NOTICE TO READER

Please retain your copy of this draft RMP/EIS for future reference. The final document may be published in an abbreviated form, including only corrections and/or additions to this draft and public comments with BLM responses.

Implementing Changes in Allotment Management

Activity plans are commonly used to present, in detail, the types of changes required in an allotment, and to establish a schedule for implementation. Actions set forth under the plan that affect the environment will be analyzed and compared to alternative actions. During the analysis, the proposal may be altered or completely revamped to mitigate adverse impacts. The following sections contain discussions of the types of change likely to be recommended in an activity plan and the guidance that applies to these administrative actions.

Livestock Use Adjustments

Livestock use adjustments are made by changing one or more of the following: the season of use, the number of head, or the pattern of grazing. For each of the five alternatives presented in this RMP, target stocking rates have been set for each allotment (refer to Appendix B, page B-14). While most livestock use adjustments will occur in the I allotments, use adjustments are permitted for allotments in categories C and M.

In reviewing the target stocking rate figures and other recommended changes, it is emphasized that the target AUM figures are not final stocking rates. Rather, all livestock use adjustments will be implemented through documented mutual agreement or by decision. When adjustments are made through mutual agreement, they may be implemented once the Rangeland Program Summary has been through a public review period. When livestock use adjustments are implemented by decision, the decision will be based on operator consultation, range survey data, and monitoring of resource conditions. Current BLM policy emphasizes the use of a systematic monitoring program to verify the need for livestock adjustments proposed on the basis of one-time inventory data.

Monitoring will also be used to measure the changes brought about by new livestock management practices and to evaluate the effectiveness of management changes in meeting stated objectives. Detailed guidance for rangeland monitoring is available in current BLM policy and guidance.

The federal regulations that govern changes in allocation of livestock forage provide specific direction for livestock use adjustments implemented by decision. The regulations specify that permanent increases in livestock forage or suspensions of preference "shall be implemented over a five year period..." The regulations do provide for adjustments to be implemented in less than five years when: (1) an agreement is reached to implement the adjustment in less than five years; or (2) a shorter implementation period is needed to sustain resource productivity.

Temporary Suspensions and Closures

Temporary suspensions of grazing use or closures of all or portions of allotments may be implemented to protect the public lands becasue of conditions of drought, fire, flood, or insect infestation. When conditions such as fire, flood or insect infestation create a significant impact on the normal operation of a grazing operator, efforts to mitigate the impact may be taken by the BLM. These mitigating efforts may consist of relocation of grazing use, modification of grazing systems and temporary nonrenewable

grazing use in other allotments under permit or lease. No action will be taken by the BLM prior to consultation and coordination with affected permittees or lessees and other affected parties.

Range Improvements and Treatments

Typical range improvements and treatments and the general procedures to be followed in implementing them are described in Appendix B, page B-3. The extent, location and timing of such actions will be based on the allotment-specific management objectives adopted through the resource management planning process, interdisciplinary development and review of proposed actions, operator contributions, and BLM funding capability. Since 4ome of the soils in the resource area may be unsuitable for range improvement projects proposed projects will be investigated for feasibility prior to approving location and design plans.

All allotments in which range improvement funds are to be spent will be subjected to an economic analysis. The analysis will be used to develop a final priority ranking of allotments for the commitment of the range improvement funds that are needed to implement activity plans. The highest priority for implementation generally will be assigned to those improvements for which the total anticipated benefits exceed costs. Generally, all structural range improvements will be maintained by the benefitting party(s). All nonstructural range improvements will be maintained by the BLM.

Grazing Systems

The type of system to be implemented will be based on consideration of the following factors:

-allotment-specific mangement objectives (see Appendix B, page B-32);

-resource characteristics, including vegetation potential and water availability;

-operator needs; and

-implementation costs.

Typical grazing systems available for consideration are described in Appendix B, page B-6.

Unleased or Unpermitted Tracts

Unleased or unpermitted tracts generally will remain available for further consideration for authorized grazing, as provided for in the current BLM grazing regulations. However, certain tracts currently closed or restricted to grazing use will remain so.

Wildlife and Fisheries Program

General

Fish and wildlife habitat will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case

basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of fish and wildlife habitat in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with management objectives for fish and wildlife habitat. Habitat improvement projects will be implemented where necessary to stabilize and/or improve unsatisfactory or declining wildlife habitat condition. Such projects will be identified through habitat management plans or multiple resource management activity plans.

Seasonal Restrictions

Seasonal restrictions will continue to be applied where they are needed to mitigate the impacts of human activities on important seasonal wildlife habitat. The major types of seasonal wildlife habitat and the time periods in which restrictions may be needed are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Seasonal Wildlife Restrictions

Habitat	Restricted Period
Big Game Winter Range	12/01 - 04/30
Elk Calving Areas	04/30 - 06/30
Raptor Nest Sites	Dates vary by species
Sage Grouse/Sharp-tailed Grouse Strutting Grounds	03/01 - 04/30
Sage Grouse/Sharp-tailed Grouse Nesting and Broodrearing	04/30 - 06/30
Antelope Fawning Grounds	05/01 - 06/30
Antelope Winter Ranges	12/01 - 04/01
Endangered Species	No surface occupancy, size is site specific.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species Habitat

Whenever possible, management activities in habitat for threatened, endangered or sensitive species will be designed to benefit those species through habitat improvement.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be consulted prior to implementing projects that may affect habitat for threatened and endangered species. If a "may affect" situation is determined through the BLM biological assessment process, consultation with the USFWS will be initiated as per section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

To the extent practicable, management actions within occupied grizzly bear habitat will be consistent with the goals and objectives contained in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USDI, FWS 1982) and the guidelines developed through the Interagency Wildlife Monitoring Program for mineral exploration and development.

Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat

Sufficient forage and cover will be provided for wildlife on seasonal habitat. Forage and cover requirements will be incorporated into allotment management plans and will be specific to areas of primary wildlife use.

Range improvements generally will be designed to achieve both wildlife and range objectives. Existing fences may be modified and new fences will be built so as to allow wildlife passage. Water developments generally will not be established for livestock where significant conflicts over vegetation would result.

Vegetative manipulation projects will be designed to minimize impact on wildlife habitat and to improve it whenever possible. These projects will comply with sage grouse, antelope and mule deer management guidelines. The ID F&G will be consulted one year in advance on all vegetative manipulation projects. Animal control programs will be coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Management actions within floodplains and wetlands will include measures to preserve, protect and, if necessary, restore, their natural functions (as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 and BLM Manual 6740). Management techniques will be used to minimize the degredation of stream banks and the loss of riparian vegetation. Bridges and culverts will be designed and installed to maintain adequate fish passage.

Riparian habitat needs will be taken into consideration in developing livestock grazing systems and pasture designs. Some of the techniques that can be used to lessen impacts are:

-changing class of stock from cow/calf pairs to herded sheep or yearlings;

-either eliminating hot season grazing or scheduling hot season grazing for only one year out of every three;

-locating salt away from riparian zones;

-laying out pasture fences so that each pasture has as much riparian habitat as possible;

-locating fences so that they do not confine or concentrate livestock near the riparian zone;

-developing alternative sources of water to lessen the grazing pressure on the riparian habitat; and

-as a last resort, excluding livestock completely from riparian habitat by protective fencing.

Where applicable, the elk management guidelines contained in the Elk Habitat Relations for Central Idaho and Eastern Idaho will be followed. These include:

-managing public vehicle access to maintain the habitat effectiveness of security cover and key seasonal habitat (such as winter range and calving/nursery areas) for deer and elk;

-maintaining adequate untreated peripheral zones around important moist sites (i.e. wet sedge meadows, springs, riparian zones);

-maintaining adequate thermal and security cover on deer and elk habitat, particularly within timber stands adjacent to primary winter foraging areas;

-ensuring that slash depth inside clear cuts does not exceed one and one-half feet; and

-generally discouraging thinning immediately adjacent to clear cuts.

Wildlife reintroductions and fish stocking proposals will be evaluated and recommendations will be made to the Department of Fish and Game. BLM policy requires that a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) be prepared prior to any wildlife reintroduction.

Soil, Water and Air

General

Soil, water and air resources will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such an evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed projects and the sensitivity of soil as defined in the National Cooperative soil survey standards, water and air resources in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to ensure compatibility of projects with soil as defined in the National Cooperative soil survey standards, water and air resource management.

Soils

Soils will be managed to maintain productivity and to minimize erosion to not more than 5 tons/acre, except for some areas of local sand dunes.

Water

Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with State and Federal standards, including consultation with state agencies on proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality. Management actions on public land within municipal watersheds will be designed to protect water quality and quantity.

Management activities in riparian zones will be designed to maintain, or, where possible, improve riparian habitat conditions.

Roads and utility corridors will avoid riparian zones to the extent practicable.

Recreation

General

A broad range of outdoor recreation opportunities will continue to be provided for all segments of the public, commensurate with demand. Trails and other

means of public access will continue to be maintained and developed where necessary to enhance recreation opportunities and allow public use. Developed recreation facilities receiving the heaviest use will receive first priority for operation and maintenance funds. Sites that cannot be maintained to acceptable health and safety standards will be closed until deficiencies are corrected. Investment of public funds for new recreation developments will be permitted only on land identified for retention in public ownership.

Recreation resources will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of recreation resources in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with recreation management objectives.

Motorized Vehicle Use

Travel planning, including the designation of areas open, restricted and closed to motorized vehicle access, will remain a high priority for public land. Public land within areas identified as open to motorized vehicle use generally will remain available for such use without restrictions. Exceptions to this general rule may be authorized after consideration of the following criteria:

- the need to promote user enjoyment and minimize use conflicts;
- the need to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resource values;
- the need to minimize harrassment of wildlife or significant degredation of wildlife habitats; and
- the need to promote user safety.

Public land within areas identified as restricted to motorized vehicle use generally will receive priority attention during travel planning. Specific roads, trails or portions of such areas may be closed seasonally or yearlong to all or specified types of motorized vehicle use.

Public land within areas identified as closed to motorized vehicle use will be closed yearlong to all forms of motorized vehicle use except emergency or authorized vehicles. Exceptions may be allowed in Wilderness Study Areas based on application of the Interim Management Policy.

Restrictions and closures will be established for specific roads, trails or areas only where problems have been identified. Areas not designated as restricted or closed will remain open for motorized vehicle use.

Visual Resources

Visual Resources will continue to be evaluated as a part of activity and project planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the visual sensitivity of the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to maintain existing visual resource management classes.

Wilderness Resources

Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed in compliance with the Interim Management Policy until they are reviewed and acted upon by Congress. Other areas being studied for wilderness will be managed to prevent unnecessary and undue degredation of the land, and when it does not conflict with valid existing rights they will be managed to meet the nonimpairment standard as well.

Public land within areas added by Congress to the National Wilderness Preservation System will be managed in compliance with the Wilderness Management Policy. Site-specific wilderness management plans will be developed for such areas.

Areas reviewed by Congress but not added to the National Wilderness Preservation System will be managed in accordance with other applicable guidance provided by this Resource Management Plan.

Cultural Resources

BLM is required to identify, evaluate and protect cultural resources on public lands, and to ensure that BLM-initiated actions and projects do not inadvertently damage or destroy non-federal cultural resources. The Antiquities Act of 1906, the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, as amended by P.L. 933-191, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Executive Order 11593 (1971), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 mandate BLM's cultural resource protection policy.

This policy requires BLM to conduct or cause to be conducted an intensive (Class III) inventory before any Bureau initiated or authorized surface disturbing activities and land sales or transfers from federal management are allowed. Inventories are conducted according to BLM Manual Section 8111.4 specifications. They supplement other inventories which may have previously located, identified and evaluated an affected area's cultural resources.

When cultural resource values are discovered in a proposed project or authorized action area they will be protected by the following methods:

1. Avoidance. Cultural resources are protected by redesigning or relocating projects, or excluding significant cultural resource areas from authorized use agreements, and land sales or transfers.

2. Salvage. If a project cannot be redesigned or relocated, cultural resource values will be salvaged through controlled, scientific methods (i.e. complete surface collection and/or excavation).

3. Project/Action Abandonment. If a site has significant cultural resource values which cannot adequately be protected by avoidance or salvage, then project or action would be abandoned.

4. Consultation. If properties which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places are discovered, BLM will consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Site documentation will be forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register to obtain an eligibility determination, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 63.

In a stewardship role, BLM manages documented cultural resource sites and values for public benefit.

The Department of the Interior has issued instructions setting forth this management structure through a use evaluation system. The purposes of the system are to analyze the scientific and sociocultural values of cultural resources, to provide a basis for allocation of cultural resources, to make cultural resources an important part of the planning system, and to identify information needed when existing documentation is inadequate to support a reasonable cultural resource-based land use allocation.

The evaluation of cultural resources requires the consideration of actual or potential use of individual sites or properties within the following categories:

1. Sociocultural Use. This category refers to the use of an object (including flora and fauna), structure or place based on a social or cultural group's perception that the item has utility in maintaining the group's heritage or existence.

2. Current Scientific Use. This category refers to a study or project in progress at the time of evaluation for which scientists or historians are using a cultural resource as a source of information that will contribute to the understanding of human behavior.

3. Management Use. This category refers to the use of a cultural resource by the BLM, or other entities interested in the management of cultural resources, to obtain specific information that is needed for the reasonable allocation of cultural resources or for the development of effective preservation measures.

4. Conservation for Future Use. This category refers to the management of cultural resources by segregating them from other forms of appropriation until specific conditions are met in the future. Such conditions may include the development of research techniques that are presently not available or the exhaustion of all other resources similar to those represented in the protected sample. The category is intended to provide long-term, onsite preservation and protection of select cultural resources.

5. Potential Scientific Use. This category refers to the potential use (utilizing research techniques currently available) of a cultural resource as a source of information that will contribute to the understanding of human behavior.

Cadastral Survey

Cadastral Surveys will continue to be conducted in support of resource management programs. Survey requirements and priorities will be determined on a yearly basis as a part of the annual work planning process.

Fire

Until the Normal Year Fire Plan is updated, the primary fire protection objective will continue to be the control, during the first burning period, of all wildfires on or threatening public land.

Limited suppression areas will be established following the selection of the Resource Management Plan.

Prescribed burning will continue to be used in support of resource management objectives.

Road and Trail Construction and Maintenance

Road and trail construction and maintenance will continue to be conducted in support of resource management objectives. Construction and maintenance requirements and priorities will be determined on a yearly basis as a part of the annual work planning process.

Investment of public funds for road and trail construction generally will be permitted only on land identifed for retention in public ownership. Excetions may be allowed where investment costs can be recovered as a part of land disposal actions.

Specific road and trail construction standards will be determined based on consideration of the following criteria:

-resource management needs;

-user safety;

-impacts to environmental values, including but not limited to wildlife and fisheries habitat, soil stability, recreation, and scenery; and

-construction and maintenance costs.

Detailed Management Plans

The RMP provides general guidance for the resource area. More detailed management plans called activity plans will, however, be prepared to deal with areas where a greater level of detail is required. Activity plans will indicate specific management practices, improvements, allocations, and other information for a particular site or area. They will be prepared for most major BLM programs such as range (allotment management plans), recreation (recreation area management plans), wildlife (habitat management plans), cultural resources (cultural resources activity plans). Where two or more activities have activity plan needs in the same general area, a single consolidated activity plan may be prepared. Coordination, consultation and public involvement are integral parts in the formulation of activity plans.

Economic and Social Considerations

BLM will ensure that any management action undertaken in connection with this plan is cost-effective and takes into account local social and economic factors. Cost-effectiveness may be determined by any method deemed appropriate by the Bureau for the specific management action involved.

Environmental Review

An environmental analysis will be undertaken prior to approval of any project involving public lands. If no significant impact is identified, the analysis will be documented as an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. If the analysis suggests a major federal action which would significantly affect the human environment, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared upon State Director direction..

SUPPORT

Support requirements are shown on The following table (Table 2).

TABLE 2
SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

SUPPORT	RESOURCE	REMARKS
Water Rights	Water	All BLM water developments will require application for water rights.
Fire Management	Range Management, Wildlife Habitat Mgmt.	Technical assistance for preparation of prescriptions for prescribed burning, fire management on prescribed burns.
	All	Fire suppression, either full, modified or limited as specified in the RMP.
Engineering	All	Engineering design, review and construction or contract preparation and administration of construction of rangeland management projects & facilities, recreation developments, road building and maintenance.
Appraisal	Lands, Forestry, Range Mgmt., Wildlife, Recreation.	Appraisal for tracts prior to disposal by sale, exchange. Appraisal required for access needs.
Cadastral Survey	Minerals, Wildlife, Range, Lands, Forestry, Wilderness	Mineral disposal actions may require identification of public land boundaries. Cadastral support may be needed for access needs. Cadastral support may be needed to identify timber sale boundaries. Cadastral support would be needed to identify wilderness area boundaries. Occupancy trespass settlement may require cadastral support.

TABLE 2 (cont'd)
SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

SUPPORT	RESOURCE	REMARKS
Access	All	Legal access may need to be acquired to some public land areas for management and for general public use. Access may also be needed to particular sites for project completion and public use.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

This proposed plan does not appear inconsistent with the officially adopted plans, programs or policies of other federal, state or local governments nor with Indian tribes. The public comments received to date have shown no inconsistencies. The High Country Resource Conservation and Development Plan, which includes all of the counties in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area, was reviewed by BLM along with comprehensive plans completed by Bonneville, Bingham, Fremont, Jefferson and Butte counties.

Review of these plans showed this draft plan to be consistent with the completed plans. The Shoshone-Bannock tribe has shown an interest in being consulted before any sales of public land are made.

Agencies, governments and Indian tribes may notify BLM of inconsistencies with their plans during the 90 day public review period. The final RMP/EIS will document inconsistencies and, if they cannot be remedied, will explain why.

IMPELEMENTATION

Decisions in the plan will be implemented over a period of years and must be tied to the BLM budgeting process. Priorities will be established for each resource to guide the order of implementation, and will be reviewed annually to help develop annual work plan commitments for the coming year. New policy, departmental guidance or new BLM goals may influence priorities.

Detailed activity plans and environmental assessments may be needed before taking some actions such as timber harvest or range improvement construction. Rangeland improvement projects, for example, will require a site-specific analysis and a review of economic efficiency.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The results of implementing the selected RMP will be examined periodically to inform the resource managers and public of the progress of the plan. The results being achieved under the plan will be compared with the plan objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation help the resource managers

- to determine whether an action is accomplishing the intended purpose,
- to determine whether mitigating measures are satisfactory,
- to determine if the decisions in the plan are being implemented,
- to determine if the related plans of other agencies, governments or Indian tribes have changed, resulting in an inconsistency with the RMP,
- to identify any unanticipated or unpredictable effects, and
- to identify new data of significance to the plan.

The proposed monitoring and evaluation plan for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area RMP is shown in Appendix G. The plan specifies resource components to be monitored, how they will be monitored, where they will be monitored and when they will be monitored. Monitoring intensity (the number of studies and the frequency of studies) will vary among allotments according to the amount of information that is needed to determine if the plan objectives are being met. If future monitoring shows a variation from RMP objectives warranting management concern, the reasons for the variation will be examined closely. Modification of a RMP decision may be needed, or the variation may be due to factors beyond BLM's control, such as climatic or economic fluctuations.