

COMMENT SUBMITTED TO THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT BY:

Governor's Task Force on the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan

JANUARY 2024



Submitted on January 10, 2024, to the Bureau of Land Management, Rock Springs Field Office, as an official comment on the Draft Rock Springs Resource Management Plan with approval and on behalf of:

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- John Kolb (Wyoming State Senator, District 12)
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- Clark Stith (Speaker Pro Tempore, House District 48)
- J.T. Larson (Wyoming House of Representatives, House District 17)
- Cody Wylie (Wyoming House of Representatives, House District 39)

Conservation: Alec Underwood (Wyoming Outdoor Council, Program Director)

- Nick Dobric (The Wilderness Society, Wyoming Conservation Manager)
- Stephanie Kessler (Citizen, Public Lands Advocate)
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- Jenissa Meredith (Sweetwater County Joint Travel and Tourism Board, CEO)
- Jessica Evans (Sweetwater Economic Development Coalition, Board Member)

Livestock and Agriculture: Jim Magagna (Wyoming Stock Growers Association, Executive Vice President)

- John Hay (Rock Springs Grazing Association, President)
- Marissa Taylor (Grazing Permittee)
- Mark Dickinson (Grazing Permittee)

Local Government: Keaton West (Sweetwater County Commission, Chairman)

- Eric Bingham (Sweetwater County Land Use Director)
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Mining and Trona: Mike McGrady (Sisecam, Vice President, HR & EHS)

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- Joy Bannon (Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Executive Director)
- Craig Thompson (Landowner)
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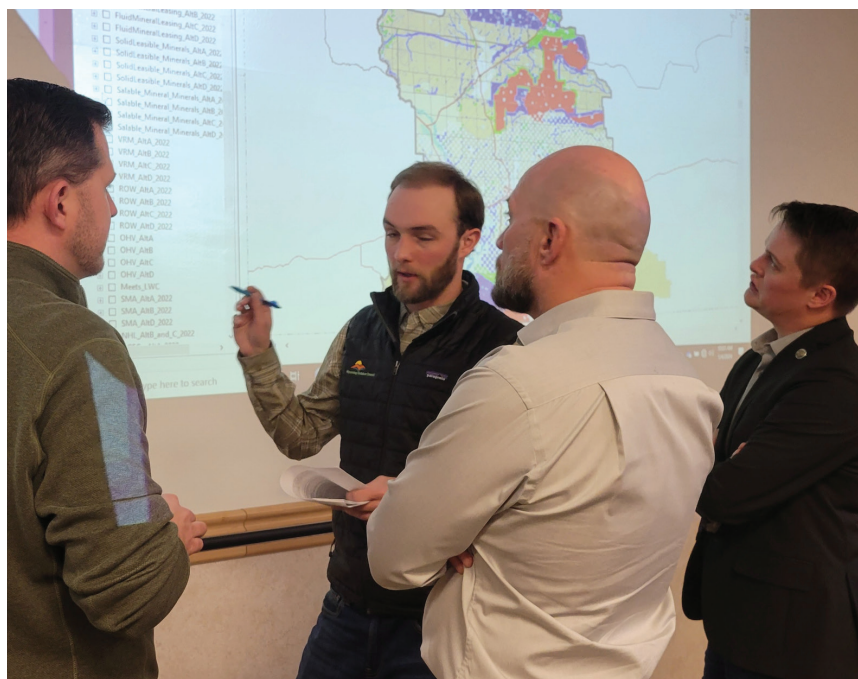
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Executive Summary

In 2011, the Bureau of Land Management’s Rock Springs Field Office initiated a revision of its Resource Management Plan, the guiding document for land use planning. In 2023, BLM released its Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), selecting Alternative B as the preferred alternative. The draft RMP says that Alternative B “emphasizes conservation of resource values with constraints on resource use” (ES-3, Draft RMP).

In response to public outcry about the agency’s preferred alternative, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon assembled a task force representing diverse Wyoming interests—Wyoming House of Representatives, Wyoming Senate, conservation, economic development and tourism, livestock, local government, mining, motorized access, oil and gas, renewable energy and utilities, and sportsmen and hunting—and charged the task force with developing consensus recommendations for revising the Draft RMP to meet the needs of Wyoming stakeholders. He asked the University of Wyoming Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources and Ruckelshaus Institute to facilitate the task force meetings and hold a series of interactive public workshops to help inform task force deliberations, in collaboration with the School of Energy Resources, and the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources.



The task force met in person four days, with five Zoom check-ins, between November 15, 2023, and January 9, 2024. In addition, task force members spent significant time and effort preparing for each meeting, including various assignments to work through the Draft RMP and meeting with each other to search for common ground. During the meetings, task force members proposed and voted on proposals for revising the RMP in ways that met their various interests. Only when all task force members could agree on a proposal did it become a consensus recommendation.

Task force recommendations included 24 agreements in principle, which allowed the task force to speak broadly on critical issues, and more than 100 management prescriptions, which focused on specific management actions linked to one of the four RMP alternatives. Major consensus recommendations included the following topics:

- A series of recommendations to conserve landscapes around Greater Little Mountain, recognizing years of work by the Greater Little Mountain Coalition to develop a local proposal for the management of the area.
- Acknowledgment of the national and local significance of the trona mining industry by protecting access to and development of the Known Sodium Leasing Area (KSLA).
- Consensus-based work to bring reasonable management approaches to the “checkerboard” area of the field office that recognize the importance of meeting access needs associated with use of non-BLM lands, managing for wildlife migration, and protecting the visual horizon.

- In response to strong public sentiment to maintain motorized recreation on BLM lands, along with industries' needs for motorized access, support for a slate of management actions that will ensure continued motorized use in the field office.
- Recognizing the historical and current importance of livestock in the region, support for management actions that ensure continued grazing, predator management, and invasive species control.
- Consensus-based recommendations for protecting key cultural features and natural resources using the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) management tool in a few limited areas of the field office.

Because the task force needed to finalize its recommendation before the end of the public comment period on January 17, 2024, the collaborative process was greatly accelerated and the task force did not address every issue that they deemed important. Instead, they focused on areas where they were most likely to all come to agreement. Additionally, while many more topics were deliberated on, the constrained time frame and high bar for consensus meant some items did not make the final report.

Despite the time limitations, the task force worked quickly to build trust, familiarize themselves with the draft RMP, and find common sense solutions that met their various needs and reflected the will of the public.

At the end of the final meeting, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordan and BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning came to Rock Springs to talk with the task force, hear about the process and recommendations, and thank task force members for their time, effort, and commitment to a collaborative process.



Background

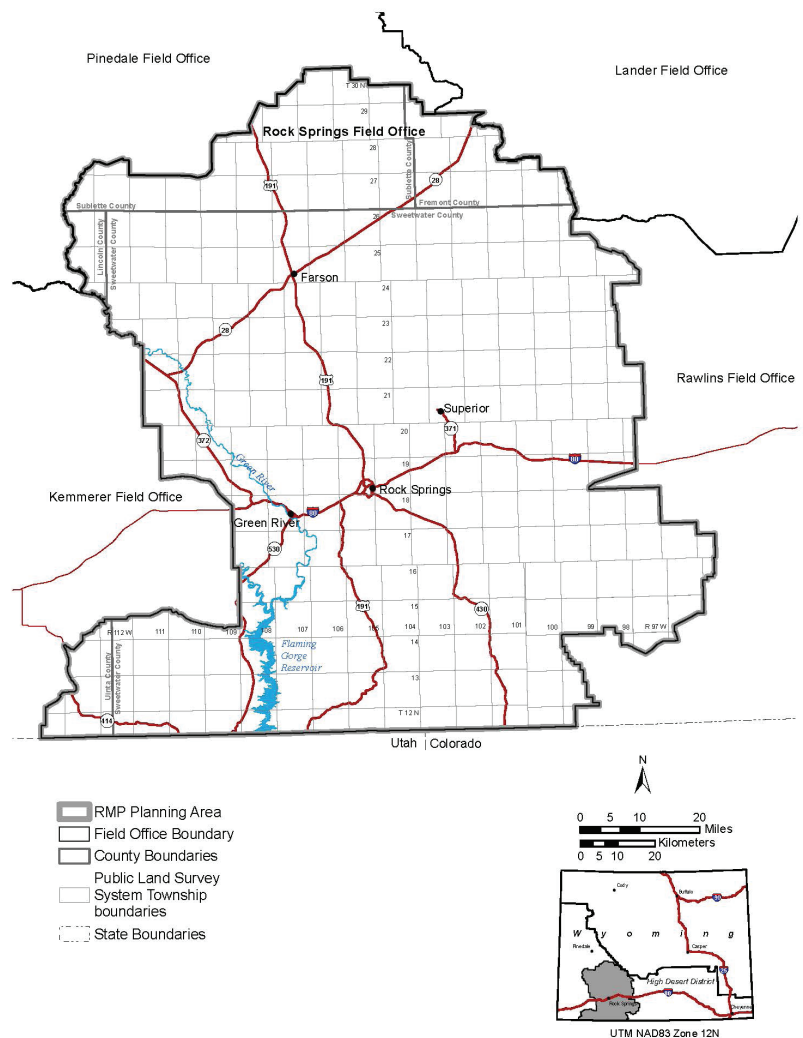
In 2011, the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Rock Springs Field Office initiated a revision of its Resource Management Plan, the guiding document for land use planning. In 2023, BLM released its Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), selecting Alternative B as the preferred alternative. The draft RMP says that Alternative B “emphasizes conservation of resource values with constraints on resource use” (ES-3, Draft RMP).

To inform his negotiations with the BLM to ensure the final RMP will meet the needs of Wyoming stakeholders, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon assembled a task force representing diverse interests and charged it with developing consensus recommendations for revising the Draft RMP. He asked the University of Wyoming (UW), including representatives from the Ruckelshaus Institute, the School of Energy Resources, the College of Law, and the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources, to facilitate the task force meetings.

In addition, the UW team, in collaboration with the governor’s office and the Wyoming County Commissioners Association, facilitated four interactive public workshops. The results of these workshops informed task force deliberations.

Rock Springs Field Office

The planning area includes 3.6 million acres of surface land and 3.7 million acres of mineral estate in portions of Lincoln, Sweetwater, Uinta, Sublette, and Fremont counties in southwest Wyoming. Map 1-1 from the Rock Spring draft RMP (below) depicts the planning area. The communities of Rock Springs and Green River lie near the center of the field office, with industries supported by mining, oil and gas, livestock grazing, tourism, and recreation. The arid landscape is a corridor for migrating wildlife, a historic corridor for migrating humans, and a current home to humans and animals alike. It is also the ancestral homeland and migratory territory for many Tribal Nations who maintain continued use and connection to this landscape.



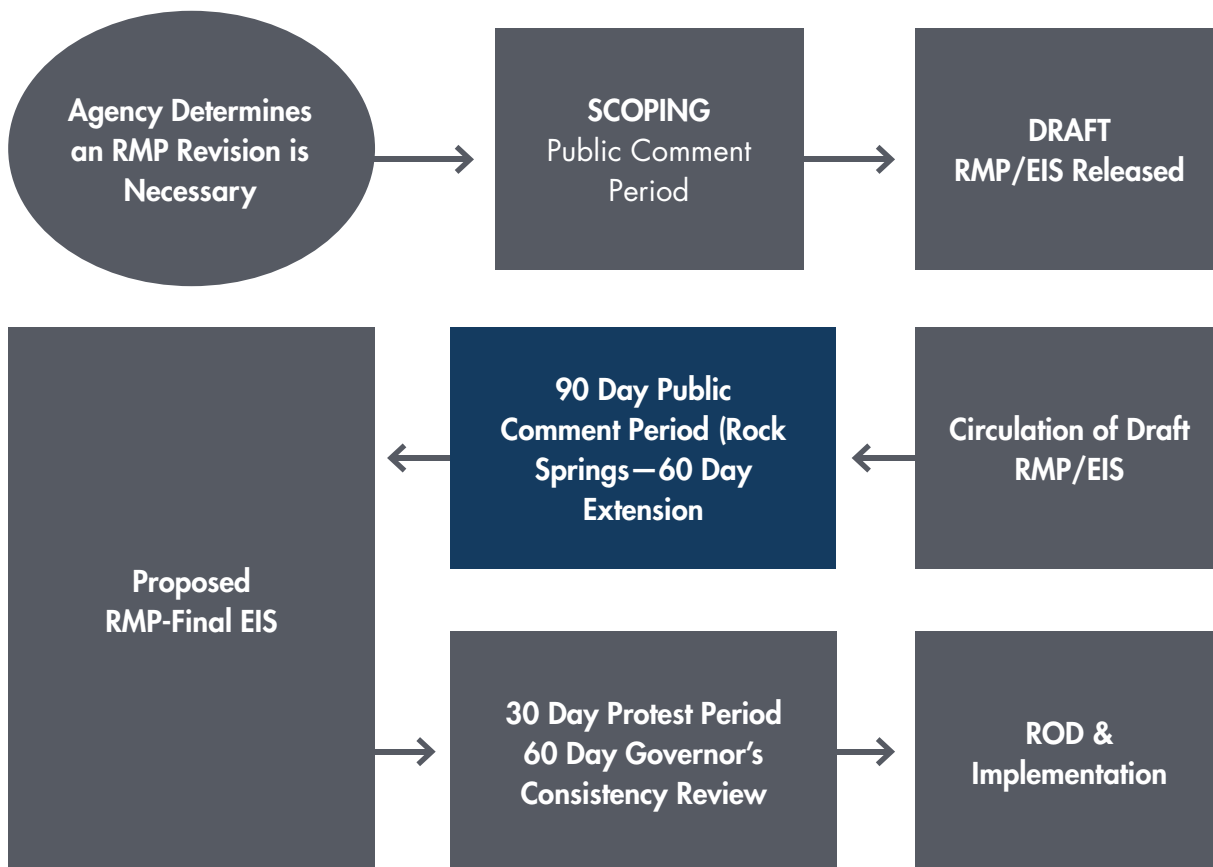
Resource Management Plan process

Congress, through the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), has directed that BLM lands be managed for multiple use and sustained yield through land use planning with public involvement (43 U.S.C. § 1712). An RMP accomplishes this required land use planning by setting goals and objectives to guide future land and resource management actions.

Because an RMP is a “major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment,” the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that BLM develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) simultaneously with the RMP. The NEPA process, described below, guides the public engagement process.

The task force completed its activities during the extended public comment period for the draft RMP (shown in blue in the RMP process diagram below). Dates and documents for each step in the process BLM has completed are available on the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan NEPA page: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/13853/510>.

RMP PROCESS



1. *Agency determines an RMP revision is necessary*—
Planning process began 2/1/2011.

- a. “The need for revising the Green River RMP (1997) is the result of considerable changes within the planning area since completion of the existing Green River RMP. Current amendments and routine maintenance actions are no longer adequate to address these changes. Since the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Green River RMP was signed in 1997, new data has become available, new policies established, and old policies revised. Additionally, completion of multiple maintenance actions for the Green River RMP, along with multiple RMP amendments, and RODs for programmatic EIS documents are needed to be incorporated into the updated RMP” (ES-2, Draft RMP).



2. *Scoping*—Final scoping report released 1/5/2012

- a. The BLM’s land-use planning process begins with a formal public scoping process to identify planning issues that should be considered in the land management plan.

3. *Draft RMP/EIS*—Draft RMP/EIS released 8/17/2023

- a. The BLM develops a range of alternatives in a draft RMP and draft EIS. BLM regulations require the identification of a preferred alternative (43 CFR 1610.4-7).

4. *90 day public comment period*—Originally ending 11/16/2023, the BLM extended the public comment period by 60 days to 1/17/2024.

- a. The public can submit comments on the draft. The BLM is statutorily required to respond to all substantive comments. The response can be in the form of changes to the final RMP/EIS, factual corrections, modifications to the analysis or the alternatives, new alternatives considered, or an explanation of why a comment does not require the agency’s response (40 CFR 1503.4). Commenting is not a form of voting; BLM can respond to similar comments collectively. More information on commenting at uwyo.edu/rmp.

5. *Proposed RMP and final EIS*

- a. Once comments have been reviewed and evaluated, BLM revises the draft plan as appropriate, then releases a proposed RMP and final EIS.

6. *Protest Period and Consistency Review*

- a. Next begins a 30-day protest period for any person who previously participated in the planning process and has an interest that is, or may be, adversely affected by the proposed plan. At the same time, the BLM provides the proposed RMP and final EIS to the governors of those states included in the RMP for a 60-day review period to identify any inconsistencies that may exist with state and local plans.

7. *Record of Decision*

- a. After inconsistencies and protests have been considered, the BLM State Director may approve the final RMP. This is a final agency action. Only at this point can legal challenges be pursued.

Public Participation

The public had several opportunities to contribute to the task force process and the eventual formation of this document.

First, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon asked the University of Wyoming to organize a series of interactive public workshops on the Rock Springs RMP. Four workshops took place November 17-18, 2023—two in Rock Springs, one in Green River, and one in Farson. Total participation across the workshops was approximately 300. The workshops were non-exclusive; individuals were welcome to attend more than one of the four workshops, and many did. In each workshop, participants had a chance to express their perspectives, and hear others' views, in response to the following prompts: 1) What about these lands is important to you? 2) If you were writing the RMP, what would you prioritize to support the things that are important to you? 3) What advice would you give the task force for how to balance multiple priorities?



Many task force members attended these workshops to listen to the public's concerns. The Ruckelshaus Institute team also prepared a full report of perspectives shared during the workshops, which they provided to all task force members and presented key findings from during the first task force meeting. This report and the raw notes from the workshops are available online at uwyo.edu/rmp.

Second, task force members provided their contact information on the task force website and encouraged the public to reach out. The task force charter instructed task force members to “engage in active communication with constituents about actions and outcomes of the task force,” “invite proposals from their constituents that they will bring to the task force,” and “provide proposals from the task force to their constituents for feedback and input.”

Third, the Ruckelshaus Institute provided a portal on the task force website where anyone could submit input to the taskforce for the duration of the process. Four comments were submitted through this portal and were forwarded to task force members.

The Task Force

Purpose

The Governor’s Task Force on the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan, representing multiple Wyoming interests, was formed to cooperatively develop recommendations for responsible and durable management of the BLM Rock Springs Field Office in southwest Wyoming. It will accomplish this through mutual education; transparency in process; fostering communication between interests; and identifying, evaluating, and recommending options that will balance the needs of the many stakeholders involved.

Membership

Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon assembled the task force to broadly represent the following organizations and interest groups: conservation, economic development and tourism, livestock, local government, mining, motorized access, oil and gas, renewable energy and utilities, sportsmen and hunting, and the public at large, through the Wyoming House of Representatives and the Wyoming Senate. Each interest group was represented by one voting member on the task force.

The governor, in consultation with voting members, also invited up to three “advisors” per interest group to attend the meetings and provide counsel to the voting members. Advisors did not have the ability to vote.

The chair, a non-voting member, led the task force through meetings, worked with the Ruckelshaus Institute to provide input and direction throughout the process, and communicated with the governor’s office when necessary.

Chair: Joel Bousman

Voting Members and Advisors:

Wyoming Senate: Ogden Driskill (President of the Wyoming State Senate, Senate District 01)

- John Kolb (Wyoming State Senator, District 12)



- Stacy Jones (Wyoming State Senate, District 13)
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- Craig Thompson (Landowner)
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Meetings and attendance

The task force met in person four days, with five Zoom check-ins, between November 15, 2023, and January 9th, 2024. Table 1 summarizes the dates, times, and major focus areas of each meeting; additional information on the content of meetings appears in the following section.

Members of the University of Wyoming’s Ruckelshaus Institute, School of Energy Resources, College of Law, and College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources worked together with the governor’s office and the task force chair to plan and facilitate the task force meetings and record task force recommendations.

The task force charter, adopted unanimously at the first in-person meeting, outlines the roles and responsibilities of the chair, voting members, advisors, and facilitators. The charter is publicly available at uwyo.edu/rmp.

In addition to the above participants, BLM representatives attended each meeting to provide clarifications, definitions, maps, and other resources as requested. Wyoming Game and Fish and other state agency representatives were also available for consultation, as well as the Wyoming County Commissioners Association. No other parties were invited to join the meetings.

Date	Time	Venue	Focus	Voting Member Alternates
November 15, 2023	5-6pm	Zoom	Purpose Public workshops	
November 21, 2023	12:30-2:20pm	Zoom	Charter Meeting schedule	
December 1, 2023	4-5pm	Zoom	Advisors	
December 11, 2023	8am-5pm	In-person	Introductions, overview Management action table	John Kolb for Ogden Driskill

December 20, 2023	8am-5pm	In-person	Special designations Agreements in principle	John Kolb for Ogden Driskill Pete Obermueller for Colin McKee
December 27, 2023	8:30-10:30am	Zoom	Agreements in principle	
January 4, 2024	8am-5pm	In-person	Agreements in principle Special designations Management action table	
January 5, 2024	8am-5pm	In-person	Agreements in principle Management action table Final report	
January 9, 2024	3:30-4:30pm	Zoom	Final report	

Process

Prior to the first in-person meeting, the facilitators conducted interviews with each voting member and their team of advisors. The interviews were meant to reveal key issues, potential areas of agreement, and likely points of conflict. The interviews also explored attitudes and expectations about the task force process.

Using this information—including concerns that the task force recommendations would be too high-level to impact BLM’s decision making—the facilitation team decided to use Table 2-1: Resource Management Plan Alternatives as the structure for working through the RMP. The table contains BLM’s proposed management actions for each alternative in the following categories: physical resources, minerals, fire and fuels management, biological resources, heritage and visual resources, land resources, special designations, and socioeconomic resources.



Prior to meetings, task force members and their advisors considered each management action for two things: how important it was to discuss with the task force and which alternative was closest to what they would like to see in a final RMP. They recorded their importance ranking (0-3) and preference (A, B, C, or D) on a spreadsheet and submitted it to the facilitation team. A ranking of “0” meant that the management action was not important enough for the task force to discuss in its limited time. A “1” meant that it was somewhat important, but the task force could skip it. A “2” indicated that the management action was important and should be discussed if there was time. Finally, a “3” meant that the action was essential for the task force to discuss.

Task force members also developed a set of interest statements that described what was most important to them. Interests are different from positions in that positions are explicit statements or demands made by parties during negotiations, whereas interests are the underlying factors that lead to those positions. A key principle of interest-based negotiation is that negotiators are best able to identify common ground, create value, and reach mutually beneficial agreements when they explore and uncover the interests of all parties involved. Generating interest statements prepared task force members to use them as the criteria for evaluating proposals offered by other task force members during deliberations.

During meetings, the facilitators focused on management actions that any voting member had rated a 3 in their management action prioritization exercise. For each action, the task force member who had rated it highest explained why it was important to them and why they preferred the alternative they had selected. Beginning with others who had ranked the action highly, the rest of the task force had a chance to discuss, ask questions of each other and the BLM, and provide their perspectives. Once all questions were satisfied, a task force member would offer a proposal for the task force to vote on.

The task force operated on consensus voting, where members rated a proposal between 1 (agreement) and 5 (blocking the proposal). If a proposal received votes of 1, 2, 3, it became a *consensus recommendation*. If it received votes of 1, 2, 3, and 4 it became a *consensus with reservation recommendation*. If any member voted a 5, *no consensus* was reached.

Types of proposals considered:

- Indication of which alternative is preferred across the range of alternatives in any given management action in Table 2-1.
 - For example, an indication that the language in Alternative A is the task force's recommendation for inclusion in the final RMP.
- Recommendation for improved clarity and specificity on any given management action.
 - For example, a suggestion to add language indicating coordination will occur with State of Wyoming regulatory agencies.
- Combination of language from multiple alternatives.
 - For example, a recommendation to combine language from Alternative A and Alternative D.
- Suggestions for adjustments in management actions within the range of analysis.
 - For example, a suggestion to adjust the boundary of a special designation.

The University of Wyoming team recorded a vote tally and either the preferred alternative or—if consensus was that none of the alternatives were acceptable—new language for the management action. The new language was displayed on the screen for all task force members to see and approve. The UW team also took notes about why the management action was important and the justification for the task force's recommendation. This information is provided in the task force recommendations table and was approved by the task force. The task force did not have time to address every action that a member had rated a "3."

Not all management actions could be addressed in this way, one-by-one. In particular, the special designations were interdependent with other management actions, for example mineral withdrawals and visual resource management. Additionally, the task force indicated that consensus would be easier to achieve if they could make area-specific agreements rather than voting on management actions that applied across the field office.

Because of this, the facilitators asked the task force to consider special designations more broadly (i.e., what kinds of management would they like to see where) in each of the following geographic areas: Greater Little Mountain; Adobe Town; west of Flaming Gorge; the northern Red Desert, including Steamboat Mountain, Killpecker Sand Dunes, Oregon Buttes, South Pass, etc; the Big Sandy Foothills, including the Golden Triangle; and National Historic Trails west of 191.

Over the course of several meetings, these geographically-specific conversations yielded several consensus recommendations, for example in the Greater Little Mountain Area, the checkerboard, the Known Sodium Leasing Area, and some of the smaller special designations like the Boars Tusk.

The task force endeavored to offer these kinds of specific recommendations as much as possible, because they would be most useful to the BLM in the RMP revision. However, they also chose to propose and vote on agreements in principle, which outlined general values and goals they would want to guide the RMP revision.

Through these agreements in principle, the task force was able to make statements about their shared interests to supplement the specific recommendations. These statements provide additional value to the management actions table by clarifying their intentions, commenting on aspects of the process or specific geographies that wouldn't otherwise be captured in the management actions, offering management prescriptions that didn't require a comprehensive understanding of all the applicable actions, and more. The agreements also allowed the task force to demonstrate consensus around shared values, even when consensus on specific implementation was difficult to achieve.

Overall, the task force focused their effort and time on areas where they were likely to find consensus, meaning all members of the task force supported a proposal. Often, if task force members had determined outside of the meetings that they would be unable to find common ground on an issue, the task force passed over the issue rather than put it up for discussion and voting. The chair, the governor's office, and the facilitation team encouraged task force members to use their personal or organization's comments to the BLM and input to the governor as the place for fully developing an individual stance on the draft RMP.

The governor commends the task force on their dedication to responsibly stewarding the land, their willingness to invest significant time and attention into a highly compressed collaborative process occurring over three holidays, and their commitment to working respectfully and productively with a diverse range of interests, the Wyoming way.

At the end of the final meeting, Wyoming Governor Mark Gordan and BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning came to Rock Springs to talk with the task force, hear about the process and recommendations, and thank task force members for their time, effort, and commitment to a collaborative process.



Task Force Recommendations

Defining consensus

The following recommendations are based on consensus voting. The task force charter states that “consensus is the decision rule that allows collaborative process to work. It is a way for more than two people to reach agreement.

Consensus prevents domination by the majority, allows building of trust and the sharing of information, especially under conditions of conflict. Consensus does not mean that everyone will be equally happy with the decision, but all do accept that the decision is the best that can be made at the time with the people involved.”

During the voting stage, task force members indicated their concurrence on a specific proposal using a five-point scale:

1. Endorsement
2. Endorsement with minor point of contention
3. Agreement with minor reservation
4. Stand aside with major reservations
5. Block

The levels of consensus recorded are:

Consensus: All voting members present rated the proposal as a 1, 2, or 3.

Consensus with reservations: All voting members present rated the proposal as a 1, 2, or 3, except at least one member rated it as a 4.

No consensus: At least one voting member present rated the proposal as a 5.



Topics not discussed

Due to the complexity of the RMP, the substantial number of management actions, and the limited time the task force had before the public comment period ended, many topics were not discussed. A topic's absence in this document should not be construed as a lack of importance. Nor does it indicate a tacit acceptance of the BLM's preferred alternative (Alternative B) or the no-action alternative (Alternative A). Additionally, while many more topics were deliberated on, the constrained time frame and high bar for consensus meant some items did not make the final report.

Agreements in principle

The task force offers the following agreements in principle as a demonstration of the values and goals that shaped their decision making throughout the process, as well as a guide for the BLM to use throughout the RMP revision. They should offer clarity if the intent of any other recommendation is unclear and guidance on management actions not specifically addressed. If associated management actions are listed, they should not be considered exhaustive of the relevant management actions. These recommendations come with full consensus from the task force.

1. The task force believes that current use, industrial development, recreation, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, and open spaces within the BLM's Rock Springs field office should be managed to provide a balance of our natural resources and a vibrant economy for southwest Wyoming.
2. The task force recognizes the economic, cultural, and biological value of healthy and abundant wildlife populations. Accordingly, the Rock Springs Field Office should implement management actions that support thriving and diverse wildlife populations and, where necessary, support the restoration of native habitat (see consensus management actions 0002, 0006, 0009, 0013 and 1113 in the recommendations section).
3. The Task Force supports Wyoming's collaborative efforts to conserve and maintain permeability of big game migration corridors. The BLM recognition of, support for, and management of migration corridors should be based on the management prescriptions within Wyoming's 2020-2 executive order and coordinate with the State of Wyoming's wildlife agency (the Wyoming Game and Fish Department). Adaptive management shall be utilized to solicit and include current science for these vital habitats.
4. Across all areas of the Rock Springs Field Office, continue all currently permitted livestock grazing and authorized annual use consistent with Wyoming Land Health Standards (see consensus management actions 4103, 4111, 4211, 4420, 6404, 6411, and 6416 in the recommendations section).
5. Place no restrictions on current authorities to authorize new range improvements, maintain existing improvements, and conduct predator control activities to protect livestock (see consensus management actions 4103, 4111, 4211, 4420, 6404, 6411, and 6416 in the recommendations section).
6. No new exclusions or avoidance for fluid mineral development and rights of ways in areas operating under existing and approved record of decision.
7. There is great concern by the Task Force with the footprint that comes from large-scale wind and solar utility projects on public lands. Concerns include obstructed viewshed, habitat fragmentation, loss of habitat, loss of acres for other uses, loss of access, and the inability to manage for the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act.
8. No management action should result in the blanket exclusion or avoidance of the responsible leasing and development of sodium minerals (trona/soda ash) within the Known Sodium Leasing Area (KSLA), including management actions that deal with rights-of-way, trails, water, air, wildlife, and raptors.
9. The public lands within the Rock Springs Field Office should be managed to promote the responsible development of infrastructure supporting sodium minerals (trona/soda ash) industries within the KSLA. The task force has found consensus that the management actions within the KSLA should:
 - a. Protect wetlands and riparian areas within the KSLA while considering, on a case-by-case basis, linear crossing, surface disturbing activities, and new permanent facilities proposed for placement within riparian areas or wetlands and 100-year floodplains or adjacent to the inner gorge of large ephemeral drainages. See e.g., Management Action 1313.
 - b. Protect big game seasonal areas within the KSLA as identified by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department while allowing for exceptions to be considered on a case-by-case basis if impacts can be mitigated in accordance with exception criteria in Appendix B. See e.g., Management Action 4421.

- c. Protect active raptor nests within the KSLA as warranted on a case-by-case basis determined by conditions on the ground. Reference to historic nests should be removed. See e.g., Management Actions 4428, 4430, and 4431.
 - d. Maintain current visual resource management (VRM) designations within the KSLA. See e.g., Management Action 5400.
 - e. Except for defined, existing exclusion and avoidance areas, allow for the consideration of granting rights-of-way within the KSLA. Do not designate new exclusion or avoidance areas that conflict with responsible mineral development in the KSLA. See e.g., Management Action 6201.
 - f. For National Historic and Scenic Trails within the KSLA, avoid surface disturbing activities within 1/4 mile of any contributing NHT segment if it would be visible from the trail; subject the area beyond 1/4 mile from the NHTs to standard NHPA and BLM/SHPO Protocol measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate effects to NHTs; allow NHT crossings by rights-of-way in areas where trail ruts have been modified by modern uses, where previous crossings exist, or where new corridor crossings would not damage trail remains. The BLM and SHPO have agreed that the setting of the NHT in the KSLA has been compromised by existing development. See e.g., Management Actions 7002, 7003, 7004, 7017, and 7021.
10. Uphold the continued ability of local communities and visitors to use and enjoy the outstanding wildlife and ecological values of landscapes within the Rock Springs Field Office, by supporting healthy wildlife, aquatic, and plant communities through conservation of the intact ecosystems, landscapes, and water sources they rely on.
 11. The task force recognizes the important value of the Greater Little Mountain Area, a crown jewel in southwest Wyoming; therefore, we support management actions that conserve the area's hunting, fishing, and recreational opportunities while maintaining the multiple-use mandate.
 12. The task force recognizes that the Northern Red Desert (Jack Morrow Hills and South Pass Area) is of national and local economic and cultural significance, rich with the history, scenic beauty and wildlife of the American West and Indigenous cultural use. It is a rugged and remote landscape that offers opportunity for many uses. We support BLM management actions that conserve the area's wildlife, tourism, motorized and non-motorized access, recreation, cultural, grazing, historic and wild land values while meeting its multiple use and sustained yield mandate.
 13. The task force recognizes that the Big Sandy Foothills (i.e., Wind River Front, Golden Triangle) area is regionally significant for its wildlife habitats, historic sites, recreational opportunities, and unparalleled views. The Foothills are a largely natural area that support migrating and wintering big game, the highest concentration of Greater Sage-grouse in the West, are crossed by the Oregon-California-Mormon emigrant trails, and which serve as a gateway to the Wind River Mountains. We support BLM management actions that conserve the area's local economic, wildlife, tourism, motorized and non-motorized access, recreation, cultural, grazing, historic and wild land values while meeting its multiple use and sustained yield mandate.
 14. Understanding that Visual Resource Management mapping is a direct result of the special designation and management areas within each alternative, it is difficult to take a position on VRMs without taking a position on the underlying special designations, and particularly the areas of critical environmental concern. The task force recognizes that identifying a given management action within the VRM alternatives would remain unresolved without being able to specifically reference and agree upon each corresponding designation as referenced.
 - a. Within the checkerboard, the Task Force supports removing VRM class II designation where it is driven solely by the visual resource inventory (Draft RMP Map 3-16).
 15. The Task Force recognizes the importance that rights-of-way play on public lands. The designation of allowance, avoidance and exclusion have direct effects to every acre within the RSFO—public, state and private. The BLM should strive for the appropriate balance in rights-of-way designations to achieve an outcome which allows for

continued economic development activities within the field office upon which the communities rely, while also recognizing the role these designations contribute to resident's fulfillment while recreating, hunting, fishing, exploring and all the other multiple uses these varied lands offer.

16. With the exception of the 1850 Cherokee Trail, which is currently being studied by the National Park Service for eligibility as a national historic trail, eligible but not designated trails within the checkerboard should have no rights of way exclusion and retain a one quarter mile protective set back on either side of contributing sections of trails. Those eligible but not designated trails include but are not limited to 1849 Cherokee Trail, Overland Trail, Point of Rocks to South Pass Road, and other expansion era roads and trails.
17. Under the Act of Admission to the union, the Federal Government endowed the State of Wyoming with state trust lands for the purposes expressed therein including to support public schools and institutions. Wyoming has a Constitutional responsibility to generate revenue for its public school system and other institutions by encouraging productive uses on state trust lands. These lands are very often encompassed by federal and private lands and require access through those lands in order to be utilized. The BLM must respect this charge given to the state by its citizens and ensure that no actions taken within this RMP impede the state's ability to fund public education and other institutions. This is the highest form of the BLM's responsibility to defer to state policies.
18. Without impacting existing seasonal closures for wildlife, continued use of, and access to, all currently existing roads, trails, and open ride areas based on available mapping and satellite imagery to include OSV and the Continental Divide snowmobile trail.
19. Include in-depth public and state agency involvement in any future planning processes that will have an impact on the existing road and trail system routes in order to create and manage a trail system. Utilize partnerships to assist with the management and maintenance expenses of all road and trail systems.
20. The task force supports responsible recreational use across the field office. Motorized and non-motorized access should be continued for both dispersed and developed recreation. We request that the field office invest more staffing and funding resources to support recreational use, wise management, monitoring, and mitigation as needed to address appropriate areas for expanded or concentrated use, necessary infrastructure improvements, and areas that need special protections. These efforts are necessary for both conservation special areas and special recreational places. The agency should work with local stakeholders, including state and local governments, to develop place-based plans that can address recreational needs while maintaining traditional uses within the Field Office area.
21. The task force does not support any special management area designations within the checkerboard except for existing Cedar Canyon and Natural Corrals, and Special Status Plant Species ACEC. The task force does recognize the importance of wildlife migration and winter range within the checkerboard.
22. The majority of the task force has grave concerns about the adoption of new or expanded ACECs in Alternative B, because of the potential negative impacts these ACECs could have on the economy, customs, and culture in SW Wyoming. The task force did not have time to develop nuanced approaches to the management in these proposed ACECs or propose different management designations.
23. The BLM has not meaningfully met with cooperating agencies in over two years. The task force requests that the BLM reengage with the Rock Springs RMP cooperating agencies and hold regular meetings between draft and the completion of the Record of Decision.
24. Time was a limiting factor in the group's ability to develop recommendations. The task force had a total of 45 days, over three holidays, to review the entire Draft Rock Springs RMP and develop negotiated recommendations. With more time, the task force is confident it would have been able to develop additional recommendations.

Management actions—Consensus

The following recommendations were made by consensus, meaning that voting members rated the proposal as a 1, 2, or 3.

The starred recommendations were made by tacit agreement, meaning that in the management action prioritization exercise, all voting members submitted the same preferred alternative. These recommendations were not discussed during the meetings, but task force members approved them with the final report.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
0002	All alternatives are the same	Manage public lands for compliance with all applicable tribal, federal, and state laws, standards, and implementation plans; and with BLM policies and regulations. Manage public lands to support valid and existing rights.	<p>This management action ensures the RSFO will continue to manage public lands to support valid and existing rights, and obligations important to the task force.</p> <p>This also supports agreement in principle #2 because managing public lands in compliance with all applicable tribal, federal and state laws and policies, for example WGFD wildlife policies, will support healthy and abundant wildlife populations.</p>
0006	All alternatives are the same	Consult, coordinate, and collaborate with all appropriate tribes and federal, state, and local governments and agencies regarding land management decisions and actions.	This supports agreements in principle #2, #3, and #23. The task force encourages the BLM to continue consultation, coordination, and collaboration with all appropriate tribal, federal, state, and local government agencies.
0009	All alternatives are the same	Participate in all Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) for the control of pests, air quality monitoring, habitat monitoring, etc.	This supports agreement in principle #2. Habitat monitoring is an essential component of maintaining quality habitat to support healthy and abundant wildlife populations.
0013	All alternatives are the same	In accordance with CEQ regulations (CFR 1508.20) the hierarchy for mitigation of impacts will be: (1) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (2) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation; (3) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; (4) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action; (5) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.	This supports agreement in principle #2. Mitigating impacts and restoring affected environments helps maintain quality habitat to support healthy and abundant wildlife populations.
1010	Alternative A	Surface disturbing activities will be managed to prevent violation of air quality regulations.	It is unclear under Alternative B whether the “implementation of mitigation measures within BLM’s authority to reduce air quality impacts” would be done in coordination with WDEQ. Alternative A is preferred because it is a continuation of existing practices which includes coordination with the WDEQ – ensuring preservation of state primacy over air quality.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
1011	Alternative A	Special requirements (e.g., use authorization stipulations, mitigation measures, conditions of approval, etc.) to alleviate air quality impacts will be identified on a case-by-case basis and included in use authorizations (including mineral leases).	See justification for linked Management Action 1010.
1012	Alternative B with amended/ additional text	Conduct conformity analyses and determinations for BLM actions in accordance with the Clean Air Act for all proposed projects located within designated non-attainment areas.	The task force would like to add language to Alternative B to clarify state primacy over air quality. Revised management action with additional language in red: <i>BLM shall work cooperatively with WY Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Division</i> to conduct conformity analysis and determinations for BLM action in accordance with the Clean Air Act for all proposed projects located within designated non-attainment areas.
1013	Alternative B with amended/ additional text	Determine, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Rock Springs Air Resources Management Plan, the level of air analysis, including air quality modeling, necessary to determine potential air quality impacts from proposed actions and subsequent potential mitigation strategies for all project level EISs and Environmental Assessments.	The task force would like to add language to Alternative B to clarify state primacy. Revised management action with additional language in red: <i>BLM shall work cooperatively with WY Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Division</i> to determine, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Rock Springs Air Resources Management Plan, the level of air analysis, including air quality modeling, necessary to determine potential air quality impacts from proposed actions and subsequent potential mitigation strategies for all project level EISs and Environmental Assessments.
1014	Alternative B with amended/ additional text	Determine, on a case-by-case basis, the need for quantitative air quality analyses (including modeling) to assess the potential air quality impacts and/or the effectiveness of mitigation strategies of proposed actions. Make determination in consultation with state, local, federal, and tribal agencies.	The task force would like to add language to Alternative B to clarify state primacy over air quality. Revised management action with additional language in red: <i>BLM shall work cooperatively with WY Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Division</i> to determine, on a case-by-case basis, the need for quantitative air quality analyses (including modeling) to assess the potential air quality impacts and/or the effectiveness of mitigation strategies of proposed actions. Make determination in consultation with state, local, federal, and tribal agencies.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
1015	Alternative B with amended/ additional text	Support a quantitative air quality analysis to ensure the protection of air quality when impacts from the sum of BLM-authorized projects in the planning area approach a level of concern as determined in consultation with state, local, federal, and tribal agencies.	<p>The task force would like to add language to Alternative B to clarify state primacy over air quality.</p> <p>Revised management action with additional language in red: <i>BLM shall work cooperatively with WY Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Division</i> to support a quantitative air quality analysis to ensure the protection of air quality when impacts from the sum of BLM-authorized projects in the planning area approach a level of concern as determined in consultation with state, local, federal, and tribal agencies.</p>
1017	Alternative A	Coordination with local and state agencies to control dust on unimproved dirt roads will occur where necessary.	Alternative A is preferred because the language in Alternative B stating the BLM will “[r]equire dust abatement measures for all BLM authorized actives” is unclear and too broad of a statement. Alternative A is preferred because it includes a statement on coordination with local and state agencies and specificity that dust abatement will occur on unimproved dirt roads.
1106, 1107, 1108	Alternative A from management action 1107 with amended/ additional text	Areas where the soils are highly erodible or difficult to reclaim would receive increased attention and are avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities. Surface disturbing activities could be allowed in these areas if site- specific analysis determines that soil degradation would not occur, and that water quality would not be adversely affected. When applicable, an erosion control plan would be prepared as part of the site-specific analysis process for activity and implementation planning. Rehabilitation plans would be developed and implemented for disturbed areas, as needed.	<p>To achieve consistency across jurisdictions, particularly in the checkerboard, the task force suggests the BLM use the text from Management action 1107 in the final RMP with the additional text included in red for Management action 1106, 1107 and 1108:</p> <p>Areas where the soils are highly erodible or difficult to reclaim would receive increased attention and are avoidance areas for surface disturbing activities. Surface disturbing activities could be allowed in these areas if site-specific analysis determines that soil degradation would not occur, and that water quality would not be adversely affected. When applicable, an erosion control plan would be prepared as part of the site-specific analysis process for activity and implementation planning. Rehabilitation plans would be developed and implemented for disturbed areas, as needed. <i>For mining activities with a mine permit issued by WDEQ-LQD, follow the soil handling and reclamation plan for hard to reclaim soils as outlined in the state mine permit.</i></p>

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
1109	Alternative D with amended/ additional text	Apply, on a case-by-case basis, photo-point monitoring of channel crossings, culverts, borrow ditch outlets, and surface disturbance.	<p>The task force requests inclusion of additional language to Alternative D, drawn from Alternative B. This inclusion ensures that photo-point monitoring is applied only on disturbances greater than ½ an acre, and only on a case-by-case basis. Alternative D with revised text is preferred because Alternative B requires the broad application of photo-point monitoring regardless of nuanced circumstances. Alternative D, with revised text, created greater flexibility for the BLM as to when to require photo-point monitoring.</p> <p>Revised management action with additional language in red: <i>For surface disturbances greater than ½ acre,</i> apply, on a case-by-case basis, photo-point monitoring of channel crossings, culverts, borrow ditch outlets, and surface disturbance.</p>
1114	Alternative D	Implement practices, on a case-by-case basis, as needed to protect groundwater, vulnerable aquifers, and prevent soil contamination (Appendix A).	Alternative D is preferred because of its case-by-case approach and its link to Appendix A (Project Design Features and Best Management Practices). Alternative B is not preferred because it includes additional requirements/restrictions beyond Appendix A that have not been justified by the BLM.
1115	Alternative A	No similar action	Alternative A is preferred over Alternative D because the language in Alternative D is already a requirement and doesn't need to be restated in the RMP (and isn't included in Alternatives A, B, and C).
1116	Alternative A	The natural values of Boars Tusk, Pilot Butte, and Emmons Cone would be protected. Surface occupancy and surface disturbing activities are prohibited in these areas unless such activity would enhance management of these geologic features. Interpretive facilities would be allowed.	The BLM owns the surface, but not the mineral estate. Alternative A was selected because it is a continuation of current practice, and the task force did not see a need to adjust the current management regime for these areas.
1301	All alternatives are the same	Areas may be considered for acquisition under a willing seller/willing buyer situation to enhance BLM management of watershed resources. The BLM would not use powers of condemnation to acquire lands (Appendix K).	The task force expressed support for this statement as it emphasizes willing buyer/willing seller and restricts the use of condemnation.
1302	Alternative D	Design land uses and surface disturbing activities to reduce erosion and to maintain or improve water quality. Direct management in wetland and riparian areas toward meeting or making progress toward Wyoming Land Health Standards as a minimum.	Alternative D is preferred because it broadly references the Wyoming Land Health Standards. Alternatives A and B do not reference the Wyoming Land Health Standards, and Alternative C includes a narrow reference. Alternative D is preferred because of its broad reference/inclusion of the Wyoming Land Health Standards.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
1303	Alternative A	<p>Management in the planning area would emphasize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of sediment, phosphate, and salinity load in drainages where possible. Measures listed in Appendix A would be applied, as necessary. Guidelines described in the Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations would also be applied, as necessary (Wyoming 1989). • Maintaining and improving drainage channel stability. • Restoring damaged wetland areas. • Exclosures would be designed to allow ample water for livestock and allow minimum impediments to big game migration. 	<p>Alternative A specifically references the Wyoming Water Quality Rules and Regulations ensuring consistency with Wyoming regulations and maintenance of primacy over water quality. Alternative A also requires that exclosures be designed for “ample water flow for livestock and allow minimum impediments to big game” language supported by the task force.</p>
1305	Alternative D	<p>Participate with federal, state, and local government agencies, affected landowners and the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum when developing and implementing salinity control measures, water quality improvement plans, salinity control plans, and TMDLs.</p>	<p>Alternative D is preferred because during discussions the BLM indicated this is their current practice across the field office.</p>
1308	Alternative D	<p>No similar action</p>	<p>Alternative D ensures consistency across jurisdictions by not adding additional BLM requirements on top of what the DEQ already requires.</p>
1309	Alternative D	<p>Prepare, on a case-by-case basis, site-specific activity and implementation plans to reduce erosion and sediment yield, promote ground cover, and enhance water quality. Activity and implementation plans could include general or specific watershed management terms and BMPs and incorporate sediment reduction, water retention, and water quality improvement objectives. Consider all existing locally developed watershed plans as new activity and implementation plans are developed.</p>	<p>Alternative D is preferred because it provides for evaluations on a case-by-case basis whereas the other alternatives do not. It was noted during discussions that industry is already required to do these things in their mine permits and pollution prevention plans.</p>

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
1317	Alternative D with amended/ additional text	<p>Manage activities in aquifer recharge areas to protect groundwater quality and quantity to ensure continued function. Manage activities in aquifer recharge areas to maintain, at a minimum, recharge volume and groundwater quality by limiting road density, chemical use and storage, and surface occupancy to maintain a healthy recharge area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSU for fluid minerals. Apply the above actions to identified and mapped recharge areas. 	To recognize the primacy of the State of Wyoming on water quality and quantity, the task force requests the following language to Alternative D: <i>“in coordination with the appropriate state agencies.”</i>
1320	Alternative B	No similar action	The management action of “no similar action” is preferred over the language in Alternative D out of deference to State of Wyoming primacy over water quality and quantity regulation. Further, it is unclear the impact Alternative D would have on existing facilities and on valid existing rights.
1322	Alternative A	Legal protection of those water uses, both consumptive and nonconsumptive (including instream uses), that are necessary for the accomplishment of BLM programs would be obtained, so that the beneficial uses may be continued or made possible in the future.	Alternative A is preferred as it does not discuss federally reserved water rights – while Alternative D does. Concern was expressed that Alternative D directs the BLM to acquire state water rights.
1323	Alternative C	No similar action	Alternative C preferred as Alternative B and D would require hydrologic investigations across the entire field office (currently only required in the JMH planning area).
1324	Alternative A	Herbicide loading sites would be prohibited within 500 feet of water sources, floodplains, riparian areas, and Special Status plant locations and would be used in accordance with the guidelines in Appendix A.	Alternative A is preferred as it adequately allows power and utility companies to effectively conduct their work in remote areas of the field office.
1325	Alternative A	No similar action	Alternative A is preferred as Alternative B would make it difficult for power and utility companies to put in a line underground when necessary.
2202	Alternative B	Continue to suspend existing oil and gas leases from development within the Mechanically Mineable Trona Area (MMTA). Close the MMTA (MMTA federal 141,409 acres) for new fluid mineral leasing until the oil and gas resource can be recovered without compromising the safety of the underground miners.	Represented industries on the task force agreed that Alternative B best addresses the safety that is needed in the Mechanically Mineable Trona Area by closing the area to fluid mineral leasing until the oil and gas can be recovered without compromising the safety of the underground miners.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
2413	Alternative A*	Specify that while the preliminary EIS refers to “application for leasing for commercial oil shale development,” the BLM could publish in the Federal Register one or more additional requests for expressions of interest in Research Development and Demonstration (RD&D) leasing within one or more of the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. Any new RD&D lease would have to be consistent with the applicable BLM land use plans.	<p>In the management action prioritization exercise, all voting members submitted the same preferred alternative. These recommendations were not discussed during the meetings, but task force members approved their inclusion in the final report.</p> <p>Interest in RD&D leasing for oil shale remains low, thus the task force prefers maintenance of the status quo under Alternative A.</p>
2415	Alternative A*	Specify that commercial leasing would occur utilizing a lease by application process. The process would require that additional NEPA analysis be conducted prior to lease issuance. Information collected as part of the lease application process would be incorporated into the NEPA analysis.	<p>In the management action prioritization exercise, all voting members submitted the same preferred alternative. These recommendations were not discussed during the meetings, but task force members approved their inclusion in the final report.</p> <p>Interest in commercial leasing for oil shale remains low, thus the task force prefers maintenance of the status quo under Alternative A.</p>
2416	Alternative A*	Specify that approval of the project-specific operating plan would require NEPA review to consider site-specific and project specific factors. The NEPA review for the operating plan may be incorporated into NEPA for the lease application if adequate operational data are provided by the applicant(s).	<p>In the management action prioritization exercise, all voting members submitted the same preferred alternative. These recommendations were not discussed during the meetings, but task force members approved their inclusion in the final report.</p> <p>Interest in commercial leasing for oil shale remains low, thus the task force prefers maintenance of the status quo under Alternative A.</p>
2417	Alternative A*	Specify that the BLM would consider and give priority to the use of land exchanges, where appropriate and feasible, to consolidate land ownership and mineral interests within the oil shale basins.	<p>In the management action prioritization exercise, all voting members submitted the same preferred alternative. These recommendations were not discussed during the meetings, but task force members approved their inclusion in the final report.</p> <p>Interest in commercial leasing for oil shale remains low, thus the task force prefers maintenance of the status quo under Alternative A.</p>
3006	Alternative A	Fire suppression actions would be based on achieving the most efficient control and allowing historical acres burned to increase. Activity plans would be developed for designated fire management areas defining specific parameters for all fire occurrence.	Alternative A is preferred, as this maintains the status quo which the group found to be a good strategy for ongoing fire suppression throughout the field office.
3007	Alternative C	Prohibit use of heavy equipment within 100 feet of special management areas, except to protect life or property.	Alternative C is preferred because Alternatives B and D were determined to be too restrictive as to when, where, and how a fire can be stopped.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
3009	Alternative A	Wildfires occurring in forested areas would be appropriately suppressed in accord with resource values threatened, as determined on a case-by-case basis.	Alternative A is preferred because there are very few forested areas in the RSFO, and thus little need for a change from the status quo as represented under Alternative A.
3012	Alternative D	Take suppression action to protect the basin big sagebrush/lemon scurfpea plant communities. Manage wildfires and prescribed fires in all vegetation types to maintain or improve biological diversity and the overall health of the public lands. Plant species and age class diversity will be a priority; thus, response for all wildfires will be identified and implemented depending on the resources and management objectives for the area. Identify suppression techniques and hazardous fuels reduction activities to reduce wildfire severity and occurrence on portions of the landscape where fire could cause undesirable changes in plant community composition and structure. Prepare a site-specific analysis for sensitive resource areas, such as Special Status plant species sites, cultural resources, historic trails, and ACECs, to determine the type of fire suppression activity that will be acceptable. Limit fire equipment and fire suppression techniques, such as vegetation clearing, to designated roads and trails in Special Status plant species habitat. Update the Fire Management Plan, as appropriate, to reflect the appropriate suppression activity in sensitive resource areas.	Alternative D is the preference because it allows for mitigation of damage to power lines in the event of lightning strikes.
4003	Alternative A with amended/ additional text	Noncommercial forest lands (woodlands) would be managed to optimize cover and enhance habitat for wildlife, protect soil and watershed values, and complement recreation uses.	<p>The task force’s preference is to combine language from Alternatives A and D to reflect that forested lands in the field office be managed to provide cover, enhance habitat for wildlife, etc... and provide forest and woodland products to the public.</p> <p>Requested additional language included in red: Noncommercial forest lands (woodlands) would be managed to optimize cover and enhance habitat for wildlife, protect soil and watershed values, and complement recreation uses, <i>while providing forest and woodland products to the public.</i></p>

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
4013	Alternative A*	Noncommercial forest lands (woodlands) would be managed to optimize cover and enhance habitat for wildlife, protect soil and watershed values, and complement recreation uses.	In the management action prioritization exercise, all voting members submitted the same preferred alternative. These recommendations were not discussed during the meetings, but task force members approved their inclusion in the final report.
4102	Alternative A	Native plant communities are the preferred species identified when establishing desired plant community objectives (see Riparian Vegetation Guidelines for additional guidance).	The task force preferred a maintenance of the status quo under Alternative A. Alternative C was not preferred because it allows for the acceptance of native and approved non-native plants species – which the BLM indicated they typically don't allow.
4103	Alternative D	Alternative D: Same as Alternative C. Alternative C: Use naturally occurring wildfires, prescribed fire, chemical treatments, biological treatments, mechanical methods, and livestock grazing to meet vegetation management objectives.	Alternative D supports agreements in principle # 4 and # 5, by allowing for flexible means to achieve vegetation management objectives. Specifically, Alternative D recognizes livestock grazing as well as prescribed fire, chemical, biological and mechanical treatments to meet vegetative management objectives.
4110	Alternative A	Vegetation manipulation projects would be conducted to reach multiple use objectives and would involve site-specific environmental analysis and coordination. Funds for vegetation manipulation in I category allotments would be provided by the BLM, other state or federal agencies, and private sources.	Alternative A is preferred as it identifies the use of vegetation manipulations projects to achieve multiple-use objectives whereas Alternative C suggest vegetation management projects would only be used to achieve ecosystem health objectives.
4111	Alternative D	Adapt management of treated areas, using a site-specific analysis of contributing factors, if not meeting or making significant progress toward vegetation objectives.	This management action supports agreements in principle # 4 and # 5 by providing for critical site-specific determination regarding rest of treated areas. Alternative D is preferred because it allows for flexible management. Alternative B requires the resting of a treated area for five growing seasons which the task force felt lacked scientific support and would be detrimental to livestock operators. Alternative A did not provide clear language as to who would be responsible for the fencing out of livestock and big game animals if necessary.
4112	Alternative D	Design vegetation treatment projects to maintain or improve water quality and reduce erosion by dissipating erosive energies.	Alternative D is preferred because it allows for water maintenance and improvement.
4209	Alternative A	No similar action	Alternative A is preferred because Alternatives B and D would impact water management in the KSLA, and are worded too broadly regarding Wyoming's water rights, and lack geographic scoping.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
4211	Alternative C with amended/ additional text		<p>This management action supports agreements in principle # 4 and # 5.</p> <p>The task force supports Alternative C with the following edits: delete the first sentence and amend the language to read as follows (new text in red): Discuss and consider control techniques and methods <i>at the annual management meeting between the BLM and APHIS-WS and include the Wyoming Department of Agriculture in these meetings.</i></p>
4420	Alternative D	Evaluate and adjust grazing schedules, at the time of permit renewal, if any conflicts with parturition areas exist.	<p>This management action supports agreements in principle # 4 and # 5.</p> <p>Alternative D is preferred because it appropriately defers consideration of potential grazing adjustments to meet conflicts, if any, with big game parturition, to the permit renewal process. Alternative D allows for site specific management with a flexible timeframe, while other alternatives require a specific timeframe.</p>
4602	Alternative A	Known locations of Special Status plant species communities would be protected and closed to: 1) surface disturbing activities or any disruptive activity that could adversely affect the plants or their habitat; 2) the location of new mining claims (withdrawal from mineral location and entry under the land laws would be pursued); 3) mineral material sales; 4) all offroad vehicular use, including those vehicles used for geophysical exploration activities, surveying, etc.; and 5) the use of explosives and blasting. (See the discussion Lands and Realty management and Minerals management.)	Alternative A is preferred because it provides that Special Status plant communities will remain protected, while still allowing for compatible activity in the area, which is not the case under Alternatives B and D.
4617	Alternative D	Manage Special Status Species habitat for the plant condition and composition that maintains a healthy functional habitat.	Alternative D is preferred because it represents a continuation of the status quo in the field office regarding the management of Special Status Species habitat, which the task force found no need to diverge from.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
6404	Alternative D	<p>Authorize livestock grazing at current active use AUM levels within all existing grazing allotments. Total active use AUMs currently administered by the RSFO are 304,261 (for an explanation of the difference between active use AUMs in Alternative A and Alternative D see Section 3.16). There are also two allotments that are partially within the RSFO that have grazing use administered by another BLM office. These include the Crooked Wash (2,292 active use AUMs currently available within the RSFO) and Horseshoe Wash (607 active use AUMs currently available within the RSFO) allotments. Adjust active use AUMs (increase or decrease) when site-specific monitoring/assessment data, the results of a land health evaluation, or a site-specific NEPA analysis demonstrates that an adjustment is appropriate to facilitate proper grazing management to provide for meeting or making significant progress towards meeting the Wyoming Land Health Standards and to meet the goals and objectives of the RMP.</p>	<p>This supports agreements in principle # 4 and # 5 by continuing current levels of livestock grazing while providing that any adjustments to actual use be based in site specific analysis. The “current active use levels” language in the management action best represents public land health standards.</p>
6411	Alternative A	<p>Salt or mineral supplements for livestock are prohibited within 500 feet of water, wetlands, or riparian areas unless analysis shows that watershed, riparian, and wildlife objectives and values would not be adversely affected. Salt or mineral supplements are prohibited on areas inhabited by Special Status plant species or other sensitive areas.</p>	<p>Alternative A is preferred because it supports agreements in principle # 4 and # 5. The task force is satisfied with the 500-foot standard and feels a ¼ mile buffer is excessive and not conducive to resource and livestock management.</p>
6412	Alternative D	<p>Authorize livestock trailing, on a case-by-case basis, based on appropriate, site-specific NEPA compliance.</p>	<p>Alternative D is preferred because it represents the status quo and enables livestock trailing.</p>
6416	Alternative B	<p>Range improvements will be directed at resolving or reducing resource concerns, improvement of wetland/riparian areas, and overall improvement of vegetation/ground cover. New range improvements may be implemented on grazing allotments. Maintenance of range improvements will be required in accordance with the BLM Rangeland Improvement Policy.</p>	<p>Alternative B is preferred because it supports appropriate range improvements across all allotments in accordance with agreements in principle # 4 and # 5 by enhancing the chances of grazing to meet quality objectives.</p>

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
6500	Same across all alternatives	Allow commercial competitive events and organized group activities, on a case-by-case basis, where compatible with natural resource management objectives.	The task force supports this management action because it supports recreation and economic development in the field office.
6507	Alternative A, with amended/ additional text	The Oregon Buttes, Honeycomb Buttes, Steamboat Mountain, Leucite Hills, Red Creek, Pine Mountain, Little Mountain, and Cedar Canyon areas would be managed to assure their continuing value for recreational opportunities. Recreation area management plans would be prepared for these areas if necessary.	Alternative A is preferred with additional text to ensure that recreation area management plans will be developed to minimize conflicts between recreation and other types of resource uses. Revised management action with additional language in red: Recreation area management plans would be prepared for these areas if necessary <i>to mitigate conflicts with other resource values and uses.</i>
6508	Alternative C	Develop recreation project plans and an interpretive prospectus for the Sweetwater Campgrounds, Boars Tusk, Leucite Hills, and the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail.	Recreation project plans for the sites listed under Alternative C should be developed to minimize conflicts between recreation and other types of resource uses.
6510	Alternative A, with amended/ additional text	The Green River, Sweetwater River, Big Sandy River, and the Bitter Creek segment between the towns of Rock Springs and Green River would be managed for recreation values. Recreation area management plans would be developed, where necessary.	The areas listed in Alternative A are popular recreation areas. Recreation management plans should be developed to minimize conflicts between recreation and other types of resource uses. Revised management action with additional language in red: Recreation area management plans would be developed, where necessary <i>to mitigate conflicts with other resource values and uses.</i>
6513	Alternative A	Recreation site development projects and access routes along intensively used streams and reservoirs would be managed to maintain or improve wetland habitat conditions.	Alternative A is preferred because it draws attention to the need to maintain or improve wetland habitats along intensively used areas.
6514	Alternative A	Development of permanent recreation sites and facilities in undeveloped recreation use areas would be considered, provided proper mitigation and exceptions to Executive Order 11988 apply. The area within 500 feet of riparian areas and floodplains is an avoidance area for recreation site facilities. Exceptions may be considered following a site-specific analysis. Adverse impacts to riparian areas and water quality is prohibited. Water sources at undeveloped recreation sites would be monitored. If the water is not potable, signs would be posted.	Alternative A is preferred because it allows development of permanent recreation sites and facilities in undeveloped recreation use areas, follows Executive Order 11988, and creates avoidance areas to protect floodplain values and allows exceptions following analysis.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
6522	Alternative A	The Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail is designated a special recreation management area to place management emphasis on enhancing recreation opportunities and to focus management on areas with high recreation values or areas where there are conflicts between recreation and other uses (60 acres, Table 2-12, Appendix V and Map 2-29). A management plan for the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail would be developed.	Alternative A is preferred because it maintains the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail as a special recreation management area and places management emphasis on enhancing recreation opportunities on this popular trail.
6523	Alternative A	The integrity of the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail and the South Pass Cross Country Ski Trail would be maintained by limiting (and in some cases precluding) surface disturbing activities or facilities on or within ¼ mile of the trails. The only exceptions would be the establishment of facilities to provide services to the users of the trails and to provide for public health and safety.	Alternative A is preferred because it maintains the integrity of the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail and the South Pass Cross Country Ski Trail by limiting surface disturbing activities within ¼ mile of the trails and provides exceptions for the establishment of facilities for trail users.
6524	Alternative A	The integrity of the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail would be maintained to allow for continued snow machine use. The trail system may be expanded by adding loop trails. Maintaining trail integrity would be accomplished by limiting surface disturbing activities, structures, or facilities that block or hinder trail use on or within ¼ mile of the trail. The only exceptions would be facilities that support trail visitor use and experiences along the trail or to protect the health and safety of trail users.	Alternative A is preferred because it maintains the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail, a popular recreational route and economic driver for the region. None of the additional management actions include similar provisions.
6525	Alternative A	The integrity of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would be maintained by limiting (and in some cases precluding) surface disturbing activities or facilities on or within ¼ mile of the trails. The only exceptions would be the establishment of facilities to provide services to the users of the trails and to provide for public health and safety.	Alternative A is preferred because it maintains and protects the integrity of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, a popular recreational route and economic driver for the region.
6531	Alternative A	The former SRMA designation for the Killpecker Sand Dunes is retained (39,290 acres, Table 2- 12, Appendix V and Map 2-29).	Alternative A is preferred because it retains the SRMA designation for Killpecker Sand Dunes at its current footprint. The SRMA designation is important for providing significant recreational opportunities in the region.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
6536	Alternative D	9,250 acres are designated open to off-road vehicle travel on the active sand dunes. Off-road vehicle travel on 3,581 acres of vegetated dune areas is limited to existing roads and trails.	Alternative D is preferred because it is a reasonable management strategy to manage off-road vehicle travel in the Killpecker Sand Dunes SMRA while providing significant recreational opportunities.
6606	Alternative D	Close, temporarily on a case-by-case basis, areas where OHV use has caused adverse effects on resources to the type(s) of vehicle causing the effects until the effects are eliminated and measures implemented to prevent recurrence.	Alternative D is preferred because it includes more flexible language than Alternative B while ensuring protection of resource values including temporary and case-by-case closures of OHV use when necessary.
6607	Alternative A	Off-road vehicle use would be managed according to the OHV designations listed on Table 2-11, Appendix V and shown on Map 2- 25—Open: 12,831 acres; Closed: 225,537 acres; Limited to Designated Roads and Trails: 968,959 acres; Limited to Existing Roads and Trails: 2,398,839 acres.	Alternative A is preferred because it provides off-road vehicle use on existing roads and trails, which continues to protect public lands and resources while providing opportunities for the safe use and enjoyment of OHVs.
6608	Alternative A	Areas for ORV rallies, crosscountry races, and outings may be provided on a permit basis.	Alternative A is preferred because it maintains important recreational opportunities in the region.
6610	Alternative A	In areas designated as either “limited” to designated roads and trails or “limited” to existing roads and trails for off-road vehicle use, motorized vehicles must stay on designated or existing roads and trails, unless allowed an exception by the Authorized Officer. This limitation applies to all activities involving motorized vehicles. Except for areas that are closed to off-road vehicle travel, some types of off-road motor vehicle use may be allowed by the Authorized Officer provided resource damage does not occur.	Alternative A is preferred because it protects public lands and resources while providing opportunities for the safe use and enjoyment of OHVs.
6613	Alternative A	Generally, over-the-snow vehicle use is subject to the prescriptions described in this section unless a site-specific analysis determines that exceptions can be allowed.	Alternative A is preferred over Alternative D because the snow depth restrictions in Alternative D are too subjective to be effectively implemented (i.e. they don’t discuss specific snow conditions – power or packed – just snow depth).
6614	Alternative A	The existing open area in the Killpecker Sand Dunes would remain open.	Alternative A is preferred because it enables continued OHV use in a very popular recreational area.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
7312	Alternative A or D	<p>Alternative A: The area is not designated as an ACEC, but would be maintained as a geographic management unit (see Glossary). The Pine Mountain Management Area is not recommended as part of the Greater Red Creek ACEC because Pine Mountain does not contain the same sensitivity of resources found in Greater Red Creek, even though the watershed resources in this area are interconnected with those of Greater Red Creek. The area does not contain populations of the Colorado River cutthroat trout that the Greater Red Creek area has and thus would not need to receive the same management emphasis.</p> <p>Alternative D: Same as A</p>	Alternative A is preferred because it maintains the Pine Mountain Management Area at its current size. There is little potential for mineral (minable and liquid) development and the areas contains important wildlife resources.
7313	Alternative A	The Pine Mountain area would be managed as an avoidance area for rights-of-way and surface disturbing activities.	This management action was voted on as a block (7313-7315). The task force prefers Alternative A, which aligns with the work of the Greater Little Mountain Coalition.
7314	Alternative A	The area is open to mineral leasing and related exploration and development activities with appropriate mitigation requirements (CSU) applied to protect all other resource values.	This management action was voted on as a block (7313-7315). The task force prefers Alternative A, which aligns with the work of the Greater Little Mountain Coalition.
7315	Alternative A	Livestock grazing objectives and management practices would be re-evaluated and, as needed, modified to be consistent with the watershed, water quality, fisheries, recreation, and riparian management objectives. Grazing systems would be designed to achieve desired plant communities and PFC of watersheds (upland and riparian) (Appendix G).	This management action was voted on as a block (7313-7315). The task force prefers Alternative A, which aligns with the work of the Greater Little Mountain Coalition.
7316	Alternative D	No similar action (see Livestock Grazing Management, Water Resources, and Riparian and Wetland Resources sections)	Alternative D was preferred over Alternative A because it does not prohibit activity that impacts a PFC.
7317	Alternative D	No similar action (see actions common to all management areas 7300-7304)	Alternative D was preferred over Alternative A because it does not require that any increase in vegetation production would be reserved for watershed stabilization and improvement purposes.
7318	Alternative A	Management of habitat for Special Status Species, if identified, would be developed on a case-by-case basis.	Alternative A is preferred because it allows for case-by-case decision making. Absence of funding for a habitat management plan/implementation made Alternative A the best choice.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
7321	Alternative C	Determine VRM classes by the Visual Resource Inventory and management direction for the individual locations as appropriate.	Alternative C is preferred because it provides for individual location decisions for VRM management as appropriate. An existing ROW corridor runs through this area already and transmission towers have already been installed. Alternative C ensures ROW access would remain open.
7324	Alternative A	The area is open to consideration of activities that conform with objectives for the area. Such activities may include fencing, interpretive signs, transportation or other use barriers, and sediment or erosion control structures to meet resource management objectives. Any actions to be conducted in the Pine Mountain Area would be considered and analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Controls may be placed on the amount, sequence, timing, or level of activity or development that may occur to assure that the actions would be consistent with or help to meet the management objectives for the area. This may result in such things as limiting the number of roads and other construction or other surface disturbing activities (such as well pads) or deferring activities or development in some areas until other areas have been reclaimed and restored to previous uses (Appendix I).	Alternative A is preferred because it allows for consideration of activities that conform with management objectives for the area.
7329	Alternative D	Retain the area as a management area (Table 2-12, Appendix V and Map 2-32).	Alternative D is preferred because it retains the area without the additional recommendations in Alternative A.
7330	Alternative B	Manage the Sugarloaf Basin portion (87,240 acres; Map 2-30) as an exclusion area for rights-of-way and surface disturbing activities, unless the purpose of the activity is to benefit the resource objectives for the management area.	Alternative B is preferred because it will manage the Sugarloaf Basin portion as an exclusion area for ROW and surface disturbing activities. There exists little to no oil and gas or mineral development potential in the area.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
7331	Alternative D	Allow surface disturbing activities if the operator and the BLM arrive at an acceptable plan for avoidance, minimization, rectification, and/or restoration within the Sugarloaf Basin area. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that fluid mineral development activities are pursued in a manner that maintain habitat function and result in no significant declines in species distribution or abundance. The BLM will consult with the WGFD to evaluate the adequacy of the conservation plan prior to finalization.	Alternative D is preferred because it is the only alternative that states that the BLM will consult with the WGFD to evaluate the adequacy of the conservation plan prior to finalization.
7332	Alternative D	No similar action (see Common to All Resources section)	Alternative D was preferred over Alternative A which states that any increase in vegetation would be reserved for watershed stabilization and improvement purposes.
7333	Alternative A	Management of habitat or Special Status Species, if identified, would be developed on a case-by-case basis. Restrictions for protection of raptors, big game crucial winter range, and big game calving/fawning areas would apply (see Wildlife section and Appendix J). Exceptions to this restriction may be approved if conditions and criteria described in Appendix B.	Alternative A is preferred because the task force found no need to deviate from the status quo.
7334	Alternative A	The area would be managed consistent with the Class II and Class III VRM classifications.	Alternative A is preferred because it includes limitations on VRM classifications and obstructing the scenic view.
7335	Alternative A	Recreation developments would be kept to a minimum and designed primarily for the protection of resource values, the prevention of resource damage, and for public health and safety.	Alternative A is preferred because the task force found no need to deviate from the status quo.
7404	Alternative B	Retain the Cedar Canyon ACEC designation (Table 2-12, Appendix V and Map 2-30).	Alternative B is preferred because it retains Cedar Canyon ACEC while Alternative C and D do not.
7418	No Alternative		The task force voted to support the adjustment of the northern boundary to exclude the checkerboard lands from the ACEC, but as a standalone action, not tied to any of the existing alternatives.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
7421	Alternative D	<p>Allow surface disturbing activities only if they protect or enhance ACEC values.</p> <p>Close to fluid mineral leasing</p> <p>Petition to segregate and pursue a withdrawal from mineral location.</p> <p>Close to oil shale leasing.</p> <p>Designate as a ROW avoidance area.</p> <p>Designate as VRM Class II.</p> <p>Closed to Coal Leasing</p> <p>See also management action 7418</p>	<p>There are no active oil and gas leases or coal development potential in the area. The task force supported Alternative D out of recognition of the work of the Little Mountain Coalition.</p>
7429	Alternative D	No similar action	Alternative D is preferred because it does not mandate management prescription on the land unlike Alternatives A and B.
7433	Alternative A	No similar action	Alternative A is preferred because it does not affect grazing while Alternative B would prohibit it in the portion of the Mellor Mountain grazing allotment that intersects the Sage Creek portion.
7438	Alternative A	No similar action	Alternative A is preferred because it does not affect grazing while Alternative B would prohibit it in the Jane's Meadow and Upper Currant Creek Pastures within the Sugarloaf Grazing Allotment.
7443	Alternative D	Require the completion of a grazing management plan prior to any annual authorization for livestock use in the allotment.	A grazing permittee, in collaboration with BLM and WGFD, has made significant positive improvements to the land and any other alternative would be very detrimental to that work. Alternative D is preferred because it allows this permittee to responsibly graze the allotment in question.
7444	Alternative D	No similar action	Alternative B would pursue the acquisition of the state parcel, Alternative D is preferred because it includes no similar action.
7452	Alternative B	Manage to protect and improve the dunal ponds for bird, amphibian, and mammal habitat.	These pools are one of the most ecologically rare features and important for big game.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
7456	Alternative B	Designate the Boars Tusk ACEC an exclusion area for ROWs. Close the area to mineral location, mineral material sales and leasable minerals. Pursue a withdrawal from entry under land laws and mineral location. Limit surface disturbing activities to actions that would preserve or enhance the values of the area.	<p>Boar's Tusk is a unique geological feature and important to Tribal nations.</p> <p>Alternative B is preferred with clarification that it only applies to the 90-acre Boar's Tusk portion of the Greater Sand Dunes ACEC.</p>
7530	Alternative B	Retain the ACEC designation (20 acres, Table 2-12, Appendix V, and Map 2-30).	Alternative B is preferred because it protects the rock art found at this site.

Management actions—Consensus with reservations

The following recommendations are made by consensus with reservations, meaning that at least one voting member rated the proposal a 4, and the others rated it a 1, 2, or 3.

Action	Alternative agreed on	Management Action Language	Justification
1113	Alternative D	Reclaim disturbed areas in compliance with BLM Wyoming and High Desert District Reclamation Plan (Appendix I), and other current guidance. Require that surface-disturbing activities minimize the surface disturbance footprint to the maximum extent possible to limit the areas requiring reclamation. Limit disturbance of desirable vegetative communities established during interim reclamation when implementing final reclamation.	This supports agreement in principle #2 by protecting quality wildlife habitat to support healthy and abundant wildlife populations.
4302	Alternative B	Maintain, improve, or restore riparian habitat to provide wildlife and fish habitat, improve water quality, and enhance forage conditions.	
4431	Alternative D	Avoid surface disturbing and disruptive activities seasonally within the identified buffer of occupied nests and historic raptor nest sites (see Appendix J).	Appendix J (Seasonal Wildlife Restrictions), referenced in Alternative D, includes the current USFWS guidance for appropriate buffer distances around raptor nest sites. One group expressed concern that there is discrepancy between Appendix J and current USFWS guidance and therefore desired to alter the management action language to direct the BLM to match this guidance rather than specific buffers outlined in Appendix J.
7004	Alternative D	Designate the National Trail Management Corridor as VRM Class II. Manage existing utility crossings within the National Trail Management Corridors VRM Class III. On contributing segments of NHT or other historic trails within the checkerboard land pattern area, manage the setting to preserve the existing character of the landscape to the extent possible within federally-managed lands.	The task force supported Alternative D in acknowledgement that this is essentially the status quo. However, this included an agreement to exclude the KSLA from this management action. Agreement in principle #9 should be referenced regarding National Trail Corridors VRM classifications.

Discussion

Limitations

Engaging in a process that requires such a high level of collaboration and negotiation is daunting under any circumstance, and particularly challenging on a short timeframe. The task force formed during the first two weeks of November 2023, following the BLM’s announcement of the RMP’s comment deadline extension to January 14, 2024, and in advance of public meetings held on November 17 and 18, 2023. The task force met for the first time November 21, and submitted recommendations on January 5, giving just 45 days for the group to learn to work together, identify points of difference, negotiate on proposals, and finalize recommendations.



To address the short time frame, particularly the limited time for voting members to consult with their constituents between meetings, the governor developed the advisor system, where task force members would be able to consult with a team of advisors in real time at the meeting. Additionally, the task force members attended the public meetings and participated in breakout discussions with the public, to help them gain knowledge of the breadth of public interests and hopes for the final Rock Springs RMP prior to engaging in the task force meetings. Voting member contact information was listed on the task force website as well as a public comment portal. Both provided an additional means through which the public could inform the task force.

Still, the task force identified specific consequences of the short time frame, particularly a limited ability to work fully through a complex, extensive document and thoroughly discuss unique geographies and management approaches in different areas of the field office. They felt there would be much more potential for consensus-based recommendations, given time to dig into each area and its associated management. Because the task force came together quickly and had to work rapidly, they had to be selective in which topics were addressed and how much time was spent on each. This report does not contain the full set of consensus-based recommendations that might have been produced given more time.

Additionally, some felt that the requirement for consensus posed a particular challenge to this process, which does not yield majority or supermajority recommendations. Only sharing consensus-based recommendations may not present the full range of viewpoints of the task force. Further, the opportunity for a proposal to be blocked by a “five” vote was seen as possibly slowing down a process already pressed for time. Motivation to negotiate also may have been diminished due to limited time.

Some members of the task force also highlighted the timing of their work within the RMP and NEPA planning process, pointing out that this group had to be reactionary to the proposed work. They argued it would be more effective to engage this type of task force during the scoping process and during plan development.

Reflections

In spite of limitations, the task force members are proud of what they accomplished in just 45 days. From the start, they were charged with representing public interests, and they felt that what took place in the group mirrored what they heard from the public. Because the governor formed the task force in response to the public outcry over the draft RMP, acting in a way that reflected this mission was critical.

Negotiations improved over time and the group was able to find the areas of consensus. A notable example of this came when a decision regarding Greater Little Mountain that had not achieved consensus at the second meeting came forward again on the final day of the task force meetings to garner a full vote of support. The group, in reflection, is proud that they revisited an important conversation in pursuit of consensus. Moreover, the task force worked through hundreds of proposed actions, engaged in robust communications during and between meetings, and consulted with wide-ranging advisors and constituents in pursuit of achieving the goal to produce the recommendations contained herein. Through all this, they kept a baseline level of respect for each other's priorities, even when disagreeing.

A significant outcome of this task force has been the creation and strengthening of relationships among task force members and, by extension, the many interests of people in the Rock Springs Field Office area. While at times it felt like a scramble to get everything on the table, the group built trust in a short period of time, enabling people to feel they could express disagreement without getting "personal." This work of building relationships among people with differing perspectives will have an enduring impact in the region.

The belief that relationships were strengthened through this process emerged in a post-process survey administered by the University of Wyoming to better understand task force members' perspectives on the effectiveness of the process. More than three quarters of respondents agreed they gained an appreciation for what matters to other participants, that they will better be able to work together in the future, and they built trust with fellow participants. Respondents to the survey also indicated that coming into the process, they were willing to work with other members of the task force and understood the reasons it came together. Most, but not all, expressed agreement with the statement "I was confident other participants would listen to my perspectives." Survey responses further indicate that during the task force process most participants gained a better understanding of key issues to be addressed, that their concerns and values were taken seriously by other participants, and that working in this manner was an effective way to address this issue. Importantly, participants indicated their belief that the recommendations herein will be valuable to the governor and reflect the issues they most care about.

Conclusion

The public response to the release of the Rock Springs draft RMP and draft EIS was perhaps unprecedented for a NEPA process in Wyoming, and it was met with a similarly extraordinary action through the formation of this task force. Looking forward, members of the task force note that NEPA processes and their accompanying management implications will continue to unfold across this landscape. How might citizens, individually and collectively, grow more knowledgeable about land use planning, better participate and engage with agencies, garner support from political factions, and cooperate across interests to increase effectiveness in dealing with the NEPA process in the state?

The work of this task force suggests that for any land use issue that arises, engaging people who live on the land and are bound to the consequences of land management decisions can lead to robust decision making. The Rock Springs RMP

Task Force attributes its successes to involving the people whose quality of life and livelihoods depend on this place. The tremendous land resources of the Rock Springs Field Office are special even within the state. Beyond recognizing what these public lands have brought to the communities in this region, members of the task force have increased their awareness of what it will take to manage them for multiple uses.

This report reflects the commitment of thousands of hours in pursuit of common ground, even when it seems easier to be divisive. The recommendations within and the process itself will pay dividends not only in shaping durable land management solutions in the Rock Springs RMP, but also in the future, as the capacity and relationships that have been built form a stronger foundation in addressing other issue that may arise.

Appendices

Key links

Summary of Public Workshops: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/rmp-public-workshop-report-final.pdf>

Raw data from Public Workshops: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/rmp-workshop-raw-data.pdf>

Task Force Charter: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/task-force-charter-rock-springs-rmp.pdf>

Meeting Summaries

1. December 11: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/meeting-1-summary-rmp-task-force.pdf>
2. December 20: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/meeting-2-summary-rmp-task-force.pdf>
3. December 27: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/meeting-3-summary-rmp-task-force.pdf>
4. January 4: <https://www.uwyo.edu/haub/files/docs/ruckelshaus/collaboration/2023-rmp/meeting-4-summary-rmp-task-force.pdf>

Interest statements

Task force members developed the following interest statements prior to the first task force meeting. Interests are different from positions in that positions are explicit statements or demands made by parties during negotiations, whereas interests are the underlying factors that lead to those positions. A key principle of interest-based negotiation is that negotiators are best able to identify common ground, create value, and reach mutually beneficial agreements when they explore and uncover the interests of all parties involved. Generating interest statements prepared task force members to use them as the criteria for evaluating proposals offered by other task force members during deliberations.

These interest statements were not voted on by the group and are not consensus recommendations.

WYOMING SENATE

- Develop and maintain essential infrastructure such as roads, energy, and communication networks to support economic activities in the region.

- Maintain right-of-way access to foster and sustain economic activities.
- Ensure that BLM lands remain accessible for a wide array of recreational activities.
- Ensure the conservation of natural habitats crucial for wildlife species.
- Involve local communities in decision-making processes, ensuring their participation and fostering a sense of stewardship.

WYOMING HOUSE

- Develop and maintain essential infrastructure such as roads, energy, and communication networks to support economic activities in the region.
- Maintain right-of-way access to foster and sustain economic activities.
- Ensure that BLM lands remain accessible for a wide array of recreational activities.
- Ensure the conservation of natural habitats crucial for wildlife species.
- Involve local communities in decision-making processes, ensuring their participation and fostering a sense of stewardship.
- If it isn't broke, don't fix it.

LIVESTOCK

- Ensure continued access to BLM-managed lands for livestock grazing, recognizing it as a vital component of the ranching industry.
- Enable ranchers to use grazing as a conservation tool.
- Provide full opportunity for the implementation of outcome-based grazing.
- Maintain right-of-way access to foster and sustain economic activities including grazing and livestock management.
- Recognize the interdependence of private, state, and public lands in providing wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing opportunities, livestock grazing, and a healthy economy.
- Improve and restore rangeland health, including measures to control invasive species.
- Provide emergency grazing opportunities on BLM lands during times of drought or other natural disasters to ensure the well-being of livestock.
- Facilitate the maintenance and development of infrastructure such as fencing, water facilities, and access roads to support responsible livestock management on BLM lands.
- Preserve cultural and historic resources on BLM lands, recognizing the significance of these areas to the heritage of ranching communities.
- Defer determination of site-specific management constraints to the permitting and leasing stage.

MINING

- Maintain secure and continued access rights to mineral-rich lands, ensuring stability and predictability for long-term mining operations.
- Enable access rights to new mineral exploration areas, enabling the continuous expansion and development of mining operations.
- Maintain access to minerals while addressing environmental and community considerations.
- Maintain access to infrastructure corridors necessary for transporting trona minerals, ensuring efficient logistics and transportation.
- Allow continued access to mineral-rich lands during reclamation processes, facilitating responsible resource extraction and rehabilitation concurrently.
- Ensure flexible and adaptive plans that accommodate evolving needs for access to trona minerals.
- Durable planning to facilitate large projects that require certainty for planning and finance.

OIL & GAS

- Enable responsible and efficient access to petroleum resources on BLM-managed, state, and private lands ensuring a stable and reliable energy supply.
- Enable the adoption of innovative technologies and best practices in petroleum exploration and extraction to enhance efficiency and minimize environmental impact.
- Maintain right-of-way access to oil and gas facilities and infrastructure.

TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure that BLM lands remain accessible for a wide array of recreational activities both motorized and non-motorized.
- Maintain trail and road systems and necessary infrastructure on BLM-managed lands, enhancing recreational opportunities and visitor experiences.
- Ensure the protection of natural habitats crucial for wildlife species that are a major draw for visitors to the region.
- Protect and promote access to the geological, cultural, and ecological significance of the region, enriching the visitor experience.
- Encourage and enhance outdoor recreational activities, both motorized and non-motorized, attracting visitors to the area and boosting the local economy.
- Enable the establishment of safety measures for visitors, including signage for multi-use activities, emergency response plans, cellphone signal and information centers to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.
- Enable infrastructure improvement projects on BLM-managed lands, such as the development of parking areas, restrooms, and interpretive centers.
- Encourage and not restrict future development for the economy in Sweetwater County

- Enable future infrastructure development for expansion and relocation opportunities in Sweetwater County.
- Ensure that BLM lands remain accessible for current and future development process.

SPORTSMEN/HUNTING

- Ensure the protection of natural habitats crucial for wildlife species by preventing degradation and fragmentation.
- Minimize conflicts between human activities and wildlife, promoting coexistence and reducing negative impacts on both.
- Protect essential migration routes and corridors to facilitate the movement of wildlife between habitats.
- Foster the protection and restoration of diverse ecosystems to support a wide range of plant and animal species.

CONSERVATION

- Prioritize strong conservation management and landscape intactness for the Big Sandy Foothills and Northern Red Desert. These areas contain exceptionally high wildlife values, including the best habitat in the world for sage grouse, pronghorn, and many other species. Additionally, these areas have remarkably important cultural, historical, and recreational values.
- Support management actions/direction and land designations that protect existing wildlife habitat, historic trails, and cultural sites.
- Prioritize industrial development (oil and gas, renewables, etc.) outside of high quality wildlife habitat and within/adjacent to known areas of disturbance and where there is known moderate to high potential for development.
- Prioritize protection of important habitat (seasonal and migratory/transitional habitat) for big game species.
- Ensure strong management direction for identified Lands with Wilderness characteristics (LWCs) to preserve inventoried wilderness values.
- Support management that keeps the landscape the way it is now, allowing future generation to experience the same open spaces, opportunities for outdoor recreation and abundant wildlife population that exist now.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Sustain meaningful participation between the BLM and Cooperators.
- Ensure a consistency review is completed with locally developed plans before the release of any preferred alternative.
- Develop and maintain essential infrastructure such as roads, energy, and communication networks to support economic activities within the region.
- Maintain right-of-way access to foster and sustain economic activities.
- Promote collaboration between the BLM and local communities to ensure that resource management decisions align with the needs and priorities of the county and its residents.

- Ensure continued access for traditional land uses, such as grazing, hunting, and other activities that are important to the cultural and historical identity of the community.
- Encourage and enhance outdoor recreational activities, attracting visitors to the area and boosting the local economy.
- Prioritize land management practices that consider the health and safety of county residents, including measures to prevent and manage wildfire risks.

ENERGY (INCLUDING RENEWABLE)/UTILITIES

- Enable the development and maintenance of infrastructure necessary for all energy projects, including roads, power lines, and other facilities.
- Maintain the ability to secure leases and opportunities for the construction of all energy projects.
- Maintain rights-of-way for the development of transmission corridors.

MOTORIZED ACCESS

- Maintain access to designated/existing motorized areas on BLM lands.
- Maintain existing motorized trails and develop new ones, providing a variety of recreational opportunities.
- Enable the development of infrastructure such as parking areas, signage, and facilities to enhance the motorized recreation experience on BLM-managed lands.
- Utilize photographic tools and other objective measures to inventory what is existing.