

**Places significance criteria were triggered in draft impacts tables
Updated January 30, 2006**

NOTE: This document is meant to show you where the BLM determined impacts to be significant in the effects analysis. It is important to remember that BAH and BLM will disclose all impacts, significant or not. Therefore, just because there is no significant impact to a resource or use does not mean there are no impacts at all.

Soils:

Alternative A: Allowing cross country OHV use on 1,053,180 acres could result significant increases in erosion.

Alternative B: Allowing cross country OHV use on 1,172,950 acres could result significant increases in erosion. Removing fragile soils protections could allow surface disturbance or permit surface occupancy in areas with fragile soils with little to no mitigation. Were surface disturbing activities permitted in these areas, increases in soil erosion would be a significant impact.

Alternative C: Allowing cross country OHV use on 94,880 acres could result significant increases in erosion. Additionally, opening over 4,060 acres of fragile soils to cross country OHV use would result in impacts to these soils from this use.

Alternative D: Allowing cross country OHV use on 20,320 acres could result significant increases in erosion.

Water:

Alternative A: Impacts to water resources due to an uncharacteristically large or intense wildlife could be significant if water quality degrades beyond the designated use of the stream.

Alternative B: Allowing surface disturbance on fragile soil areas (38,540 acres) without performance objectives would indirectly affect water quality by increasing localized erosion and surface runoff, which could be significant if water quality degrades beyond the designated use of the stream. Not establishing NSO stipulations in these areas would allow surface disturbing activities, which could increase localized erosion and sediment loading to nearby perennial water sources. These impacts could be significant if water quality degrades beyond the designated use of the stream.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Vegetation:

Alternative A: Continuing to not establish guidance for competitive recreation events could also increase surface disturbance from human uses. This could result in significant impacts to vegetation by altering the physical characteristics of riparian/wetland areas. Continuing to manage 88 miles of riparian wetlands rated Functioning at Risk (FAR) or Non Functioning (NF) and 35 miles rated as PFC as open to OHV recreation use would continue to increase erosion rates and reduce riparian/wetland functioning condition, particularly in areas rated as FAR or NF. This could result in significant impact from the loss of capacity of riparian/wetland areas to support other resources. Full suppression could cause a significant impact from the loss of unique vegetation characteristics, and could reduce

resistance to disease and insect pest infestations and may increase the risk of uncharacteristically large or intense wildfire.

Alternative B: Managing 276 miles of riparian areas rated as FAR or NF and 59 miles rated as PFC as open OHV use would increase surface disturbance and could reduce riparian functioning conditions in these areas. This could result in a significant impact if riparian/wetland areas lost capacity to support other resources compared to Alternative A. Not protecting 38,530 acres of fragile soils from surface disturbances could result in a loss of the sparse vegetation resources because erosion could increase. This could result in a significant impact by reducing vegetation diversity and increasing areas that could be dominated by noxious weeds and invasive species compared to Alternative A. Managing within the RMPPA using prescribed fire and conditional fire suppression and AMR would improve the ecological health of rangelands, forests, and woodlands by increasing vegetation diversity. This could result in a significant increase in vegetation diversity, and could increase resistance to disease and insect pest infestations. Areas where vegetation diversity decreased could increase opportunities for noxious weeds and invasive species establishment. Over the long-term, this could have a significant impact on rangelands ability to support other resources. Managing WSAs (78,250 acres) if released by Congress for multiple use consistent with resource goals and objectives would result in localized vegetation loss and introduce noxious weeds, which might become significant depending on the level of activity.

Alternative C: Implementing vegetation treatments on 4,110 acres per year (82,200 acres over 20 years) could significantly increase vegetation diversity and the ability of vegetation to support other resources. Areas where vegetation diversity increased could decrease opportunities for noxious weeds and invasive species establishment. Over the long-term, this could have a significant impact on the ability of the rangeland to support other resources. Impacts from fire would be the same as Alternative B.

Alternative D: Implementing vegetation treatments on 8,750 acres per year (175,000 acres over 20 years) could significantly increase vegetation diversity and the ability of vegetation to support other resources.

Fish and Wildlife:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Providing no protection for raptor nests sites and waterfowl and shorebird significant production areas as compared to Alternative A would result in potential removal of nest sites and/or disturbance during nesting which could reduce breeding sites and other habitat components vital to the raptor population. This would likely result in a significant impact to raptors, waterfowl, and shorebirds. No stipulations for protection of perennial or ephemeral water sources would likely result in wildlife habitat degradation from surface disturbance, erosion and increased sedimentation. Impacts could be potentially significant to fisheries depending on the proximity of surface disturbance to water sources. However, protections for big game and other fish and wildlife species could be applied through a COA on an APD consistent with Appendix X if it is determined that impacts to species would be significant.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Special Status Species

Alternative A: Damage to critical habitats for the endangered pikeminnow would be likely to occur in the Yampa River SRMA, which could become significant as boating activity increases over time and/or increased use of unconventional watercraft (such as jet skis) results in changes to underwater environments. Recreation facilities located in close proximity to streams could increase run-off and dust, both of which could potentially cause slight to significant changes in stream characteristics. Depending on the extent and timing of OHV use, the resulting degradation to vegetation communities could cause slight to significant changes to habitats that may be occupied by special status species or provide necessary habitat components. Approximately 1,566,020 acres of BLM-administered federal mineral estate (79% of the RMPAA) would be open to oil and gas leasing consideration, which could cause slight to significant changes to important habitat components and population function as development occurs within more areas of the RMPAA. Authorized wells would not be anticipated to adversely affect species populations; however, population function may decline over time and could become significant as development increases.

Alternative B: Removal of stipulations intended to protect sharp-tailed grouse and sage-grouse could cause abandonment and potentially destroy lek sites, nesting habitat, and crucial winter habitat, which could result in slight to significant changes depending on the extent of disturbance over time. Potential significant impacts from recreation use along the Yampa River and recreation facilities would be the same as Alternative A; however, conservation measures would minimize the extent of these impacts.

Alternative C: Depending on the extent and timing of recreation activity, casual use in the South Sand Wash SRMA could cause slight to significant changes to habitats that may be occupied by special status species or provide necessary habitat components. Potential significant impacts from recreation use along the Yampa River and recreation facilities would be the same as Alternative A; however, conservation measures and reductions would minimize the extent of these impacts.

Alternative D: Potential significant impacts from recreation use along the Yampa River and recreation facilities would be the same as Alternative A; however, conservation measures and reductions would minimize the extent of these impacts.

Fire:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Wild Horses:

Alternative A: Long-term or regular presence of human activity (cross country OHV use and oil and gas development) could change wild horse usage patterns, which would cause overuse in some areas of the HMA and could result in horses leaving the HMA. Such impacts would be considered a significant impact if it reduces the viability of the herd.

Alternative B: Long-term or regular presence of human activity (cross country OHV use and oil and gas development) could change wild horse usage patterns, which would cause overuse

in some areas of the HMA and could result in horses leaving the HMA. Such impacts would be considered a significant impact if it reduces the viability of the herd.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Managing 85,840 acres (57 % of HMA) as NSO/NGD could result in a significant impact as the ability to provide water sources to maintain the wild horses at AML could be constrained.

Cultural:

Alternative A: Areas open to OHV that do not go through Section 106 Cultural clearance is a significant impact to cultural resources.

Alternative B: Areas Open to OHV that do not go through Section 106 Cultural clearance is a significant impact to cultural resources.

Alternative C: Areas Open to OHV that do not go through Section 106 Cultural clearance is a significant impact to cultural resources.

Alternative D: Areas Open to OHV that do not go through Section 106 Cultural clearance is a significant impact to cultural resources.

Paleo:

Alternative A: Areas open to cross-country OHV use do not go through paleontological assessments/inventories and such use could damage paleontological resources at the surface. The significance of this impact would depend on the scientific significance of the fossils that could be impacted.

Alternative B: Areas open to cross-country OHV use do not go through paleontological assessments/inventories and such use could damage paleontological resources at the surface. The significance of this impact would depend on the scientific significance of the fossils that could be impacted.

Alternative C: Areas open to cross-country OHV use do not go through paleontological assessments/inventories and such use could damage paleontological resources at the surface. The significance of this impact would depend on the scientific significance of the fossils that could be impacted.

Alternative D: Areas open to cross-country OHV use do not go through paleontological assessments/inventories and such use could damage paleontological resources at the surface. The significance of this impact would depend on the scientific significance of the fossils that could be impacted.

Special Management Areas:

WSAs:

Alternative A: If any of the existing WSAs were released from wilderness study, significant impacts would occur to the wilderness characteristics by managing these areas consistent with surrounding OHV management, which would be open and/or limited to existing roads and trails. Surface disturbance could impact the naturalness, and opportunity for solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities in the West Cold Springs, Ant Hills, Chew Winter Camp, Peterson Draw, and Vale of Tears WSAs if any of these areas were released from wilderness study. Impacts could be significant depending on the amount of activity within the area from a loss of wilderness characteristics.

Alternative B: Significant impacts could occur from increased potential for surface disturbance and development, to the naturalness, and opportunity for solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities in any of the WSAs if these areas were released from wilderness study under Alternative B. These areas would have no special management and surface disturbing activities would be allowed. Impacts could be significant depending on the amount of activity within the area from a loss of wilderness characteristics

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

ACECs:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions. Plant values and white tailed prairie dog are protected by avoidance.

Alternative B: Scenic relevant and important values in the Limestone Ridge and Lookout Mountain area could be significantly impacted if surface disturbance from development were to occur in these areas based on the removal of protections to these values under this alternative. The geologic, cultural, and scenic relevant and important values in the Irish Canyon area could be significantly impacted if development were to occur due to surface disturbance that would be allowed in this area.

If the Cross Mountain WSA was released from wilderness study, Significant impacts in the Cross Mountain Canyon area to the relevant and important values could occur if development were to occur due to surface disturbance that would cause irreparable harm to the scenic values in this area.

Surface disturbance restrictions that may significantly alter any prairie dog complexes, as well as protective management for black-footed ferret habitat, would not be implemented. This could result in irreparable harm to the relevant and important values related to the protection of this species, which would result in significant impacts to the relevant and important values in the potential White-Tailed Prairie Dog ACEC.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions. Plant values and white tailed prairie dog are protected by avoidance.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions. All ACECs are designated.

Lands with Wilderness Character outside existing WSAs:

Alternative A: Wilderness characteristics are significantly impacted in Vermillion Basin and other areas “Likely to contain wilderness characteristics” because of being open to leasing, OHV use and development of ROWs. Also portions of the Little Yampa/Juniper Canyon area would be open to coal leasing, that if developed, would result in significant impacts.

Alternative B: Wilderness characteristics are significantly impacted in Vermillion Basin and other areas “Likely to contain wilderness characteristics” because of being open to leasing, OHV use and development of ROWs .

Alternative C: Wilderness characteristics are significantly impacted in Northern Vermillion Basin (Zone 1) because of allowing leasing and development.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Wild and Scenic Rivers:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Visual Resource Management:

Alternative A: Designating 1,053,180 acres as open to OHV use could deteriorate visual quality through road proliferation and vegetation loss across the field office. The level of change to the landscape could be significant in localized areas if OHV use and cross-country travel continued to increase as expected.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Energy and Minerals:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Designation of WTPD ACEC and associated NSO is a significant impact to oil and gas. Closing Vermillion Basin is a significant impact to oil and gas.

Livestock Grazing:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: If there were a reduction of permitted AUMs as a result of livestock decisions, (we are still mulling this one over), there would result in a significant impact to livestock grazing.

Recreation:

Alternative A: An Open OHV designation and mineral development potential in Vermillion Basin and other areas with opportunities for primitive, unconfined recreation would be a significant impact to non-motorized recreation. Also, significant impacts could occur over the life of the plan, in localized areas, by not providing Special Recreation Management in the Cedar Mountain and South Sand Wash from a loss of recreation opportunities.

Alternative B: An Open OHV designation and mineral development potential in Vermillion Basin, and other areas with opportunities for primitive, unconfined recreation would be a significant impact to non-motorized recreation. Managing OHV recreation with expanded cross-country OHV areas would result in conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreation users would increase and would impact the experience to both user groups. Also, degradation of the visual character of natural features would likely occur which would impact the recreation experience for many users. This would be a significant impact to both

motorized and non-motorized recreation. Also, significant impacts could occur over the life of the plan, in localized areas, by not providing Special Recreation Management in the Cedar Mountain and South Sand Wash from a loss of recreation opportunities.

Alternative C: An Open OHV designation and mineral development potential in Vermillion Basin Zone 1 would result in significant impacts to non-motorized recreation and recreationists seeking solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation opportunities.

Forest and Woodlands:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Transportation and Access:

Alternative A: OHV closures (only WSAs and a few other areas in this alternative; 72,480 acres) are not a significant impact. Significance criteria not triggered.

Alternative B: OHV closures (only WSAs in this alternative; 46,370 acres) are not a significant impact. Significance criteria not triggered.

Alternative C: OHV closures (WSAs, Serviceberry, Flycreek, portion of southern Vermillion Basin, etc in this alternative; 86,710 acres) are not a significant impact. Significance criteria not triggered.

Alternative D: Closures of many larger, high-use OHV areas (many areas in this alternative; 202,630 acres) are a significant impact.

Lands and Realty:

Alternative A: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative B: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative C: Significance criteria not triggered by any actions.

Alternative D: Many of the areas previously designated as avoidance areas would become exclusion areas under Alternative D. Such restrictions could hinder the ability to meet future demand as existing sites reach capacity, which could become significant. Restricting communication site authorizations to existing sites could impose greater standards for development at existing sites, potentially resulting in requests for new or amended ROWs at existing sites to be denied over time. Such restrictions could hinder the ability to meet future demand as existing sites reach capacity, which could become significant.