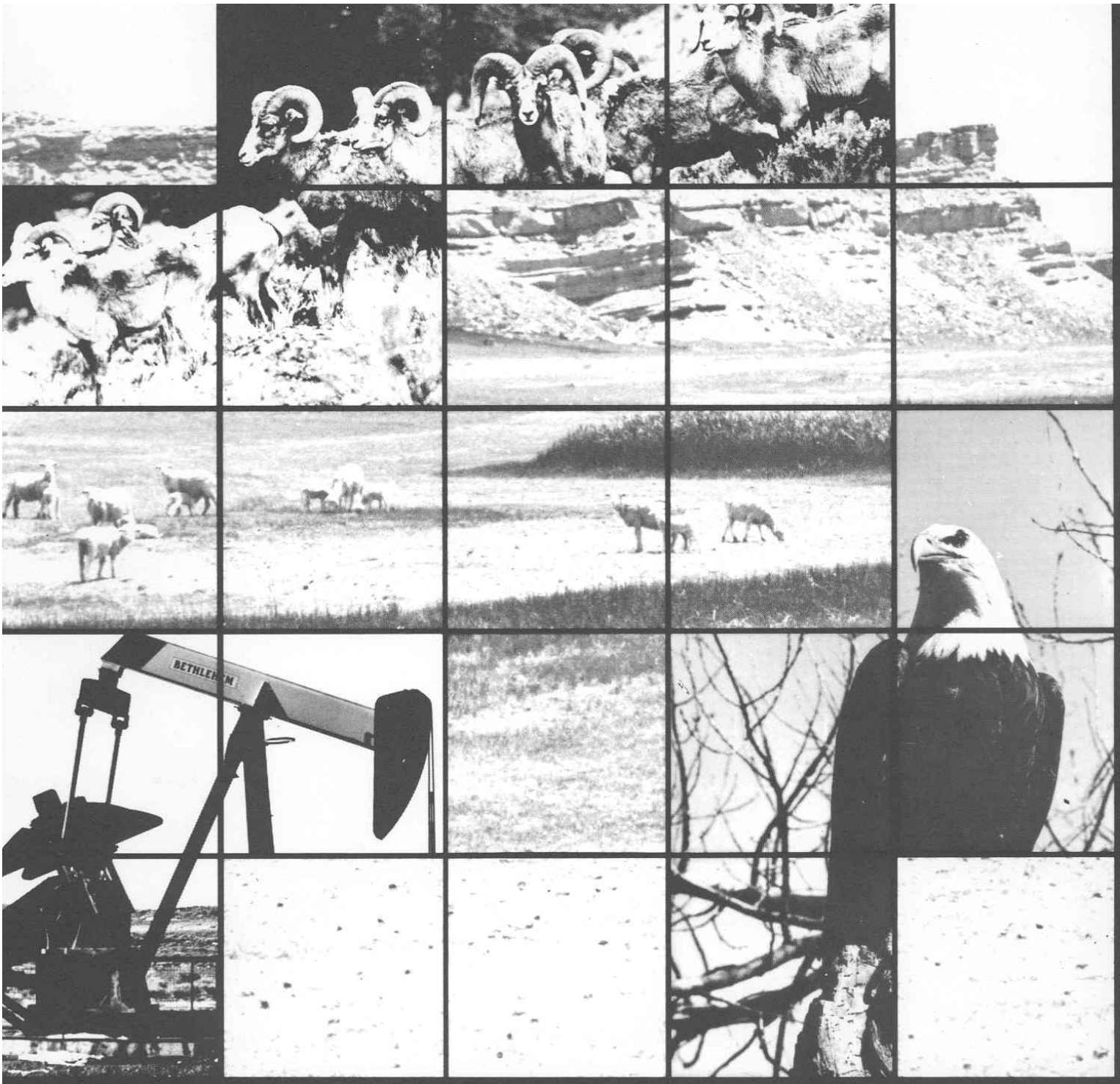

BUFFALO

Resource Management Plan
Record of Decision

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This responsibility includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses the nation's energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

RECORD OF DECISION
for the
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
for
BUFFALO RESOURCE AREA
(incorporating Rangeland Program Summary)

Campbell, Johnson, and Sheridan Counties
Wyoming

Casper, Wyoming
October 1985

Recommended: Glenn Bessinger
Area Manager, Buffalo Resource Area

Concurred: James W Monroe
District Manager, Casper District

It is my decision to approve the proposed plan as presented in the proposed resource management plan/final environmental impact statement and summarized in this document.

Approved: Hillary A Oden 10-4-85
State Director, Wyoming State Office **Date**

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ABBREVIATIONS

[Note: Many of these terms are further defined in the Glossary in the second draft RMP/EIS.]

AMP	Allotment management plan
AUM	Animal unit month
BLM	Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior
"C" allotments	See appendix 3 in the second draft RMP/EIS
CRMP	Cultural resource management plan
EA	Environmental assessment
EIS	Environmental impact statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
HMP	Habitat management plan
"I" allotments	See appendix 3 in the second draft RMP/EIS
KGS	Known geologic structure
"M" allotments	See appendix 3 in the second draft RMP/EIS
MBF	Thousand board feet
MFP	Management framework plan
MMBF	Million board feet
ORV	Off-road vehicle
PRLA	Preference right lease application
R&PP	Recreation and public purposes
RMP	Resource management plan
SCS	Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDI	United States Department of the Interior
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WGFD	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
WSA	Wilderness study area

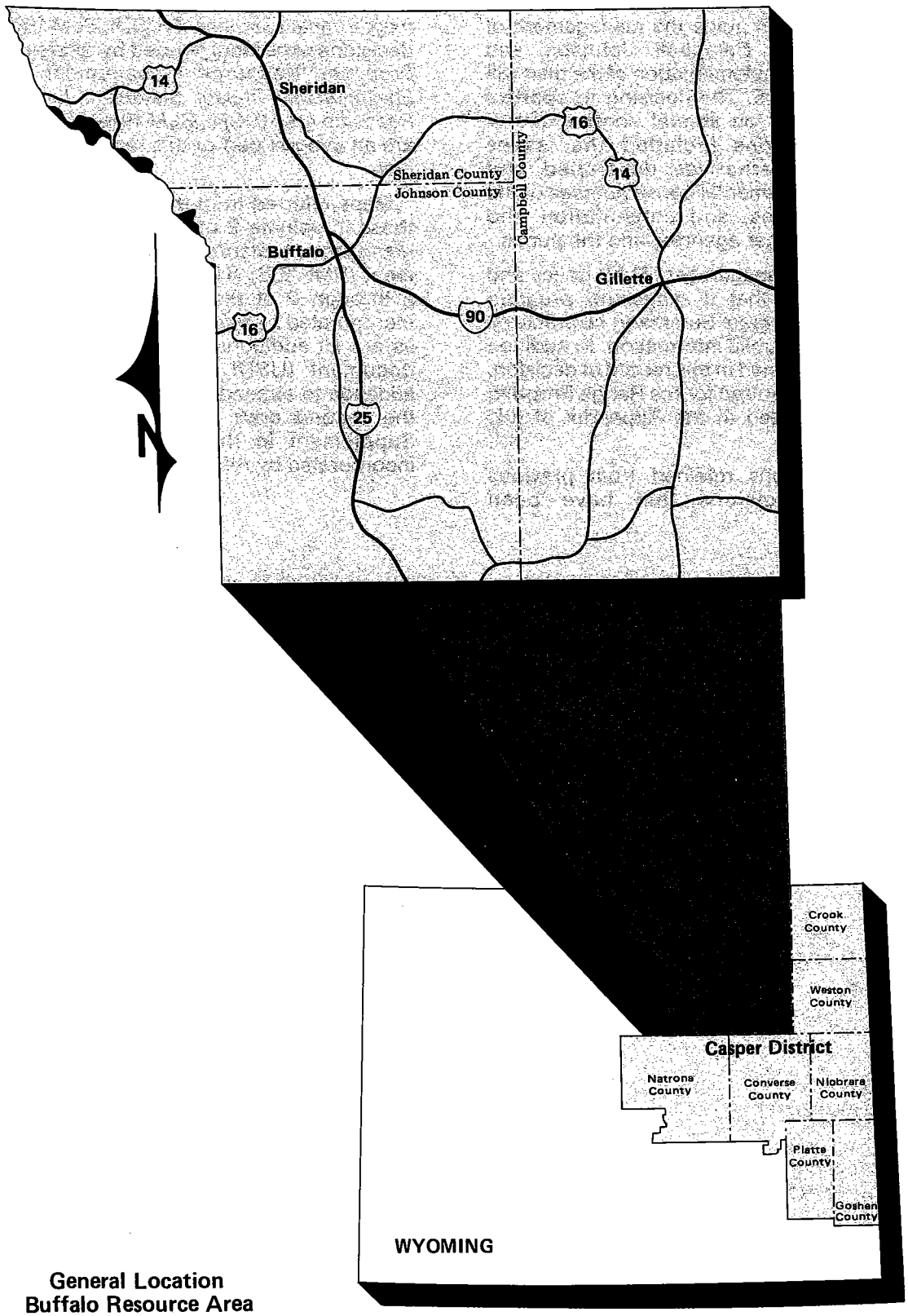
INTRODUCTION

This record of decision describes the approved resource management plan for the Buffalo Resource Area in Wyoming. The resource management plan will guide the management of the public lands in Campbell, Johnson, and Sheridan counties. Implementation of the plan will begin in autumn 1985. The decision to approve this plan was based on several considerations. Those considerations included the issues identified, the alternatives developed and analyzed, the environmental consequences of the different alternatives, and consultation and coordination with other agencies and the public.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy and regulations require that a rangeland program summary (Range Program Summary) be prepared and distributed for public information. In addition to information contained in this record of decision, other information required for the Range Program Summary is presented in the Appendix of this document.

Land use decisions retained from previous planning and decisions that have been implemented through activity plans were identified and evaluated in the *Second Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (USDI, BLM 1984). Those decisions were incorporated by reference into the *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Buffalo Resource Area* (USDI, BLM 1985). These decisions are an integral part of this resource management plan.

Maps referred to in this record of decision are those in volume 2 of the second draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement (RMP/EIS) (USDI, BLM 1984). Appendixes 2 through 6 of the second draft RMP/EIS are incorporated by reference into the approved plan, as are all additions and corrections in the final document (USDI, BLM 1985), including the addenda to appendixes 2 and 4. The Glossary in the second draft RMP/EIS and the Glossary Supplement in the final document also are incorporated by reference.



General Location
Buffalo Resource Area

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, ALTERNATIVES, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The planning process used in preparation of this plan is described in chapter 1 of the second draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1984). The planning issues considered and the alternatives analyzed also are detailed in that document. The public participation that occurred throughout the process is detailed in both the second draft and the final document. These aspects of the planning process are summarized in the following sections.

PLANNING ISSUES

Issues for this plan were derived from public input, an intensive review of existing planning documents, suggestions from interdisciplinary team members, and BLM policy and management. The issues analyzed in detail in the RMP/EIS are listed below by program.

Cultural Resource Management

Protection of identified cultural resource values needs to be increased.

Protection and intensive management are needed for specific cultural sites.

Cultural sites could be damaged by surface-disturbing activities.

Fire Management

The cost of fire suppression should reflect the value of the resources being protected.

Prescribed burning should be used to support the forestry, grazing management, and wildlife programs.

Forest Management

Greater flexibility is needed in scheduling proposed timber sales.

Sales of forest products from woodlands should be permitted.

Livestock grazing on commercial forestlands is impairing the productive capacity of certain forest sites.

Grazing Management

Conflicts exist between livestock grazing and wildlife forage demand.

Range condition in portions of the 30 "I" (improve) allotments is poor to fair.

Lands and Realty

Disposal of small isolated tracts would increase management efficiency.

Minerals Management

Current coal planning is not in accordance with current regulations.

Recreation Management

Off-road vehicle designations are needed for Campbell and Sheridan counties.

Wilderness

Recommendations must be made on the three wilderness study areas in the Buffalo Resource Area.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Priorities need to be assigned for preparation of habitat management plans.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives Considered in Detail

Four alternative resource management plans were described and analyzed in the RMP/EIS, as were applicable previous planning decisions common to all alternatives. Each alternative represented a comprehensive plan for managing

all public land and resources in the Buffalo Resource Area. What differentiated one alternative from another was the way each issue would be addressed if that alternative had been selected for implementation. Grazing management alternatives are described in the Appendix to this record of decision.

The alternatives detailed in the RMP/EIS were as follows:

Alternative A, the "no action" alternative, would have continued the present management direction. The basis for this alternative was existing land use decisions from management framework plans (MFPs) and activity plans prepared in the Buffalo Resource Area.

Alternative B, the preferred alternative (now the approved plan), was designed to balance competing resource and land use demands by providing for the production of needed goods and services in a cost-effective manner while protecting important and sensitive environmental values.

Alternative C, the economic production alternative, would have provided for protection of environmental values to the extent required by applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The objective of this alternative was to favor economic production.

Alternative D, which emphasized environmental protection, would have placed highest priority on the maintenance or improvement of environmental quality. This was the environmentally preferable alternative.

Selection of Approved Plan

Alternative B, which was identified as the preferred alternative in the draft RMP/EIS and as the proposed plan in the final document, has been selected as the approved resource management plan because it is a balanced, cost-effective management plan that best responds to the issues in a multiple use-sustained yield framework. It emphasizes the management, production, and use of the renewable resources on the public lands in the resource area, and it will make nonrenewable energy resources available for development and use. Thus, it will balance competing demands by providing for the production of needed goods and services while protecting important and sensitive environmental values or providing for mitigation of impacts on those values.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

First Draft RMP/EIS

A *Federal Register* notice, a news release, and legal notices in four Wyoming newspapers in February 1982 announced the initiation of the RMP and EIS, inviting comment and soliciting suggestions and input on issues to be discussed and analyzed.

During the RMP/EIS scoping process more than 500 letters were sent to a wide variety of agencies, organizations, interest groups, and individuals. The letters, which were mailed in the spring of 1982, were intended to solicit comments, suggestions, and opinions concerning issues to be discussed and analyzed in the RMP/EIS.

Approximately 70 meetings were held with small groups or individuals, including local officials, lessees, landowners, businesses, organizations, and interest groups.

The input received as a result of these public involvement efforts was used in the development of the issues, planning criteria, and alternatives presented in the *Draft Resource Management Plan: Environmental Impact Statement for the Buffalo Resource Area Management Plan* (USDI, BLM 1983b). Individual follow-up letters were sent to many persons who requested more information on the process.

Meetings also were held with the District Grazing Board and the District Multiple Use Advisory Council during the planning effort. The board and the council were invited to comment and provide input throughout the planning process.

The criteria for categorization of federal grazing allotments were approved in 1982. All grazing lessees were contacted during the allotment categorization process. More than 400 letters were sent to explain the categorization criteria and to solicit information about needed range improvements and resource conflicts. BLM personnel then met individually with approximately 50 operators whose allotments were categorized as "I" (improve) or high priority "M" (maintain) allotments. All operators received copies of the first draft, second draft, and final documents (USDI, BLM 1983b, 1984, 1985).

Second Draft RMP/EIS

After a public comment period on the first draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1983b), a notice of intent to prepare a second draft RMP/EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on December 16, 1983. Comments were received until January 30, 1984. Six written responses were received in that period, four of which paralleled earlier concerns raised by the same parties. Some of those comments expressed concern about the gathering of information for evaluating the resource area's potential for energy minerals; others were concerned with the land use allocation in areas with high mineral potential. The other responses were requests to be placed on the RMP/EIS mailing list.

After publication of the second draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1984), 32 individuals, private organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies submitted comments on the recommendations and analysis in that document. The comments were received either orally or in writing at the public hearing of September 26, 1984, or in writing throughout the 90-day comment period. Three letters received after the close of the comment period were included in the total. Responses to all comments were published in the final document (USDI, BLM 1985).

Copies of the second draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1984) and of the proposed RMP/final EIS (USDI, BLM 1985) were sent to local governments, state and federal agencies, industrial entities, environmental groups, various land users, and other individuals. A complete mailing list is on file at the Buffalo Resource Area office.

No protests were received during the 30-day protest period following publication of the final document.

THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This resource management plan will provide balance among competing resource and land use demands in the Buffalo Resource Area by providing for the sustained production of needed goods and services while protecting environmental values. It presents a balanced, cost-effective management plan.

When actions that would take place in wilderness study areas (WSAs) are described, it is assumed that Congress will accept the BLM's recommendation that the three WSAs in the Buffalo Resource Area not be designated wilderness. The process by which an area is designated or not designated as wilderness is described on pages 267 through 271 of the second draft RMP/EIS.

In the description of management for each resource program in the next section, the wording in boldface type indicates the decisions that the Buffalo Resource Area will implement for that resource program. The authorized officer may waive or modify some decisions, as indicated, following a site-specific field inspection or the acquisition of new information. The Wyoming standard stipulations (printed on pages 142, 143, and 144 of the final document) will be applied as necessary to land use proposals that involve surface disturbance. Other site-specific mitigation may be applied following field examination and analysis.

CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

CRM-1: Develop cultural resource management plans (CRMPs) for Cantonment Reno, Dull Knife Battlefield, and the Outlaw Cave Archeological District. In addition, develop CRMPs for other federally owned sites as they are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Both Cantonment Reno and the Dull Knife Battlefield, which cover 1,952 acres, are listed on the National Register. Preliminary studies conducted on the Outlaw Cave Archeological District indicate that this district has one of the greatest potentials in Wyoming for revealing further information about our prehistoric forebears.

The management described below will be implemented for the CRMPs already identified and for any others that may be identified in the future.

Research goals, designs, and strategies will be identified. (Any information that would contribute to the understanding of prehistoric and historic lifeways will be recovered and preserved.)

Necessary protection and excavation (recovery of archeological data) will be identified.

All artifacts and features will be mapped and recorded.

Significant artifacts will be collected and curated.

Sites will be extensively photographed.

Selected sites will be interpreted.

Significant sites in the Outlaw Cave Archeological District will be nominated to the National Register.

Rationale: Intensive management will provide the appropriate level of protection for cultural sites recommended as eligible for the National Register and those formally determined to be eligible.

CRM-2: Class III (intensive) cultural resource inventories will be required before surface-disturbing activities are permitted in the areas listed below.

Gardner Mountain (Ts 43-45N, Rs 83-85W)

Fortification Creek (Ts 51-53N, Rs 75-77W)

Middle Fork (Ts 41-43N, Rs 83-85W)

Pumpkin Buttes (Ts 51-53N, Rs 75-77W)

Rochelle Hills (Ts 45-47N, Rs 69-70W)

All BLM-administered lands within ½ mile of the Powder River

According to the provisions of the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the operator is responsible for the protection of any prehistoric or historic site on or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Class III inventories in other areas will be performed as necessary.

Rationale: There is a high potential in these areas for the presence of significant cultural sites that could be damaged by surface-disturbing activities.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

FM-1: Conduct full fire suppression in class III and IV value-at-risk areas (see map 4).

Full suppression will be practiced on approximately 165,000 acres of BLM-administered surface in value-at-risk classes III and IV. Full suppression also will be practiced in isolated areas within limited suppression areas to protect structures, power lines, and other improvements.

The Middle Fork Fire Management Plan (USDI, BLM 1982b) will remain in effect. Under this plan full suppression will be practiced on approximately 48,000 acres in the Middle Fork Management Area.

The interim fire management plans for the Fortification Creek, Gardner Mountain, and North Fork WSAs (USDI, BLM 1982c, 1982d, 1983e) will remain in effect. According to those plans, full fire suppression will be practiced within the boundaries of the WSAs (approximately 29,000 acres) until Congress has made a decision as to designation or nondesignation of the areas as wilderness. If the WSAs are not designated wilderness, fire suppression in each of those areas will be determined according to the normal fire year plan.

Rationale: Full fire suppression in specified areas will prevent undue degradation of the environment and destruction of physical structures.

FM-2: Conduct limited fire suppression on public land in value-at-risk class I and class II areas and where fire control is very difficult or extremely hazardous to firefighting personnel (see map 4).

Before limited suppression is implemented, a limited suppression plan and EA will be prepared. This plan will be incorporated into a fire management plan for the resource area. Efforts will be coordinated with owners of adjacent lands. Approximately 634,000 acres of BLM-administered surface, or 79% of the public land in the resource area, will be in limited suppression areas. In determination of limited suppression areas, value-at-risk and fire problem classes will be considered.

Rationale: Limited fire suppression costs will more closely reflect the value of the resources being protected.

FM-3: Conduct prescribed burns.

Prescribed burning will be used as a management tool in support of other resource programs as described below. Site-specific plans and EAs will be prepared before implementation, and specific locations and acreages will be determined from those plans. The environmental analysis in chapter 4 of the second draft RMP/EIS is based on the *estimated* acreages of prescribed burns.

In forest management, prescribed burning will be used for seedbed preparation and disease control. It also will be used to reduce buildups of hazardous fuels and to break up the continuity of fuels so that the intensity of wildfire can be reduced.

For grazing management, prescribed burning will be used to increase forage production and to replace undesirable brush with desirable vegetative species.

For wildlife, prescribed burning will be used to improve and diversify habitat.

Grazing lessees/permittees will be authorized by permit to conduct prescribed burning on public lands in association with burning on their adjacent private land. Authorization for ignition will be given only after advance notification by the lessee and only after preparation of BLM guidance such as a burn plan, an environmental assessment (EA), or a written prescription.

Rationale: Prescribed burning is one of the most cost-effective and environmentally acceptable means of controlling unwanted vegetation or infestations of insects or disease. Prescribed burning also can improve wildlife habitat by creating a mosaic pattern of vegetation. Forage on winter and spring range for elk and summer and fall ranges for mule deer can be improved through the use of prescribed burning.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Grazing in Areas Where Timber Has Been Harvested

FOM-1: Suspend or adjust livestock grazing use in areas where timber harvest has occurred, whenever grazing would impair forest regeneration.

Grazing may be reauthorized or readjusted to preharvest levels after successful reestablishment of a new stand of trees (approximately 10 to 15 years). This will be done only if it will not impair the productive capacity of the forestland or when the authorized officer determines that grazing will not be incompatible with site-specific forest management objectives.

Rationale: The authorized use of livestock grazing on commercial forestlands where timber has been harvested can contribute to preventing successful tree regeneration. Livestock have shown a preference for the new vegetative growth that becomes established following a timber harvest. Tree seedlings are therefore subjected to browsing and trampling.

Thinning and Planting

FOM-2: Implement forest thinning and planting projects.

Thinning and planting projects have been identified for initiation in the following areas:

Thinning Projects

Sawmill Creek
T45N, R85W, Sections 3 and 4
Fisher Springs
T44N, R85W, Sections 7 and 8
Woosley Cabin
T45N, R85W, Sections 4 and 5
Willow Creek
T45N, R84W, Section 22
Rome Hill
T46N, R85W, Section 6
Upper North Fork
T47N, R85W, Section 17
Horn and Bull Creek
T47N, R83W, Sections 7, 18, 19, 31, and 32
T46N, R83W, Sections 5, 6, 7, and 20
T46N, R84W, Section 12
Mosier Gulch
T50N, R83W, Sections 2 and 3
Baldwin Creek
T44N, R85W, Sections 7 and 8
Laramandy Draw
T45N, R85W, Section 1
Pass Creek
T46N, R85W, Section 22

Planting Projects

Willow Creek
T45N, R84W, Section 22
Lost Creek
T46N, R85W, Sections 9, 10, and 15
Poison Creek
T48N, R83W, Section 32
Sawmill Creek
T45N, R85W, Sections 9 and 10

Rationale: Forest development projects are used as management tools to enhance the growing conditions on forestlands. Sustained yield levels will be better maintained by projects that will enhance forestland growth.

Sale of Forest Products and Timber

FOM-3: Allow the sale of minor forest products (posts, poles, and fuelwood) from woodlands and/or noncommercial forestlands throughout the resource area.

Live, or green, minor forest products harvested from woodlands and/or noncommercial forestlands will not exceed the ten-year allowable cut of 1 million board feet (MMBF). All dead timber is considered unregulated in regard to an allowable cut; therefore, harvesting of minor forest products from dead timber will be permitted within program capabilities. Sales of minor forest products will be made only after site-specific environmental analysis in which other resource values (such as wildlife and soils) are considered.

Rationale: Whenever possible, sales of minor forest products will be used as a management tool to increase the overall vigor, and therefore the productive capacity, of the woodlands and noncommercial forestlands. Such sales also will contribute to the economic growth of local communities and industries.

FOM-4: Offer for sale from commercial forestlands over the next ten years approximately 9 MMBF of sawtimber in the 11 timber harvest areas listed below. In addition, offer for sale over the next ten years approximately 1 MMBF of minor green forest products from commercial forestlands.

The sawtimber will be offered as follows:

Gardner Mountain area (not in WSA), 1 MMBF (300 acres)
Baldwin Creek, 1 MMBF (200 acres)
Poison Creek, 1 MMBF (200 acres)
Horn, 2 MMBF (300 acres)
Red Springs Reservoir, 250 MBF (400 acres)
Arndt, 1 MMBF (200 acres)
Lost Creek, 250 thousand board feet (MBF) (50 acres)
Upper North Fork Reentry, 500 MBF (50 acres)
Lower Beartrap, 1 MMBF (200 acres)
Billy Creek, 500 MBF (125 acres)
Lower "H" Hill, 500 MBF (125 acres)

Map 6 shows the harvest areas. Changes may be made in the future in the projected volume of these sales, and some areas may be deleted if biological or economic conditions warrant such actions. The schedule allows flexibility in annual harvesting when changes are warranted by delays in acquiring easements or by changes in biological or economic conditions. Final decisions regarding which sale to offer in any particular year will be

made after interdisciplinary development and review of site-specific plans and EAs.

Rationale: Identifying sale areas and offering an allowable timber harvest will help to bring the commercial forestlands into a state of management and contribute to the economic stability of local communities and industries that depend on timber resources. The 9 MMBF of sawtimber to be offered over the next ten years will help to meet the demand expressed by the local timber industry; and at this rate a permanent supply of timber can be sustained.

FOM-5: Acquire easements across private and state lands where access is needed for timber harvest and other forest management purposes.

Areas where easement needs are currently known are listed below.

Poison Creek
- T48N, R84W, Sections 27, 28, 34, 35, and 36
- T48N, R83W, Section 31

The "Horn"
- T47N, R83W, Section 31
- T48N, R84W, Sections 32 and 33
- T47N, R84W, Sections 3, 4, 10, 14, 15, 23, 25, 26, and 36
- T46N, R84W, Sections 1 and 2
- T46N, R83W, Sections 4, 5, 6, 9, 20, 28, 29 and 33

Bull Creek
- T47N, R84W, Sections 13, 14, 15, 24, 25 and 26
- T47N, R83W, Sections 16, 17, 19, 20, 29 and 30

Red Springs Reservoir
- T45N, R84W, Section 6
- T46N, R84W, Sections 31 and 32

Pack Saddle Canyon
- T45N, R84W, Section 6
- T46N, R84W, Sections 32 and 33

Arndt
- T45N, R84W, Sections 17, 18 and 19
- T45N, R85W, Section 12

Gardner Mountain
- T44N, R84W, Sections 2 and 3

Lost Creek
- T46N, R85W, Section 15

Lower Beartrap
- T45N, R85W, Sections 2, 11, 14, 23 and 36
- T44N, R85W, Section 2

Billy Creek
- T48N, R83W, Sections 7, 12, 17 and 18

Upper North Fork and Goldmine
- T47N, R85W, Sections 9, 10 and 20

Dull Knife
- T44N, R83W, Sections 17, 20, 21, 27 and 28

The "Castle"
- T45N, R85W, Sections 32 and 33

Cash Canyon
- T45N, R84W, Sections 8, 9 and 10

Hammond Spring
- T46N, R84W, Sections 7, 8, 17, and 21
- T46N, R85W, Sections 11, 12 and 14

Rationale: Many of the BLM-administered commercial forestlands in the Buffalo Resource Area are not accessible because of the intermingled land pattern of private, state, and federal lands.

Grazing in Commercial Forestlands

FOM-6: Suspend or adjust livestock grazing on commercial forestlands if grazing is impairing the productive capacity of the forestland.

Decisions to suspend or adjust livestock use on the "I" (improve) allotments will be made in conjunction with development and implementation of allotment management plans (AMPs). Decisions regarding "M" (maintain) and "C" (custodial) allotments will be made case by case.

Rationale: The authorized use of livestock grazing on commercial forestlands has, in certain cases, resulted in an impairment of the long-term productive capacity of the forestlands as a result of soil compaction, browsing and trampling of seedlings, and rubbing of saplings.

Other Applicable Decisions

Decisions from other programs that apply to forest management are CRM-2, FM-3, LR-4, SWAM-1, SWAM-2, SWAM-3, WHM-1, WHM-2, WHM-3, WHM-4, WHM-5, and WHM-7.

GRAZING MANAGEMENT

In addition to the information presented in this section, other information required for the Range Program Summary is presented in the Appendix to this document.

General Grazing Management

GM-1: Control noxious weeds on public surface lands.

The noxious weed control program entails physical, biological, preventive, and herbicidal measures to control noxious weed infestations. Leafy spurge will be the principal noxious weed species controlled. Herbicide use and weed control will conform to that described in the noxious weed control EA (USDI, BLM 1982a) or subsequent similar EAs. The actual control work

will be done through a BLM contract with county weed and pest control districts or by BLM personnel.

Rationale: Control of noxious weeds on public lands will help to ensure that the public lands will not act as seed sources for reinfestation.

Management of "M" Allotments

GM-2: Manage "M" category allotments as described below.

Continue the current authorized livestock use on 98 "M" allotments at 43,573 AUMs. Livestock numbers and kinds and the periods of use would be authorized as at present for each individual lease (see appendix 6 in the second draft RMP/EIS).

Allow development of range improvements. The range projects proposed for construction on the "M" allotments over a ten-year period are listed in the Appendix to this document. Range improvements will be authorized through cooperative agreements or range improvement permits. A site-specific environmental analysis will be conducted for each project.

Establish resource monitoring studies as necessary to detect undesirable changes in the current satisfactory resource conditions. One or more of the following may be monitored: range condition, trend, forage utilization, actual use, and climate. The number and intensity of monitoring studies will vary, depending on the resource value and potential for resource conflicts on a given allotment.

Baseline inventories consisting of range site and condition mapping will be conducted or updated in conjunction with development of cooperative management agreements. Site-specific resource management objectives also will be developed. Periodic allotment evaluations will be scheduled to determine progress toward meeting the objectives.

Rationale: Analysis of the "M" allotments has revealed no serious management problems and has shown resource conditions to be generally good. Current satisfactory management of grazing use could be recognized and documented through cooperative management agreements. Limiting of BLM-initiated management actions will permit concentration of personnel and range improvement funds on allotments where the highest return on investments can be realized. Resource monitoring studies and evaluation of progress toward management objectives will ensure that no undesirable changes in resource conditions will occur.

Management of "I" Allotments

GM-3: Manage "I" category allotments as described below.

Conduct baseline inventories. Inventories are needed to update information on range sites and range condition. A schedule of inventories is included in table 3 in the Appendix to this record of decision. Site-specific resource management objectives will be established and opportunities identified through the inventories, which will include ranch unit analyses (see Glossary).

Develop, implement, and monitor AMPs. Livestock numbers, kinds, and periods of use will continue as now licensed pending adjustments to be made in conjunction with implementation of AMPs or analysis of allotment monitoring studies (see appendix 6 in the second draft RMP/EIS). It is anticipated that 10 to 12 of the 30 AMPs will be developed and fully implemented over the next ten years. The level of authorized use for livestock on the 10 to 12 "I" allotments is expected to increase from 28,968 animal units months (AUMs) to 32,218 AUMs by the end of the ten-year period. The authorized use for livestock on all 30 "I" allotments over the long term (40 to 50 years) is expected to increase to 41,968 AUMs.

Resource monitoring studies will cover actual use, forage utilization, trend, and climate (see table 3 in the Appendix). The monitoring plan will follow established BLM guidelines.

The priority for development of AMPs was established through evaluation of each allotment against the allotment categorization criteria (see appendix 3 in the second draft RMP/EIS). The allotments given the highest priority for AMP development were those offering the greatest potential for improvement of unsatisfactory range condition, management, or resource condition and those offering the best return on public investments. The priority ranking of these allotments is shown in table 3 in the Appendix to this record of decision.

After range condition class has been upgraded to "good" on allotments now rated "poor" to "fair," allocate the increased available forage first to wildlife to meet the population objectives of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD). Any of the increased forage not needed for wildlife will be available to be licensed for livestock use. After the range condition class is upgraded to

"good," watersheds will be stabilized. About 2,400 "new" AUMs will be made available to wildlife to bring big game populations up to the levels recommended by the WGFD, which provides this information on an allotment basis. The remainder of the approximately 13,000 "new" AUMs will be licensed for livestock use.

Rationale: The management of "I" category allotments as described will address the issues of unsatisfactory range condition and possible lack of wildlife forage (with corresponding low wildlife populations) by improving the ecological range condition of public land in these allotments. This improvement is expected to result from implementation of more intensive grazing management systems and development of range improvement projects. Normally, as range condition improves toward ecological climax condition (excellent), there is a concurrent increase in total vegetation and forage production. The new forage resulting from improved ecological range condition will be available for wildlife and other resource uses, including watershed protection.

Management of "C" Allotments

GM-4: Manage "C" category allotments as described below.

Continue current authorized livestock use. The 280 "C" allotments are licensed at 22,004 AUMs per year. Livestock kinds and numbers and the period of use will be authorized as at present for each individual lease. The BLM's efforts on "C" allotments will be concentrated on functions of lease administration, including issuance of leases and billing notices, processing of range improvement applications, and handling lease transfers.

Assign low priority to funding of range improvement projects. Private investment will be encouraged through development of cooperative agreements with the individual operators and the Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (SCS) for allotment management and construction of range improvements. It is estimated that one SCS ranch plan will be implemented each year and three or four individual range improvement projects per year will be constructed among all "C" allotments.

The projects will be constructed under SCS ranch plans, coordinated resource management plans, or individual project agreements. A site-specific environmental analysis will be conducted for each individual range improvement project, or for groups of such projects, before projects are constructed on public land.

Rationale: The small size and scattered public land pattern characteristic of "C" allotments severely limits the BLM's management options. The return on public investments in range improvements or management normally would be very low on these allotments, but the BLM can encourage proper grazing management by providing the administrative clearances for construction of range improvements. The intermingled public lands in these allotments also may benefit from conservation management recommendations provided by the SCS under the Great Plains conservation program.

Other Applicable Decisions

Decisions from other programs that apply to grazing management are CRM-2, FM-3, FOM-1, FOM-6, LR-2, LR-4, RVRM-2, SWAM-1, SWAM-2, SWAM-3, SWAM-4, WHM-1, WHM-2, WHM-3, WHM-4, WHM-5, and WHM-7.

LANDS AND REALTY MANAGEMENT

LR-1: Locate transmission and transportation facilities within the corridor areas.

Corridors are shown on map 6. The facilities to be included in the corridors are power lines 69 kilovolts and larger on "H" type and lattice type structures, pipelines 6 inches in diameter or larger (excluding feeder or gathering lines in producing fields), state and federal highways, and railroads leading out of the planning area. Future corridor adjustments and new corridor designations will be made only when facility placement within an existing designated corridor is incompatible or unfeasible and when the environmental consequences can be adequately mitigated. Problems of technical compatibility between facilities and spacing of facilities in corridors will be solved case by case.

New facilities will be placed within a compatible distance of existing facilities. The definition of "compatible distance" will be determined case by case, and minimum design standards and major impacts to the human environment will be considered. Space between utilities in the same corridor will be sufficient to permit expansion and modernization. New state and federal highway

routes that cross BLM-administered public lands will be selected in cooperation with the agencies and private landowners involved. An effort will be made to establish roads and utility facilities in the same corridor, but not at the expense of excessive additional construction costs or interference with scenic values or human activity such as enjoyment of a scenic view from a highway.

The corridor areas, as shown on map 6, are along existing facilities. New corridors will be considered only when new facilities would be at least ½ mile from existing corridors or when the environmental impacts could be mitigated better by establishment of a new corridor.

Rationale: Most adverse visual impacts, landowner concerns, and other problems related to rights-of-way can be mitigated by establishment of corridors around the existing facilities and location of new facilities within these corridors.

The primary purpose of corridor designations is to create corridors for major cross-country right-of-way facilities. This does not preclude the placement of small facilities, where practical, within the corridors to gain corridor sharing benefits where adequate space is available.

LR-2: Locate communication sites and utilities in the Pumpkin Buttes area only on South Middle Butte until that butte has been fully utilized as a communication site unless the decision is waived by the authorized officer. Communication sites will not be authorized on North Middle Butte unless it becomes absolutely necessary to use that butte for the line-of-sight needs (such as for microwave transmission).

Whether or not construction of communication sites on North Middle Pumpkin Butte is permitted will depend on the results of an evaluation of engineering drawings (if applicable), the location designated, and a visual contrast rating. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that the action could occur without causing signficant visual impacts in the area.

The management plan for the Pumpkin Buttes Communication Site (USDI, BLM s necessary to avoid the random and potentially inefficient use of those types of sites. This decision will preses necessary to avoid the random and potentially inefficient use of those types of sites. This decision will preserve the visual integrity of the North Middle Pumpkin Butte and will aid the proper management of a limited resource: locations that are suitable for communication sites.

LR-3: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy in the recreation and public purpose (R&PP) areas unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer. This decision will not apply to recreation and public purpose projects in the R&PP applicant's plan of development.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on whether a threat to public safety is involved and whether there would be detrimental effects on the approved uses of the R&PP area. If there would be no threat to public safety and no detrimental effects, the authorized officer may waive the prohibition.

Exploration and development activities such as those carried out for oil and gas and other leasable minerals may entail use of large equipment and other activities that could pose a safety hazard to the public.

Rationale: This decision will prevent possible conflicts related to public safety, visual resources, or other matters between R&PP area values and other development activities.

LR-4: Public lands shown on map 7A are available for further consideration for sale or exchange. The possible sale or exchange of lands in producing oil and gas fields (known geologic structures—KGSs), high interest coal areas, and designated mineral material sites will be considered case by case.

The approximate amounts to be considered for sale or exchange are 32,000 acres by sale and 63,000 acres by exchange in Campbell County; 20,000 acres by sale and 45,000 acres by exchange in Johnson County, and 21,000 acres by sale and 10,000 acres by exchange in Sheridan County. The resource area's total amount available for consideration is 73,000 acres for sale and 118,000 acres for exchange. The lands identified for possible sale also could be exchanged. The lands identified for exchange will not be available for sale unless their sale clearly would be in the public interest. (Map 7A is erroneously labeled "Land Disposal: Alternatives A and C." As indicated in the Map Guide enclosed in the final document, it should have been labeled "Alternatives B and C.")

Disposal of public land within a particular grazing lease will not be given priority consideration unless all the public land in that lease can be disposed of. Exchange should not be considered unless the private land available for exchange adjoins other public land.

Lands identified as available for consideration for sale or exchange were selected according to the disposal criteria of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). A site-specific analysis will be conducted for each possible sale or exchange so that existing resource values and

conflicts can be identified. Lands will be considered for disposal only if their disposal would not conflict with applicable regulations and would meet the sales criteria in section 203 of FLPMA.

Possible sales of lands in areas of high mineral interest and development will be considered case by case. Mineral values on or beneath lands proposed for sale or exchange will be defined in a mineral report prepared by the BLM. The report will be used to determine the appropriate mineral reservation to be contained in a title conveyance. In general, the title conveyance could reserve all minerals in federal ownership, partially reserve some minerals, or convey all minerals with the surface title. The BLM does not intend to create "split estate" when disposal actions are consummated; however, minerals identified as valuable will be retained in federal ownership, along with the right to prosect for, mine, and remove those minerals.

Rationale: The disposal of land identified on map 7A would provide for better management of the public lands in the resource area. Small parcels that are uneconomical to manage can be sold. Exchanges would create larger blocks of public lands that would be more economical to administer.

Decisions from other programs that apply to lands and realty management are CRM-2, RVRM-2, RVRM-3, SWAM-1, SWAM-2, SWAM-3, WHM-1, WHM-2, WHM-3, WHM-4, WHM-5, and WHM-7.

MINERALS MANAGEMENT

Leasable Minerals

Coal

MM-1: Federal coal lands in central Campbell County and in north central Sheridan County are the priority areas available for consideration for coal leasing.

The areas identified encompass about 378,000 acres containing about 26 billion tons of uncommitted federal coal after application of the coal screening process. This includes previously delineated (but unleased) federal coal tracts (approximately 95,000 acres containing 6 billion tons). Competitive tracts in any coal lease sale occurring after a possible Powder River round II sale would be confined to the priority leasing consideration areas shown on map 9 for Alternative B. The coal screening process for these lands is discussed in appendix 2 of the second draft RMP/EIS.

Any competitive or noncompetitive coal leasing that may occur in the Thunder Basin National Grassland is subject to Forest Service land use plans covering the grassland and the mitigating measures defined therein. See the addendum to appendix 2 in the additions and corrections for appendixes, pages 138 and 139 in the final document (USDI, BLM 1985).

The BLM will process the outstanding noncompetitive preference right lease applications (PRLAs). The outstanding PRLAs are listed in table 2-4 on page 24 of the final document (USDI, BLM 1985). The BLM has determined that an EIS is necessary to consider the cumulative impacts of leasing PRLA areas that meet the requirements of the law and regulations. After that EIS is completed, applicants who hold preference rights will be asked to submit their final showings. The final showing for each PRLA will then be evaluated and a decision made either to issue a coal lease to the applicant or to reject the PRLA. For any PRLA area that qualifies for a federal lease, there could be proposals for modification, exchange, or emergency leasing. These proposals would be considered as described under MM-3.

Rationale: This decision will enable the BLM to consider for leasing the federal coal that has the highest economic potential for development and that is best served by existing transport facilities. It also will permit leasing in areas where mining would be most environmentally acceptable and would result in the least economic and social impact. This priority area for leasing consideration (shown under Alternative B on map 9) would serve any future need for competitive leasing of federal coal.

MM-2: Delineated coal tracts are available for consideration for competitive leasing in one coal lease sale beginning with a possible second round Powder River lease sale. Tracts previously considered for leasing and newly delineated tracts will be available for consideration. Following a possible second Powder River Region coal lease sale, any coal tract not selected for inclusion in a lease sale or any tract included in a lease sale but not sold can be either redelineated or dropped from further consideration for sale. This decision will not affect tracts currently being considered for a possible round II Powder River competitive coal lease sale. The potential round II tracts are defined on table 2-3 on page 22 of the final document. They also are shown on map 9.

Rationale: Tracts not sold after being offered in a lease sale may not be feasible for leasing for various reasons such as lower coal quality, environmental problems, economic conflicts, or extensive requirements for transportation facilities. New data, new studies, or new interest in development may require significant changes in the boundaries of these tracts. This decision allows the BLM to redefine boundaries or to change the character of future competitive tracts completely after evaluating responses to a new call for expressions of interest.

MM-3: Federal coal land available to be considered for lease modifications, emergency leases, and exchanges includes the uncommitted coal land determined to be acceptable for coal development and leasing consideration both within the priority areas for competitive leasing (as described in MM-1, above) and outside the priority areas for competitive leasing.

Rationale: As needs arise for lease modifications, emergency leases, or exchanges, the BLM is required to address those needs that qualify by law or regulation. When a need for a specific lease modification, emergency lease, or exchange is identified, the federal coal land to meet that need will be defined. For this reason, no restrictions are placed on land that can be used in meeting those needs at this time, except that it must be uncommitted federal coal land on which the coal screening process and land use planning processes have been applied.

MM-4: On coal leases for which mining and reclamation plans have been approved, authorize oil and gas drilling and production only where such activities would not conflict with coal mining. In cases where conflicts cannot be resolved, oil and gas drilling and production will be deferred.

Rationale: On a coal lease for which a mining and reclamation plan has already been approved, new oil and gas activity could require costly changes in planning and mining operations or could result in a loss of coal. Simultaneous development could occur in cases where oil and gas activity would not interfere with mining operations. Delaying oil and gas drilling and production in cases where conflicts could not be resolved would ensure efficient development and conservation of both resources.

Oil and Gas

MM-5: Defer coal leasing in producing oil and gas fields unless or until coal development will not interfere with the economic recovery of the oil and gas resource, as determined case by case by the BLM.

Oil and gas fields are defined in this plan by the boundaries of identified KGSs. The coal screening process has already been applied on federal coal lands in KGSs; therefore, it will be possible to lease coal in a KGS whenever the BLM determines that all or parts of a KGS are no longer required for oil and gas operations or that site-specific conflicts between oil and gas production and coal development can be mitigated.

The public will be invited to supply information regarding oil and gas operations during coal activity planning. If the BLM concurs with the information indicating that coal leasing will not interfere with recovery of the oil and gas in a KGS, a coal tract could then be delineated in the KGS and could be considered further for coal leasing.

Before potential coal lease tracts in oil and gas fields are delineated, the BLM site-specific analysis team will conduct a field review of possible lease tract areas, especially those in which high interest in coal leasing has been expressed. Any new information gathered during the field review regarding oil and gas operations will be considered before coal tracts are delineated. This could result in KGS areas being made available for coal leasing or in new areas being deferred where conflicts exist.

Following tract delineation, any new oil and gas operations occurring within a coal tract or new oil and gas information regarding a tract will be analyzed during the coal activity planning process.

Rationale: This decision will maximize production of energy resources without allowing development of one of these important resources to the detriment of the other. The quantities of coal available for potential new leasing make it unnecessary to create conflicts between coal and oil and gas production within the resource area. Case-by-case consideration will provide an opportunity for evaluation of the potential for development of the resource and will minimize conflicts.

MM-6: If Congress decides not to designate the WSAs as wilderness, lease for oil and gas development 6,423 acres in the Gardner Mountain WSA, 10,089 acres in the North Fork WSA, and 12,419 acres in the Fortification Creek WSA with the terms and conditions shown on the Oil and Gas/Watershed and Oil and Gas/Wildlife maps for each WSA..

Rationale: Leasing these lands will help to maximize the acreage available for oil and gas

leasing, but the environment in these areas will be protected when the terms and conditions shown on the maps named above are applied.

MM-7: Continue to lease and allow development of federal oil and gas in the Buffalo Resource Area.

The oil and gas surface protection plan for Fortification creek (USDI, BLM 1982f) will remain in effect. Oil and gas leasing and development will be subject to the standard stipulations of the Wyoming BLM and to other mitigation of surface disturbance as may be necessary.

Rationale: Continuation of leasing and development of federal oil and gas reserves in the Buffalo Resource Area is vital to the local and regional economy. The environment will be adequately protected by application of the BLM's standard stipulations and by case-by-case application of other mitigation of surface disturbance.

Salable Minerals

MM-8: The entire resource area is available for mineral material sales initiated either by the BLM or by application. This does not include sites designated by the BLM for free use by city, county, and state entities.

A final decision on each mineral material sale will be made when the application is processed. The processing will include preparation of a site-specific EA. Findings of some EAs may result in denial of applications for some specific locations. If a mineral material sale is approved, stipulations will be attached as necessary to protect the environment and to ensure successful reclamation. Sites currently designated for common disposal of mineral materials are listed on page 243 of the second draft RMP/EIS. The plans for disposal of salable mineral materials in Johnson and Campbell counties (USDI, BLM 1980c, 1982h) will remain in effect.

The use of mineral materials for road construction and maintenance by state and county highway departments will receive priority attention.

Rationale: Disposal of mineral materials from designated sites will reduce environmental impacts while maximizing public benefits realized from disposal of a limited commodity.

Locatable Minerals

MM-9: BLM-administered locatable minerals will remain subject to the provisions of the 1872 Mining Law except in areas that are now withdrawn from mineral location.

Specific areas withdrawn from mineral location under the 1872 Mining Law are listed in table 3-13 on page 87 of the second draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1984).

Other Applicable Decisions

Decisions from other programs that apply to management of all minerals (coal, oil and gas, and salable minerals) are CRM-2, LR-2, LR-3, LR-4, RVRM-2, RVRM-3, SWAM-1, SWAM-2, SWAM-3, WHM-1, WHM-2, WHM-3, WHM-4, WHM-5, and WHM-7.

RECREATION AND VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RVRM-1: Public lands in Campbell and Sheridan counties are designated for off-road vehicle (ORV) use as shown on table 2-5 on page 26 of the proposed RMP/final EIS.

The Johnson County ORV plan (USDI, BLM 1981c) will remain in effect. All public lands in Johnson County already have been designated as either open, closed, or available for limited ORV use. All designations will be evaluated continuously for effectiveness, and areas may be reclassified according to the BLM planning system or in response to resource-related problems.

Rationale: ORV designations will help reduce unnecessary resource damage such as soil disturbance, loss of vegetation, and disturbance of wildlife that could be caused by indiscriminate vehicle use on public land.

RVRM-2: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy on public lands in the Red Wall/Hole-in-the-Wall area, within Middle Fork Canyon and within 1/2 mile of the canyon rims, and on the Dry Creek Petrified Tree environmental education site unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the results of an evaluation of proposed uses, engineering drawings (if applicable), location and design of facilities, and a visual contrast rating. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that the action could occur without causing significant adverse impacts. The recreation management plans for Middle Fork Powder River and Dry Creek Petrified Tree area (USDI, BLM 1980e, 1978a) will remain in effect.

Rationale: Each of these areas contains one or a combination of important resources such as wildlife habitat, wildlife diversity, high visual quality, and significant cultural, historic, or paleontologic values. Special consideration for these resources will ensure that any proposed surface development or surface occupancy would not alter the integrity of these areas.

RVRM-3: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy within 200 feet of the edge of state and federal highways unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the results of an evaluation of engineering design and drawings (if applicable), the location designation, public safety considerations, and a visual contrast rating. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that public safety and visual resources would not be significantly affected.

Rationale: Establishment of a buffer zone will help enhance highway safety by reducing potential problems caused by unnecessary ingress and egress from the highway. It also will reduce the visual effects associated with BLM-related activities along heavily used public roads.

RVRM-4: Provide access to the Gardner Mountain and North Fork WSAs by existing roadbed and new construction.

A trail will be constructed to provide access from an existing county road to the vicinity of the present Gardner Mountain WSA. A parking area will be built on public land near the county road, and a horseback and hiking trail will lead from the parking area to the boundary of the present WSA and into the unit. If and when demand warrants it, one primitive campground will be developed in the vicinity of the present WSA.

A foot and horseback trail will be constructed for access to the present North Fork WSA if access can be acquired from the owner of the adjacent private property. Trailhead parking will be provided on public land near a county road outside the unit. A primitive campground will be developed inside the present WSA if and when demand warrants it.

Rationale: Providing access to these WSAs for public use will open two large blocks of public land for the first time. Both areas offer excellent opportunities for recreational activities.

Decisions from other programs that apply to recreation and visual resource management are CRM-2, LR-2, SWAM-1, SWAM-2, SWAM-3, WHM-1, WHM-2, WHM-3, WHM-4, WHM-5, and WHM-7.

SOIL, WATER, AND AIR MANAGEMENT

SWAM-1: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy within areas of severe erosion hazard from March 1 through June 15 unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on weather conditions and visible moisture conditions of the soil such as potential for rutting and erosion. A waiver may be granted if the weather conditions are essentially dry and if only minor rutting can be expected, or if the proposed activities or the design of the facilities will adequately mitigate any impacts.

Rationale: Areas of severe erosion hazard are characterized by shallow, erosive, or fragile soils on moderate to steep slopes. Disturbance of these soils in spring, when the soil surface is saturated, greatly increases the potential for accelerated erosion.

SWAM-2: Prohibit surface disturbance within 500 feet of any spring, reservoir, water well, or perennial stream unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the location of the action in relation to the water; for example, on a terrace sloping away from the water or with a ridge between the disturbance and the water. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that the water would not be contaminated.

Surface development proposals that involve intermittent and ephemeral streams (as identified on USGS 7 ½-minute topographic maps) will be evaluated, and effects will be mitigated as necessary through site-specific mitigation, or the development may be moved a sufficient distance to ensure natural drainage integrity. The restriction applies to intermittent streams and well-defined ephemeral streams where watershed conditions indicate that the potential exists for the stream to carry sufficient amounts of water to damage surface facilities.

This decision will be applied case by case. It will not apply to every topographic depression or every drainage that might conceivably carry runoff at some time; rather, it applies to drainages that have the potential to affect live streams.

Rationale: Requiring a buffer zone of at least 500 feet between the disturbance or facility and the water source will reduce the potential for accidental contamination of surface and subsurface water.

SWAM-3: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy on slopes of more than 25% (see map 12) unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the results of an evaluation of engineering drawings (if applicable), mining plans, or plans of operation. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that the action could occur without significantly accelerating soil erosion.

Rationale: Surface disturbance of soils on slopes of more than 25% could result in accelerated soil erosion from the disturbed sites, making reclamation very difficult.

SWAM-4: Fence the head seepage areas of all spring developments on public surface.

The exact area to be fenced will be determined after field inspection.

Rationale: Livestock and wildlife tend to concentrate in the spring seep areas, reducing water quality through siltation and damaging riparian vegetation by trampling. Fencing the seep areas will improve water quality by reducing siltation and reduce maintenance costs while increasing the useful life of the project.

MANAGEMENT OF WSAs

WM-1: Recommend all three WSAs for nondesignation as wilderness.

This is a preliminary recommendation. It is subject to change during administrative review. If this recommendation is accepted by Congress, 28,931 acres will be available for full multiple use management.

Rationale: The ecosystem of the North Fork and Gardner Mountain WSAs is already well represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Designation of these areas as wilderness would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of wildernesss areas within the system. In addition, management of the Gardner Mountain and North Fork WSAs as wilderness would be difficult because of the configuration of those WSAs with surrounding private land.

Oil and gas development probably would occur on state inholdings within the Fortification Creek WSA. Access through public land for this oil and gas development would compromise wilderness values in much of that WSA. The Fortification Creek WSA also contains public lands that are valuable for oil and gas. Impacts from any development that might occur on public land, including those from access to state interests, could be mitigated so that resource values would be adequately protected.

WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

WHM-1: Prohibit surface disturbance and occupancy in the Ed O. Taylor, Kerns, Bud Love, and Amsden Creek winter ranges for big game unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the type of action proposed and the effect it would have on big game. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that there would be no significant adverse effects on big game.

These four big game ranges are crucial winter range for elk and important winter/yearlong areas for deer. The ranges also are important seasonal use areas for numerous small game and nongame species. All areas are managed in cooperation with the WGFD.

Rationale: Allowing development in these areas would be contrary to an existing memorandum of understanding between the BLM and the WGFD, which manages the state-owned surface in the game ranges. Occupancy and disturbance of the surface would displace big game from crucial areas; consequently, herd health would be lowered because of stress. The result would be a corresponding loss in elk and deer numbers.

WHM-2: Prohibit surface disturbance in crucial elk winter range between November 15 and April 30. In addition, prohibit surface occupancy in elk calving areas. The decision may be waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the type of action proposed, the exact location of the action, and the exact dates on which different phases of the action would occur. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that crucial habitat would not be significantly affected during important seasons.

Rationale: These crucial seasonal use areas are limited by specific habitat characteristics; for example, elk are less tolerant of human activity than other big game species and will readily displace to lower quality areas away from human activity. As a result, herd health and reproduction can decline, resulting in lower herd numbers.

WHM-3: Prohibit surface disturbance and occupancy within 250 yards of sharp-tailed grouse dancing grounds at any time. Prohibit surface disturbance within an additional 1/2-mile radius of sharp-tailed grouse dancing grounds from April 1 through May 30 (see map 14) unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition on surface disturbance within the additional ½-mile radius is waived will depend on the type of action, the exact location of the action within the boundaries of the designated areas, and the exact dates on which the different phases of the action would occur. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that crucial habitat would not be significantly affected during important seasons. The seasonal limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of existing facilities.

Rationale: The distance of 250 yards for no surface disturbance or occupancy is the minimal distance that will prevent breeding ground disruption and possible abandonment. Some human activities and facilities might have little impact on sharp-tailed grouse within the ½-mile buffer area, depending on the location and the distance from breeding activity. Therefore, the restriction on surface disturbance within the additional ½-mile radius may be waived after field inspection.

WHM-4: Prohibit surface disturbance and occupancy within a 1/4-mile radius of the center of sage grouse strutting grounds with no exceptions. Prohibit surface disturbance within an additional 1 3/4-mile radius from March 1 to June 15 (see map 14) unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition of surface disturbance within the additional 1¾-mile radius is waived will depend on the type of action, the exact location of the action within the designated areas, and the exact dates on which the different phases of an action would occur. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that crucial habitat would not be significantly affected during important seasons.

Rationale: The no surface disturbance, no surface occupancy, and seasonal activity buffer zones correspond to recommendations from literature and scientific study. Although some studies have shown that surface-disturbing activity does not appear to affect breeding behavior of sage grouse in proximity to the lek center, documented lower productivity and abandonment of strutting grounds in the resource area have been attributed to human activity during this crucial period.

WHM-5: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy within a biologic buffer zone around active nests of raptor species of high federal interest unless the prohibition is waived by the authorized officer.

Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the type of action, the exact location of the action within the biologic buffer zone, and the exact dates on which different phases of an action would occur. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that crucial habitat would not be significantly affected during important seasons.

An active nest is defined as one that has been used at least once during the previous three years. The size of each buffer zone will be determined case by case, and specific raptor nesting periods, topography, and raptor prey habitat surrounding the nest site will be considered.

The current seasonal guidelines of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are as follows: golden eagle, February 1 through July 15; osprey and merlin, April 15 through August 15; prairie falcon, March 15 through August 1; ferruginous hawk, March 15 through July 15; Cooper's hawk, April 1 through August 15; burrowing owl, April 15 through July 15; and Swainson's hawk, April 1 through July 15. The dates in the USFWS guidelines correspond with the approximate time of nest construction, egg laying, incubation, and fledging of each raptor species.

Rationale: Continuous surface-disturbing activity can cause nest abandonment, especially during nest building and incubation. Raptor species often can tolerate nearby human activity when the activity is screened by vegetation or topography. For this reason, site-specific analysis is needed before any action takes place.

WHM-6: Develop habitat management plans (HMPs) to improve and protect wildlife habitat in

the following priority areas: South Big Horns HMP (1985), including a portion or all of the Gardner Mountain and North Fork WSAs; wetlands and aquatic HMP (1986); and Powder River Breaks HMP (1987).

The South Big Horns HMP area, which covers approximately 108,000 acres of public surface, is essential habitat for many wildlife species, including elk, mule deer, antelope, mountain lion, small game, and nongame species. The need for this HMP was initially identified during previous planning. The HMP is expected to be completed in 1985. The HMP for the Middle Fork Powder River area (USDI, BLM 1980d) will remain in effect.

The wetlands/aquatic HMP will be developed for the entire resource area to emphasize water quality and wetland, riparian, and fisheries habitat that is in less than satisfactory condition. Priority will be first, maintenance or improvement of 50 miles of streams in the south Big Horns; second, maintenance or improvement of riparian and wetland areas in less than good condition throughout the resource area.

The Powder River Breaks HMP will cover about 257,000 acres. The area contains important winter and yearlong range for elk, mule deer, and antelope, as well as habitat for numerous small game and nongame species.

All HMPs will be developed in cooperation with the WGFD under authority of the Sikes Act. Implementation of the HMPs will be coordinated with the development of the AMPs prepared for the "I" category allotments and with other activity plans.

Rationale: Crucial winter range and important yearlong habitat for elk and deer in the south Big Horns is limited by the availability of forage, cover, and water. Implementation of the HMP will improve these habitat conditions and limit habitat degradation from timber harvesting, mineral development, livestock grazing, and recreational pursuits.

A wetland HMP is needed to maintain the streams or wetland areas on BLM-administered land that are now in good condition and to improve streams or wetland areas in less than satisfactory condition. Objectives are to increase duck and goose production, to create additional fish habitat, and to improve habitat for all wildlife species that use wetland sites.

Forage and water are limited in many areas in the Powder River Breaks. Implementation of the HMP will improve habitat conditions for all wildlife. Emphasis will be placed on meeting population objectives stated in the WGFD strategic plan.

WHM-7: Prohibit surface disturbance or occupancy within 1/2 mile of communal winter roosts for bald eagles from November 1 through March 30 (see map 14). When biologic buffer zones around roosts have been delineated, prohibit surface disturbance within these zones from November 1 through March 30. The prohibition can be waived by the authorized officer.

Designation of the ½-mile zone around roosts is a measure to provide needed protection. These zones will be analyzed and possibly revised when a specific activity is proposed that might affect the roost areas. Biologic buffer zones will then be established on the basis of topography, vegetative screening, and essential foraging areas. Whether or not the prohibition is waived will depend on the type of action, the exact location of the action within the boundaries of the biologic buffer zone, and the exact dates on which the different phases of the action would occur. A waiver may be granted if it is determined that bald eagles would not be affected during the most important part of the season.

Rationale: Bald eagles choose communal roost sites for specific habitat characteristics such as proximity to available food and aspect and density of conifer or deciduous trees, which afford protection from inclement weather. This endangered species will readily be displaced from an area by continuous human activity. This could cause them to expend more metabolic energy in search of food and thermal cover, with a resultant decline in reproduction.

WHM-8: Allow animal damage control on BLM-administered lands when the need for control is demonstrated.

All control will conform to the provisions defined in the BLM Casper District's animal damage control plan and the associated EA (USDI, BLM 1983a, 1983c).

Rationale: The practice of animal damage control in accordance with the provisions of the plan cited will ensure that control activities are directed at offending animals or populations rather than at species as a whole.

Decisions from other programs that apply to wildlife habitat management are CRM-2, FM-3, GM-3, LR-2, LR-4, RVRM-2, SWAM-1, SWAM-2, SWAM-3, and SWAM-4.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE RMP

The Buffalo Resource Area RMP will be continually monitored and evaluated for its management effectiveness and for its ability to meet public needs and demands, BLM policy, and stated objectives. Should monitoring reveal that changes in the plan are necessary, they can be achieved through plan maintenance (administrative modification), amendments to specific parts of the plan, or a new or revised resource management plan.

APPENDIX

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Grazing Administration

The BLM administers nearly 800,000 acres of public surface in Sheridan, Johnson, and Campbell counties. Of this total, the Buffalo Resource Area administers approximately 735,000 acres for livestock grazing. Approximately 24,000 acres of public land is withdrawn for stock driveway use and 4,000 acres is unsuitable for livestock use because of steep slopes or low forage production. The remaining public lands in the resource area that are leased for grazing are administered by other BLM resource areas.

Nearly 100,000 animal unit months (AUMs) are licensed each year on public land. This meets about 5% of the total forage demand in the Buffalo Resource Area. Leases for 408 allotments are held by 390 operators.

There is one allotment management plan (AMP) in the three counties in the Buffalo Resource Area. It covers 6,149 acres of public land.

Approximately 700 authorized range improvement projects are already in place on public land in the resource area. Most are fences (900 miles) and reservoirs (187). Other authorized range improvements in place are 43 water wells, 23 miles of water pipeline, 18 spring developments, 9 corrals, and 1,800 acres of sagebrush treatment.

Allotment Categories

Criteria for categorization of federal grazing allotments were developed in 1982. Through application of these criteria, all allotments have been categorized as either "M" (maintain), "I" (improve), or "C" (custodial). The allotment categories are described in detail in appendix 3 of the second draft RMP/EIS.

The second draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1984) and the proposed RMP/final EIS (USDI, BLM 1985) reported that the Buffalo Resource Area contained 98 "M" allotments, 29 "I" allotments, and 281 "C" allotments. However, some allotments have been reclassified on the basis of new information. The current totals are 98 "M" allotments containing approximately 321,000 acres of BLM-administered surface, 30 "I" allotments with about 273,000 acres of BLM-administered surface, and 280 "C" allotments containing approximately 140,500 acres of BLM-administered surface. Table 1 shows the allotment ranking and priority schedule for monitoring of "I" and "M" category allotments.

SUMMARY OF GRAZING ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

Seven grazing management alternatives were identified during the preparation of the RMP/EIS. Three of these were eliminated from further study; the four others were analyzed in detail.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated from Further Study

Maximum Forage Production on "I" Allotments

An alternative to maximize forage production was considered. The objective would have been to bring the range on all "I" allotments to excellent condition. This would have been accomplished over an estimated ten-year period (beginning in fall 1985) through intensive project development and livestock management. All increased forage production would have been allocated to livestock grazing.

Range improvements in this alternative would have included construction of 27 wells, 6 spring developments, 13 reservoirs, 56 miles of water pipeline, 6,800 acres of brush control, and 200 acres of prairie dog control. It was estimated that the improvement in range condition on the "I" allotments would have resulted in an increase of 25,300 AUMs. The AUM increases would have accumulated over 30 years following implementation of 29 AMPs during the ten-year implementation period.

The benefit/cost ratio of the maximum forage production alternative would have been negative; therefore, the alternative would have been uneconomical and unreasonable.

Public comments indicated that there is a definite interest in maintaining current levels of forage production, but very few comments

Appendix

TABLE 1

ALLOTMENT RANKING AND PRIORITY SCHEDULE FOR MONITORING OF "I" AND "M" ALLOTMENTS IN THE BUFFALO RESOURCE AREA

Operator or Allotment Name	Lease Number	Operator or Allotment Name	Lease Number
High Priority "I" (improve) Allotments— High Monitoring Intensity			
Graves	7203	2¢ Ranch	7562
Brubaker	7271	Harriet Bros.	7226
Christian/Powder River	7103	Firnekas	7662
J&P Corp./Mountain Camp	7630	Jones, T.	7285
J&P/Slope	7630	Harriet Bros./Falxa	7227
Wheeler L&C/Red Fork	7058	Ullery	7268
Wagoner, T.	7137		
Medium Priority "I" (improve) Allotments— High Monitoring Intensity			
Streeter	7529	Camino	7086
Powder River Ranch	7435	Meike	7130
Marton	7348	Blue Cr./Poker Cr.	7660
DeLapp	7236	Mayor	7581
Iberlin	7645	York/Hepp	7248
Iberlin	7646		
Low Priority "I" (improve) Allotments— High Monitoring Intensity			
Curuchet	7119	Powder River Cattle	7235
Arndt	7008	Christiansen	7102
Hayden/Darrell est.	7241	Hope	7259
High Priority "M" (maintain) Allotments— High Monitoring Intensity			
Ramsbottom	7449	Gordon	7196
Brock Livestock	7056	Marterina	7658
Hanson Livestock	7090	V Bar F/Schuman	7485
Hayden/Fort. Cr.	7242	Steward and Shinn	7659
Floyd	7171	Watt/Remington Cr.	7597
Rule/Wagonhammer	7175	Dry V	7579
Medium Priority "M" (maintain) Allotments— Medium Monitoring Intensity			
TTT	7482	Michelena	7364
Faddis-Kennedy	7162	Bishop	7039
Trebelcock/Rhoads	7512	Wagensen	7585
TR Ranch	7540	Rafter L./Salt Cr.	7447
Y Bar U	7627	Thrush	7604
Wagensen	7028	Wolcott	7616
Low Priority "M" (maintain) Allotments— Medium Monitoring Intensity			
Ritchie	7470	Rhodes/LeDoux	7604
Johnson	7669	Auzuqui	7011
Johnson	7670	Etchemendy Ranch	7023
Elsom Bros.	7152	Arndt	7007
Elsom Bros.	7153	Ostlund Investments	7041
Guess	7207	Briles	7054
Lester	7318	Brown-Kennedy	7061
Sussex Oil	7221	Brug Land & Lvst.	7066
Camino	7087	Cain	7084
Mercer	7363	Camblin	7085
Lawrence	7309	Barlow	7022
Arno	7009		

Appendix

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Operator or Allotment Name	Lease Number	Operator or Allotment Name	Lease Number
Low Priority "M" (maintain) Allotments— Low Monitoring Intensity			
Cellars	7096	Klutts	7295
Christensen, C.	7099	Kretschman	7300
Clabaugh	7105	Cow Cr. Ranch	7303
Clear Cr. Grazing	7109	Laramore	7304
Trail Cr. Grazing	7569	Lawrence	7310
Collins	7110	Hoyt	7312
Perry	7113	Allemand	7314
Davis	7129	Mankin	7339
Dry Cr. Ranch	7143	Oedekoven	7359
Eaton Bros.	7147	Meike	7362
Elm	7151	Morse	7382
Fitch	7168	Norfolk	7392
Flint	7169	Norfolk	7393
Garrett	7188	Norfolk	7394
Allemand	7190	Parks	7413
Harrod	7233	Pickrel	7427
Hepp	7243	Reece	7458
Hepp	7244	Rhoads	7512
Hampshire	7245	Sorenson	7520
Hepp	7247	Ratcliff	7530
Odegard	7262	Swartz	7537
Jenkins	7280	Curuchet	7661
Jones, P.	7283	Lund	7671
Kaufman	7286	Harlan	7678
Kendrick	7289		
Knudson	7290		
Knudson	7291		

indicated an interest in or need for management of the public land to maximize forage production for livestock use. In addition, other resource values such as wildlife habitat would have been compromised.

Maximum Forage Production on "M" Allotments

An alternative to increase forage production on "M" allotments was considered. It proposed initiation of intensive grazing management practices on all "M" allotments with a potential for a positive return on public investments.

The alternative was eliminated from detailed study because a preliminary benefit/cost analysis indicated that the rate of return on public investment for the "M" allotments would not be favorable. The relatively low rate of return would have occurred because the opportunity for improving productivity on the "M" allotments would be limited; these allotments already are producing at or near their potential. In addition, the public land in most of the "M" allotments is less consolidated than that in the "I" allotments; thus, management opportunities are more limited.

Elimination of Livestock Grazing

An alternative to exclude livestock use from all public land in the resource area was considered. However, it was found to be unreasonable and unfeasible, and it was eliminated from detailed study. The following factors identified through interdisciplinary analysis were instrumental in the decision to eliminate the "no grazing" alterative from detailed study.

Given the highly fragmented nature of public land in the resource area (more than half the leases apply to less than 640 acres of public land), exclusion of livestock grazing would have required extensive fence construction. It is estimated that 6,000 miles of fence would have been required to implement a "no grazing" alternative. The cost to the public would have been exorbitant, and fencing would have resulted in significant interference with wildlife movement and disruption of ranching operations.

Elimination of livestock grazing on all allotments would have resolved the range issues of unsatisfactory range condition in certain areas and of big game populations that are lower than the objectives of the WGFD strategic plan. However, this alternative was found to be unreasonable in that it proposed a "blanket" action for all allotments. The elimination of grazing on all allotments would have unjustifiably created severe hardship for many ranch units. The "no grazing" alternative was not supported by the public during issue identification and scoping.

Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

Alternative A (No Action)

Alternative A, the "no action" alternative, would have continued the existing management. The specific grazing decisions that would have been carried out under this alternative are summarized below. These decisions are discussed in more detail on page 22 of the second draft RMP/EIS.

Authorized use on 408 grazing leases would have been maintained at 94,545 AUMs, and one existing AMP would have been maintained. Livestock grazing on the individual leases would have been authorized at the same rate as at present, including livestock numbers, kind of livestock, and period of use.

Approximately 10 to 12 range improvements would have been maintained or reconstructed each year, and the areas around the heads of spring developments would have been protected.

The current program for control of designated noxious weeds would have been continued.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative/Proposed Plan)

Alternative B, which was designated the preferred range program alternative in the second draft RMP/EIS (USDI, BLM 1984) and the proposed plan in the final document (USDI, BLM 1985), is the approved plan. The approved plan is described in this record of decision.

Alternative C

Under Alternative C, after range condition class had been upgraded to "good," new forage produced through implementation of AMPs would have been licensed to livestock use. None of the new forage would have been reserved for big game use; however, allotment-specific resource management objectives would have been met by the improved range conditions before livestock use would have been increased. It was estimated that the increase in livestock forage would have amounted to approximately 15,400 "new" AUMs.

Appendix

TABLE 2

PLANNED GRAZING MANAGEMENT ACTIONS IN THE BUFFALO RESOURCE AREA

Annual Authorized Use on 408 Grazing Allotments

Allotment Category	Number of Allotments	Acreage	Number of AUMs in Year 1	Number of AUMs in Year 10
"M" (maintain)	98	320,981	43,573	43,573
"I" (improve)	30	273,292	28,968	32,218
"C" (custodial)	280	140,446	22,004	22,004
Total	**408**	**734,719**	**94,545**	**97,795**

Use Supervision/Inspection of BLM Allotments

"M" Allotments: 12 per year during life of plan
"I" Allotments: 10 in first year; increasing to 30 per year by tenth year
"C" Allotments: 5 per year during life of plan

Total of 27 in first year, increasing to 47 per year by tenth year

Number of Allotments on Which Monitoring Studies Will be Done

"M" Allotments: 1 in first year; increasing to 10 per year by tenth year
"I" Allotments: 5 in first year; increasing to 12 per year by tenth year
"C" Allotments: no monitoring

Total of 6 allotments in first year, increasing to 22 per year by tenth year

Allotment Management Plans Developed, Implemented, and Maintained

2 AMPs to be developed and implemented in first year.

Total of 10 AMPs to be developed and implemented in ten-year period.

1 AMP to be maintained.

Estimated Total Number of New Range Improvements to be Constructed on "M" and "I" Allotments in Ten Years

Wells	10		
Springs	10	Vegetation manipulation	
Reservoirs	5	(brush control)	4,000 acres
Pipeline	55 miles	Noxious weed control	500 acres
Fence	17 miles		

Formal Grazing Decisions

An estimated total of five formal grazing decisions will be issued over ten years.

TABLE 3

SCHEDULED GRAZING MANAGEMENT ACTIONS FOR "I" ALLOTMENTS

Lease Number	Operator/ Allotment Name	Range Site and Condition Inventory	AMP Development/ Implementation	Use Super-vision	Actual Use Report to Be Done	Forage Utilization Studies To Be Done	Trend Studies (Priority)	Springs or Wells (number)	Reser-voirs (number)	Pipe-lines (miles)	Fences (miles)	Brush Control (acres)
Allotments with High Priority for AMP Development												
7203	Graves	completed	year 2	high	X	X	high	1				200
7271	Brubaker	completed	year 2	high	X	X	high			7		100
7103	Christian/Powder River	completed	year 1	high	X	X	high			5	3	400
7058	Wheeler L&C/Red Fork	year 1	year 2	high	X	X	high			8	3	
7630	J&P/Mountain Camp	year 2-10	year 3-10	high	X	X	high	3		7	4	
7630	J&P/Slope	year 2-10	year 3-10	high	X	X	high			2		
7137	Wagoner	year 3-10	year 3-10	high	X	X	high	1	2	1	3	700
7562	2¢ Ranch	year 3-10	year 3-10	high	X	X	high	1			2	
7226	Harriet	year 4-10	year 6-10	high	X	X	high	2		10		1,000
7662	Firnekas	year 5-10	year 6-10	high	X	X	high					200
7285	Jones, T.	year 6-10	year 6-10	high	X	X	high			5		200
7227	Harriet Bros./ Falxa	year 7-10	year 9-10	high	X	X	high			3		200
7268	Ullery	year 8-10	year 9-10	high	X	X	high			1		
Allotments with Medium Priority for AMP Development												
7529	Streeter	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
7435	Powder River Ranch	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
7348	Marton	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					400
7236	DeLapp	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high			2		
7645	Iberlin	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
7646	Iberlin	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
7086	Camino	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
7130	Meike	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high			2		
7660	Blue Creek/ Poker Creek	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high	1				
7581	Mayor	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
7248	York/Hepp	after year 10	after year 10	medium	X	X	high					
Allotments with Low Priority for AMP Development												
7119	Curuchet	after year 10	after year 10	medium		X	high					
7008	Arndt	after year 10	after year 10	medium		X	high					
7241	Hayden/ Yellowhammer	after year 10	after year 10	medium		X	high	1				
7235	Powder River Cattle	after year 10	after year 10	medium		X	high					
7102	Christiansen	after year 10	after year 10	medium		X	high					
7259	Hope	after year 10	after year 10	medium		X	high	1	1			

TABLE 4

SCHEDULED GRAZING MANAGEMENT ACTIONS FOR HIGH PRIORITY "M" ALLOTMENTS

Lease Number	Operator/ Allotment Name	Range Site and Condition Inventory	CMA Development/ Implementation	Use Super-vision	Actual Use Report to Be Done	Forage Utilization Studies To Be Done	Trend Studies (Priority)	Springs or Wells (number)	Reser-voirs (number)	Pipe-lines (miles)	Fences (miles)	Brush Control (acres)
7449	Ramsbottom	year 1-5	year 2	high		X	high	1				
7056	Brock Livestock	year 1-5	year 1-5	medium			high					
7090	Hanson Livestock	year 1-5	year 1-5	medium			high					
7242	Hayden/Fort Cr.	year 5-10	year 5-10	low			high	2				
7171	Floyd	year 1-5	year 1-5	medium			high	1				
7175	Rule/Wagonhammer	completed	AMP implemented	medium		X	medium	1				
7196	Gordon	year 1-5	year 2	medium		X	high					
7658	Marterina	year 5-10	year 5-10	low			high					
7485	V Bar F/Schuman	year 1-5	year 1	medium		X	high			4		200
7659	Steward/Shinn	completed	year 1	low		X	high	1		1		
7597	Watt/Remington Cr.	year 5-10	year 5-10	low			high	2				200
7579	Dry V	year 5-10	year 5-10	medium			high					

The grazing management program for Alternative C is described in more detail on page 49 of the second draft RMP/EIS.

Alternative D

Under Alternative D, baseline inventories would have been conducted and licensed livestock grazing would have been reduced to allow recovery and maintenance of range condition to "good" or "excellent" on the "I" allotments. The total number of AUMS would have been 8,800 fewer than the current authorized level—a reduction of 30%. After range condition class had been upgraded, about 2,400 AUMs would have been allocated to wildlife to meet the WGFD's population objectives.

Alternative D would have required that natural materials be used in the construction of new range improvement projects in the WSAs. The use of motorized vehicles by livestock operators with leases in the WSAs would have been prohibited except when approved case by case for emergencies such as removal of sick animals, or where no alternative method of transportation was available for maintaining existing range improvement projects.

The grazing management program for Alternative D is described in more detail on pages 51 and 52 of the second draft RMP/EIS.

APPROVED GRAZING MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Objectives

The primary objectives of the grazing management program for each allotment category in the Buffalo Resource Area are as follows:

"M" Category Allotments: To maintain current balanced use and satisfactory resource conditions and productivity.

"I" Category Allotments: To improve current resource conditions and productivity, and enhance multiple use opportunities.

"C" Category Allotments: To manage allotments custodially while protecting resource values. Management actions will be concentrated on administrative functions such as issuance of grazing leases, billings, and grazing lease transfers.

Planned Grazing Management Actions

The grazing management actions planned are summarized in table 2. Implementation of the plan will begin in the autumn of 1985 and continue for approximately ten years. Additions or changes to the plan, if any, will be described in Range Program Summary updates. Some additions or changes that could occur are changes in allotment categorization based on new data, changes in supervision and studies to tailor them for specific allotments, changes in allotment priorities, and changes in kinds, seasons, or numbers authorized for each grazing lease.

No schedule has been established for issuance of formal decisions to change the grazing use on specific grazing allotments. It is anticipated that most of the needed changes in management will be mutually agreed upon by grazing lessees and BLM personnel. However, when mutual agreement cannot be reached and when the results of the monitoring studies indicate that a change in management is needed, formal decisions will be issued. It is estimated that a total of five such formal decisions will be made during the ten-year implementation period.

Tables 3 and 4 list the grazing management actions scheduled for "I" allotments and high priority "M" allotments.

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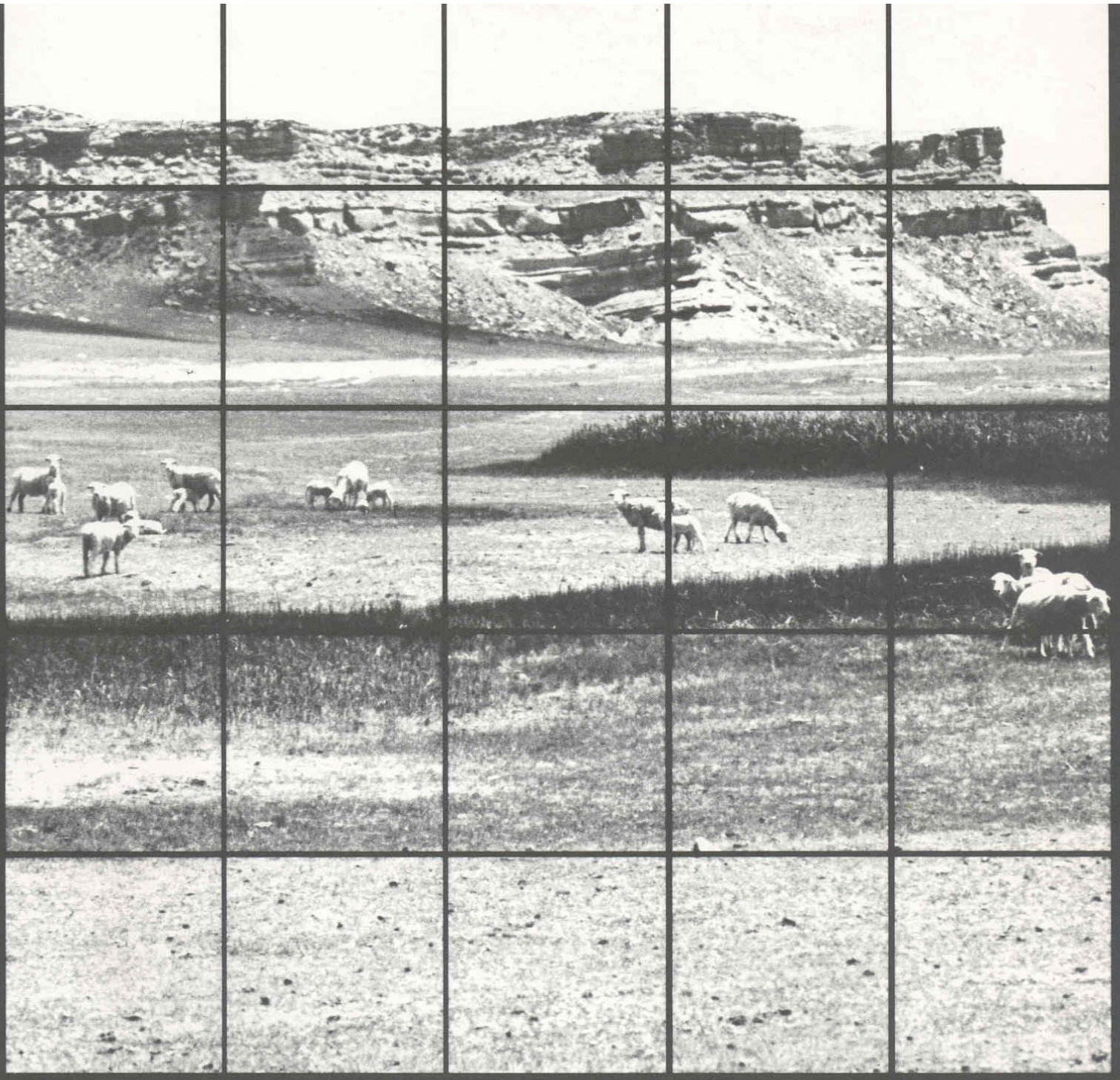

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