providing for resource protection, visitor services, and the health and safety of public land visitors (see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

The BLM-administered public lands in the planning area are available for recreation uses, subject to appropriate restrictions for the protection of other resource values.

Response to public requests, including dispersed recreation opportunities (such as hunting, rock-hounding, and sightseeing), information, permitting of guide and outfitter activities on public land, limited field patrols of public land during hunting seasons, and boundary marking of areas where problems or conflicts occur, will be provided.

Acquisition of lands with public recreation potential will be pursued. (Map 4 "Recreation Development Areas Map").

Access to BLM-administered public land surface in selected areas will be provided through purchase of access, exchange of use agreements, or exchange of lands, based on a willing buyer/willing seller philosophy (Map 4).

A recreation project plan, livestock water development, and wildlife habitat management plan will be completed for the development of the proposed Meadow Draw Reservoir Recreation Site (T. 45 N., R. 63 W., section 8).

Additional, developed recreation sites on public lands will be pursued as needs are identified.

Primitive camping sites will be established on BLM-administered public land surface in Crook County (T. 56 N., R. 66 W., sections 5, 8, and T. 56 N., R. 67 W., section 1) to provide better control of camping use, fire, and trash collection. Establishment of additional primitive camping sites will be pursued as needs are identified (Map 4).

Areas within 0.25 mile of developed or semideveloped recreation sites on public land are avoidance areas for other development and surface-disturbing activities (such as roads, power lines, pipelines, and well pads). This requirement can be modified by the authorized officer. However, these areas are open to development activities specifically for the purpose of recreation site facilities.

Camping will be allowed in developed recreation sites or on undeveloped BLM-administered public land surface for a period of not more than 14 days within a 28 consecutive day period. After this time, the camp must be moved to a site at least 5 miles away.

Cutting trees and firewood for recreational purposes is restricted to dead and down trees.

The BLM will cooperate with other agencies and private landowners to explore opportunities

to interpret a portion of the Cheyenne to Deadwood Trail.

Selected tracts of BLM-administered public land surface within T. 43-46 N., R. 60 W., will be designated as the Stateline SRMA to emphasize recreation-related opportunities (see the Special Management Areas section, Stateline SRMA, for more details). BLM-administered lands in the remainder of the planning area (except for the Whoopup Canyon ACEC) are designated an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA).

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with constructing and using roads, campgrounds, interpretive sites, and other recreational facilities and activities will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to recreation management activities.

Off-Highway (or Off-Road) Vehicle Management (OHV or ORV)

Management Objective

Provide opportunities for OHV use in conformance with other resource management objectives. (Also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Unless otherwise specified, motorized vehicle use (including over-the-snow vehicles) on BLM-administered public land surface in the planning area is limited to *existing* roads and trails. Seasonal restrictions may be applied in crucial wildlife habitats (for example, sage grouse strutting grounds/nesting areas, fish spawning beds, crucial big game winter ranges/parturition areas) as needed.

On areas designated as limited to *existing* roads and trails, the performance of necessary tasks requiring off-road use of a motorized vehicle will be allowed, provided resource damage does not occur. An example of a necessary task is constructing or repairing authorized range improvements.

Motorized vehicle travel is prohibited on wet soils and on slopes greater than 25 percent if damage to vegetation, soils, or water quality will result.

The BLM-administered public lands within the Whoopup Canyon ACEC are *closed* to both motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use, except for authorized administrative purposes.

Soil Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Maintain soil cover and productivity and provide for improvement in areas where soil productivity may be below potential on BLM-administered public land surface. (See Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Protecting and enhancing soil resources on public land surface will be accomplished through site-specific mitigation of individual surface-disturbing actions. Mitigation measures, such as special construction and reclamation techniques, will be required on highly erosive or fragile soils.

Land uses and surface-disturbing activities on BLM-administered public land surface will be designed to promote reduction of channel erosion, where it would result in severe losses of riparian habitat, and reduction of accelerated surface erosion problems or susceptibility. To the extent practical, damaged wetland and riparian areas will be restored.

Vegetation Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Maintain or improve the diversity of plant communities to support livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, timber production, watershed protection visual resources and to reduce the spread of noxious weeds (also see Appendix 2).

Maintain or enhance essential and important habitats for special status plant species (for example, sensitive or threatened and endangered plants) **on BLM-administered public land surface and prevent the need for any special status plant species being listed as threatened and endangered species.**

Management Actions—General

The vegetation resources on BLM-administered public land surface will be protected and enhanced through site-specific mitigation of surface-disturbing activities.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of vegetation management will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures, determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

Management Actions—Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds and other undesirable vegetation on BLM-administered public lands will be controlled in cooperation with counties, APHIS, and other agencies and affected interests, consistent with the *Wyoming Record of Decision for the Final EIS Addressing Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in the 13 Western States* (USDI, BLM 1991a).

Control of noxious weeds, in priority order, may include the use of species-specific insects, livestock grazing, mechanical methods, or chemical methods. If herbicides are proposed for use, those with minimum toxicity to wildlife and fish will be selected. As appropriate, buffer zones will be provided along streams, rivers, lakes and riparian areas, including riparian areas along ephemeral and intermittent streams.

Vegetation treatments will avoid bird nesting seasons and other times of the year when loss of cover or disturbance by equipment will be detrimental to wildlife. Projects that may affect threatened or endangered plants or animals will be postponed or modified to protect the presence of these species. In such cases, the BLM will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as required by the Endangered Species Act.

Management Actions—Special Status Plant Species

Threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species surveys and general floristic surveys will be conducted on BLM-administered public land surface to note locations and to obtain recommendations for management.

Special status plant species surveys will be required before allowing surface-disturbing activities in potential habitat locations. Terms and conditional requirements will be developed to protect or enhance discovered populations.

Sensitive species designation for species identified as being present or potentially present in the planning area will be requested.

The BLM will work with the FWS to identify sensitive plant species that may be present in the planning area.

Table 2 identifies the three species of plants in the planning area that have been proposed for special status designation. Known populations of these plants will be avoided by use authorizations involving surface-disturbing activities.

Table 2
Proposed Special Status Plant Species

Scientific Name/Common Name	Federal Status	BLM Status	*TNC Status	County
Spiranthes diluvialis Utes Ladies' Tresses	Federally Threatened	Sensitive	G2/S1	Niobrara
Lesquerella arenosa var. argillosa Sidesaddle Bladderpod	– – – – – –	Sensitive	G5T3/S1	Niobrara
Parthenium alpinum Alpine fever-few	– – – – – –	"Watch"	G3/S3	Niobrara

* The Nature Conservancy

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with all types of vegetation management will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures, determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to vegetation management activities.

Visual Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Maintain or improve scenic values, visual quality, and establish visual resource management (VRM) priorities in conjunction with other resource values. (Also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Visual resources will be managed in accordance with objectives for VRM classes that have been assigned to the planning area (see Glossary). Map 5 "Visual Resource Management Map" shows the VRM management areas.

The VRM requirements apply to activities conducted on public lands or to BLM-authorized mineral exploration and development activities on split-estate lands.

Visual resources will be considered before authorizing land uses that may affect them. Mitigation to protect visual resources will be determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1) and could require that facilities or structures such as power lines, oil wells, and storage tanks be screened from view, painted, or otherwise designed to blend with the surrounding landscape.

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to visual resource management activities.

Watershed And Water Resources Management Decisions

Management Objective

Maintain or improve surface and groundwater quality consistent with existing and anticipated uses and applicable state and federal water quality standards; provide for the availability of water to facilitate authorized uses; and to minimize harmful consequences of erosion and surface runoff from BLM-administered public land surface. (Also see Appendix 2).

Management Actions

Water resources will be protected or enhanced through site-specific mitigation of use authorizations.

When authorizing proposals for use of herbicides or pesticides on BLM-administered public lands, those chemicals with minimum toxicity to wildlife and fish will be selected. "No chemical use" buffer zones, to be delineated on a case-by-case basis, will be required along streams, rivers, lakes and riparian areas, including riparian areas along ephemeral and intermittent streams.

Areas within 500 feet of 100-year floodplains, wetlands, or perennial streams, are avoidance areas for surface-disturbing activities.

Areas within 100-year floodplains, wetlands, or riparian areas are closed to the placement or construction of structures (fuel or chemical storage tanks, well pads, buildings, or other types of structures), where there is potential for property, ecological, and general resource damage and human health and safety hazards from a flooding event.

Land use and surface-disturbing activities on BLM-administered public lands will be designed to promote reduction of channel erosion where it would result in severe reduction of riparian habitat, and to promote reduction of accelerated surface erosion in areas having severe erosion problems or fragile or erodible soils. To the extent practical, damaged wetland or riparian areas on public lands will be restored (Appendix 1).

Protecting watershed resources will be considered in the analysis of industry and BLM initiated projects. Watershed conservation practices and *State of Wyoming Best Management Practices* will be applied as necessary.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with watershed management will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to watershed management activities.

Wildlife Habitat Management Decisions

Management Objectives

- **Maintain biological diversity of plant and animal species.**
- **Support the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) strategic plan population objective levels to the extent practical and to the extent consistent with BLM multiple-use management requirements.**
- **Maintain, and where possible improve, forage production and quality of rangelands, fisheries, and wildlife habitat.**
- **To the extent possible, provide habitat for threatened, endangered, and special status animal and plant species on BLM-administered public land surface in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and approved recovery plans (also see Appendix 2).**

Management Actions

The BLM will coordinate efforts with other federal authorities and with state and local authoritiesto implement safe and effective prairie dog control measures on public lands when prairie dogs are determined to be a threat to human health and safety or are causing resource damage. Resource damage will be documented by BLM personnel when reported by the grazing lessee, adjacent landowners, or other interests. Damage could include resource damage occurring on private or state lands from prairie dog towns located on BLM-administered public lands**. Animal damage control activities will be subject to established procedures and policies as outlined in the national and state level memoranda of understanding between BLM and APHIS and the animal damage control plan for the planning area. Human health and safety determinations will be made by the State of Wyoming, Department of Health or by officers of the US Center for Disease Control.**

The size of prairie dog towns on BLM-administered public lands will not be controlled unless resource damage is occurring or human health and safety are threatened as stated above. Unless one of the above situations were occurring, prairie dog control on BLM-administered public land in the planning area will not be allowed. Prairie dogs and their towns are an important component of the prairie ecosystem and are valuable in providing habitat and a food source for a number of wildlife species, some of which are species of special management concern.

New prairie dog towns will be allowed to become established on public lands.

No BLM-authorized actions will be allowed that will disrupt animals on identified crucial winter range, generally from November 1 through March 30, unless approved by the authorized officer (see Map 6, “Deer Critical Winter Range Map”).

To protect raptors and sage and sharp-tailed grouse during their nesting seasons, disruptive activity generally will not be allowed from February 1 through July 31. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operations of existing facilities. Modification of this limitation in any year may be approved in writing by the authorized officer. (See Map 7 “Grouse Nesting and Raptor Concentration Areas Map.”)

Timber harvesting on BLM-administered public land surface in crucial winter range areas will not be allowed unless the timber harvest is designed to improve winter habitat for wildlife species.

Riparian habitat management guidelines will be developed and implemented in all grazing allotments, with priority given to category “I” allotments. These guidelines could apply to such things as protective fencing, livestock season of use designations, and project work to enhance and improve riparian zones to achieve a healthy and productive condition in wetland/riparian areas, and to apply the “no net loss of wetlands” policy.

Fence construction will be required to meet current BLM fence standards.

Fences on BLM-administered public land surface that cause documented wildlife conflicts will be removed, reconstructed, or modified, as appropriate or necessary, to eliminate or reduce the conflict.

Construction of fences that interfere with movements of big game species in crucial big game winter range will not be allowed on BLM-administered public land surface.

Animal damage control activities will be considered on a case-by-case basis. These activities will be subject to established procedures and policies as outlined in the national and state level memoranda of

understanding between BLM and APHIS and the animal damage control plan for the planning area. Situations where the proposed animal damage control activities (all or specific methods) are not compatible with BLM planning and management objectives or with prescriptions for other resource activities and uses the APHIS/WS will be requested to amend the proposed animal damage control activities accordingly. Human health and safety determinations will be made by the State of Wyoming, Department of Health or by officers of the US Center for Disease Control.

The BLM will work in cooperation with the WGFD to provide adequate habitat for wildlife population objectives in the state's approved strategic plan for wildlife populations.

Surface-disturbing and disruptive activities associated with wildlife habitat management will be subject to appropriate mitigation measures , determined through, but not limited to, use of the Wyoming BLM Mitigation Guidelines (Appendix 1).

See the other sections in this document for other land and resource use decisions and guidance that may apply to wildlife habitat management activities.

Planning And Management Decisions For Special Management Areas

Unless otherwise stated, the management action decisions for the general Newcastle RMP planning area will apply.

Stateline Special Recreation Management Area

Management Objective

Ensure continued public use and enjoyment of recreation activities, while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural values; improving opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation; and, improving visitor services related to safety, information, interpretation, and facility development and maintenance.

Management Actions

Selected tracts of BLM-administered public land surface in T. 43-46 N., R. 60 W. are designated the "Stateline Special Recreation Management Area" (SRMA) due to their high potential for recreational activities (Map 4)**.** The following additional management actions will be implemented in the SRMA:

— **Recreational trails in the SRMA will be developed on BLM-administered public land surface for use by hikers, skiers, and mountain bike riders**. The trails could also be nature walk trails or used by schools, volksmarches, and competitive and noncompetitive events for walking, horseback riding, mountain bike events, and cross-country skiing.

Whoopup Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Management Objective

Protect and study rock art in the Whoopup Canyon area; expand public education and interpretation in the area; protect cultural resource values from degradation; and provide for wildlife and scenic values, and Native American concerns.

Management Actions

The Whoopup Canyon ACEC area is expanded to 1,439.39 acres (BLM-administered public land surface only). The legal description for the ACEC is:

6th Principal Meridian

	Acres
T. 43 N., R. 60 W.	
sec 5: W1/2SW1/4	80.00
sec 6: SE1/4NW1/4	40.00
sec 7: Lot 4, SE1/4SW1/4	80.19
sec 8: W1/2SW1/4	80.00
T. 44 N., R. 60 W.	
sec 19: SE1/4SW1/4, S1/2SE1/4	120.00
sec 20: S1/2SW1/4	80.00
sec 29: NW1/4NW1/4, SW1/4SE1/4	80.00
sec 30: Lots 3 and 4, N1/2NE1/4, NE1/4NW1/4, SE1/4SE1/4	239.80
sec 31: Lots 1 through 4 inclusive, NE1/4, E1/2NW1/4, E1/2SW1/4	479.40
sec 32: NE1/4NE1/4, S1/2NW1/4	120.00
sec 33: NW1/4NW1/4	40.00
TOTAL ACRES	1,439.39

Site-specific management activities within the ACEC will be developed through further activity or implementation planning that will incorporate the following actions.

—**The public lands within the ACEC are closed to:**

- **public access and unsupervised general public use;**

- **surface-disturbing activities, including rights-of-way actions. The only exception to this will be those surface-disturbing activities necessary for meeting the research, education, interpretive and preservation management objectives for the area;**
- **mineral material sales;**
- **mineral location (a withdrawal from staking of mining claims and mining under the Mining Laws, will be pursued);**
- **motorized or nonmotorized mechanical transport. Exceptions for physically handicapped persons will be explored on a case-by-case basis and may be allowed where possible, safe and practical. Vehicle use for administrative purposes will be allowed on a case-by-case basis;**
- **the use of explosives or blasting;**
- **use of fire retardant chemicals or those retardants containing dyes to prevent adverse effects to the petroglyphs and to protect the integrity of sociocultural values;**
- **geophysical exploration activity; and**
- **commercial timber harvesting and harvesting of other forest products.**

— **The public lands within the ACEC are open to consideration for mineral leasing with a no surface occupancy stipulation** (see Glossary).

— **The public lands within the ACEC will be managed consistent with the Class II visual resource management (VRM) classification.**

— **The requirements identified above for no surface occupancy stipulations on federal oil and gas or other federal mineral leases, will be applied, as appropriate, to split-estate lands (private surface over federal minerals), intermingled among or adjacent to the public lands in the ACEC, in relation to federal mineral exploration and development activities only. These include surface-disturbing activities, the use of explosives or blasting, geophysical exploration, mineral material sales, and mineral location.**

— **Livestock grazing objectives will be evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the management objectives for this area.**

— **Legal access across private lands for administrative and management purposes will be pursued.**

— **Visitation to and use of the area will be limited to (1) research under a cultural resources research permit; (2) traditional religious use by Native Americans; and, (3) supervised tours guided by BLM personnel.**

— **Active research and preservation activities will be conducted. To the extent possible, petroglyphs, artifacts, and cultural deposits will be preserved and protected from weathering and vandalism.**

— **A land exchange will be pursued to acquire private lands in the area determined to have significant cultural resource values.**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Active preference: The currently authorized livestock grazing use on public lands in an allotment, measured in animal unit months (AUMs) of forage.

Allotment: An area of land designated and managed for livestock grazing. An allotment may include intermingled private, state, public, and other federally administered lands that are administered for grazing. The number of livestock and period of use are stipulated for each allotment. An allotment may consist of several pastures or may be only one pasture.

Allotment categorization: The grouping of livestock allotments into the categories "M" (maintain current condition), "I" (improve current condition), or "C" (manage custodially while protecting existing resource values). The criteria that determine the allotment categorization are described in Appendix G in the first draft document.

Animal unit month (AUM): The amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and calf pair, five sheep, or one horse for one month.

Authorized Officer: Any employee of the Bureau of Land Management to whom has been delegated the authority to make final, binding decision or take specific action, or both, as an official representing the United States Government. Such authority has legal base in statute or regulation.

Avoidance area: An area designated to be avoided due to some resource value that may become damaged or detracted from if development activities were allowed. Examples of an avoidance area may be a recreation site or known cultural site. An area may also be an avoidance area if some hazard exists such as a landslide area. The area may not be totally unavailable but should be avoided if possible.

Biological diversity: Biological diversity is the variety of life and its processes. Although vastly complex, it includes some measurable distinctions like genetic differences within and among species, species variations, associations of species with each other and their environment, and the patterns and linkages of these biological communities across geographical areas (Keystone Center 1991).

Inventory, monitoring, research, data management, and information sharing are needed for understanding the elements of biological diversity that exists in the Newcastle planning area.

There is a need to identify biologically diverse areas and conserve their richness of plan and animal species. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act mandates inventory of the public lands and the use of inventories in management. According to the Keystone Center, BLM's multiple-use management of public lands promotes biological diversity because, under this management, a variety of ecological stages of habitat are developed and maintained, each with its particular plant and animal communities. Also, the variety of landscapes and habitat types making up the public lands provides naturally for biological diversity.

The BLM policy requires that habitats be managed with emphasis on biological communities and natural systems to ensure self-sustaining populations and an abundance and diversity of wildlife, fish, and plant resources on the public lands; and that rare, vulnerable, and representative habitats, plant and animal communities, and natural systems be conserved. The Newcastle RMP EIS considered the effects of the alternatives on biological diversity by using the evaluation of habitat as a starting point.

Crucial winter range: Winter habitat on which a wildlife species depends for survival. Because of severe weather conditions or other limiting factors, no alternative habitat would be available.

Diversity: The relative abundance of wildlife species, plant species, plant communities, and habitats in an area.

Ecosystems and Ecosystem Management: An ecosystem is an intricate group of organisms within their environmental communities, working as an ecological unit or natural system. Plants and animals, including humans, are a part of this dynamic process of living and nonliving interaction. The BLM's mission is to efficiently manage these ecosystems.

Ecosystem management is a process that considers the total environment. It requires the skillful use of ecological, economic, social, and managerial principles in managing ecosystems to produce, restore, or sustain ecosystem integrity and desired conditions, uses, products, values, and services over the long term. Management of individual components of ecological systems for immediate needs is tempered or expanded to responsible management centered on long-term

goals and objectives targeted to the entire ecological system. The principles of ecosystem management, used in BLM's day-to-day management of the public lands and resources, include recognition that people and their social and economic needs are an integral part of ecological systems. it is consistent with the BLM's mission and direction under the FLPMA and it is supported by other laws guiding the BLM's mission.

Effective ecosystem management will be incorporated into implementation of the Grass Creek RMP, into site-specific implementation plans, and into daily management decisions.

Forage: All browse and herbaceous foods that are available to grazing animals.

Full suppression: A strategy for extinguishing fires that requires immediate and continuous aggressive attack in the most cost-effective manner, with the least amount of property damage or resources lost. Full suppression may include control, containment, or confinement of a wildfire to meet land management objectives.

Interdisciplinary: Characterized by participation or cooperation among two or more disciplines or fields of study.

Monitoring: The orderly collection, analysis, and interpretation of resource data to evaluate progress toward meeting resource management objectives.

No surface occupancy (NSO): This term is used to define a no surface occupancy area where no surface-disturbing activities *of any nature or for any purpose* would be allowed. For example, construction or the permanent or long-term placement of structures or other facilities for any purpose would be prohibited in an NSO area. It is also used as a stipulation or mitigation requirement for controlling or prohibiting selected land uses or activities that would conflict with other activities, uses, or values in a given area. When used in this way, the NSO stipulation or mitigation requirement is applied to prohibit one or more specific types of land and resource development activities or surface uses in an area, while other—perhaps even similar— types of activities or uses (for other purposes) would be allowed. For example, protecting important rock art relics from destruction may require closing the area to the staking of mining claims and surface mining, off-road vehicle travel, construction or long-term placement of structures or pipelines, power lines, general purpose roads, and livestock grazing. Conversely, the construction of fences to protect rock art from vandalism or from trampling or breakage by livestock, an access road or trail, and other visitor facilities to provide interpretation and opportunity for public enjoyment of the rock art would be allowed. Further, if there were potential and interest for leasing and development of leasable minerals in the area, leases for gas and oil, coal, and so forth, could be issued with a "no surface occupancy" stipulation or mitigation requirement for the rock art site, which would still allow access to the leasable minerals from adjacent lands and underground.

The term "no surface occupancy" has no relationship or relevance to the presence of people in an area.

Nonmotorized mechanical transport: Any device for moving people or material in or over land, water, snow or air that has moving parts, and that is powered by a living or nonliving power source. This includes, but is not limited to, sailboats, hang gliders, parachutes, bicycles, game carriers, carts and wagons. The term does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances, nor does it include skis, snowshoes, nonmotorized river craft, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts.

Off-road vehicle (ORV)/off-highway vehicle (OHV) - these terms are synonymous : Any motorized vehicle capable of, or designated for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any nonamphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved; (4) vehicles in official use; and, (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies (43 CFR 8340.0-5).

Off-road vehicle/Off-highway (ORV/OHV) management designations: Designations apply to all off-road vehicles regardless of the purposes for which they are being used. Emergency vehicles are excluded. The ORV designation definitions have been developed in cooperation with representatives from the US Forest Service, US Park Service, and BLM state and district personnel. BLM recognizes the differences between off-road vehicles and over-the-snow vehicles in terms of use and impact. Therefore, travel by over-the-snow vehicles will be permitted off existing routes and in all open or limited areas (unless otherwise specifically limited or closed to over-the-snow vehicles) if they are operated in a responsible manner without damaging the vegetation or harming wildlife.

Closed. Vehicle travel is prohibited in the area. Access by means other than motorized vehicle is permitted.

Open. Vehicle travel is permitted in the area (both on and off roads) if the vehicle is operated responsibly in a manner not causing, or unlikely to cause, significant undue damage to or disturbance of the soil, wildlife, wildlife habitat, improvements, cultural, or vegetative resources or other authorized uses of the public lands.

Limited

a. Vehicle travel is permitted only on existing roads and vehicles routes which were in existence prior to the date of designation in the *Federal Register.* Vehicle travel off of existing vehicle routes is permitted only to accomplish necessary tasks and only if such travel does not result in resource damage. Random travel from existing vehicle routes is not allowed. Creation of new routes or extensions and/or widening of existing routes is not allowed without prior written agency approval.

b. Vehicle travel is permitted only on roads and vehicles routes designated by BLM. In areas where final designation has not been completed, vehicle travel is limited to existing roads and vehicle routes as described above. Designations are posted as follows:

1. Vehicle route is open to vehicular travel.
2. Vehicle route is closed to vehicular travel.

c. Vehicle travel is limited by number or type of vehicle. Designations are posted as follows:

1. Vehicle route is limited to four-wheel drive vehicles only.
2. Vehicle route is limited to motorbikes only.
3. Area is closed to over-the-snow vehicles.

d. Vehicle travel is limited to licensed or permitted use.

e. Vehicle travel is limited to time or season of use. Posted:

"Seasonal closure to all motor vehicles [*the approximately dates of closure are indicated*]."

f. Where specialized restrictions are necessary to meet resource management objectives, other limitations also may be developed. Posted:

"Recreational ORV play area"

Prescribed fire: The skillful application of fire (by planned or unplanned ignition) to wildland fuels in either their natural or modified state under specified conditions to allow the fire to burn in a predetermined area while producing the fire behavior required to achieve certain management objectives.

Prevention of significant deterioration (PSD): The process incorporated in the Clean Air Act which places emission limitations on specified new or modified sources. PSD regulations are intended to limit deterioration of air quality that is currently cleaner than national ambient air quality standards.

Public land: Any land or interest in lands owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, except lands located on the outer Continental Shelf and lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos (43 CFR 1601.0-5). The term "public lands" as used in this document, refers to all BLM-administered public land surface and/or federal mineral estate under the jurisdiction of the Newcastle Field Office.

Public use: This category is applied to any cultural property found to be appropriate for consideration as an interpretive exhibit in place, a subject of supervised participation in scientific or historical study, or related educational and recreational uses by members of the general public.

Range condition: The existing state of range vegetation in an area described in comparison to the climax (natural potential) plant community for that area. It is an expression of the relative degree to which the kinds, proportions, and amounts of plants in a plant community resemble that of the climax plant community. Range condition is rated as: potential natural—more than 75 percent of the vegetation is in a climax state; later seral—51 percent to 75 percent of the vegetation is climax; mid seral—26 percent to 50 percent is climax; and, early seral—less than 26 percent of the vegetation is climax.

Range improvement: Any activity or program on or relating to rangelands designed to improve production of forage, change vegetation composition, control patterns of use, provide water, stabilized soil and water conditions, or provide habitat for livestock or wildlife. Range improvement projects may be fences, reservoirs, brush control, or spring and well developments.

Riparian habitat: Common usage refers to the green zones along the banks of streams and ponds and such wetlands as springs or wet meadows. Other usage defines it as any area characterized by vegetation dependent on more water than is available to normal upland vegetation. The BLM's usage is "an area of land directly influenced by permanent water. It has visible vegetation or physical characteristics reflective of permanent

water influence. Lakeshores and streambanks are typical riparian areas. Excluded are such sites as ephemeral streams or washes that do not exhibit the presence of vegetation dependent on free water in the soil." See also Wetlands Jurisdictional Wetlands."

Season of use: The part of the year in which livestock grazing is authorized on a given range area, as specified in the grazing lease.

Surface Disturbance (or surface-disturbing activities): The physical disturbance and movement or removal of the land surface and vegetation, it ranges from the very minimal to the maximum types of surface disturbance associated with such things as off-road vehicle travel or use of mechanized, rubberized, or tracked equipment and vehicles; some timber cutting and forest silvicultural practices; excavation and development activities associated with use of heave equipment for road, pipeline, power line and other types of construction; blasting; strip, pit and underground mining and related activities, including ancillary facility construction; gas and oil well drilling and field construction of development and related activities; range improvement project construction; and recreation site construction.

Mitigation of surface-disturbing activities centers around surface reclamation and the control and prohibition of surface uses. Mitigation is associated with concerns for such things as movement of disturbed or denuded soil (by water, air, or gravity); erosion, water quality (sedimentation, salinity pollution); wildlife habitat (vegetative and special, aquatic or terrestrial); vegetative composition, cover of productive capacity (quality, quantity) for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses (grazing, scenic values, watershed stability); surface and subsurface cultural and paleontological values; and other subsurface values (cave or karst systems, aquifers).

Trend: The direction of change in the condition of health of the range, usually gauged in relation to its natural potential and determined by observation over a period of time.

Visual resource management (VRM): The planning, design, and implementation of management objectives for maintaining scenic values and visual quality. The system is based on research that has produced ways of assessing aesthetic qualities of the landscape in objective terms. After inventory and evaluation, lands are given relative visual ratings (management classes), which determine the amount of modification allowed to the basic elements of the landscape. Following are the five classes.

VRM Class I: This class applies to areas where the objective is to maintain a landscape setting that appears unaltered by man.

VRM Class II: This class applies to areas where the objective is to design proposed alterations so as to retain the existing character of the landscape.

VRM Class III: This class applies to areas where the objective is to design proposed alterations so as to partially retain the existing character of the landscape.

VRM Class IV: This class applies to areas where the objective is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape.

VRM Class V: This class applies to areas where the natural character has been drastically altered, and the area requires rehabilitation to upgrade it to one of the above classifications.

Wetland: Defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as "areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support and which, under normal circumstances do support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." The BLM's usage is virtually synonymous with riparian area, but included associated waters such as ponds or streams, and all other wet areas such as springs, wet meadows, bogs, swamps, and sloughs.