

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS

Draft Land Management Plan • Draft Environmental Impact Statement

VOLUME 2 ■ Draft Land Management Plan



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management
Dolores, Columbine, and Pagosa Field Offices

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U.S. Forest Service – Region 2
San Juan National Forest



PROPOSED ACTION LOCATION..... San Juan Public Lands
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA),
United States Forest Service (USFS)
U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI),
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Archuleta, Conejos, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral,
Montezuma, Montrose, Rio Grande, San Juan, San Miguel Counties,
Colorado.

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U.S. FOREST SERVICE AND BLM PLANNING

U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and resource management planning is an adaptive process that includes social, economic, and ecological evaluation. The process entails plan development, monitoring, and adjustment, as appropriate. The overall aim of planning is to ensure responsible land management based on useful and current information that guides land stewardship to best meet the needs of the American people.

Planning generally occurs at three levels within both agencies. For the USFS, at the national level, the Chief is responsible for the Forest Service Strategic Plan, as required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. The Strategic Plan establishes goals, objectives, performance measures, and strategies for management of the National Forest System. The San Juan National Forest is one administrative unit of this system. At the next level, the Regional Forester is the Responsible Official for approval of land management plans. The third level is for site-specific projects and activities which are actions usually under the authority of the Forest Supervisor or District Ranger.

For the BLM, at the national level, the Director is responsible for the Annual Operating Plan, which falls under the Department of Interior's Strategic Plan as required by the GPRA. The Strategic Plan and the Operating Plan establish goals, objectives, performance measures, and strategies for management of lands administered by the BLM. The Columbine, Dolores, and Pagosa Field Offices, administered by the San Juan Public Lands Center, are administrative units of this system. At the next level, the State Director is the Responsible Official for development and approval of resource management plans. The third level is for site-specific projects and activities which are actions usually under the authority of the Center Manager or Field Office Manager. These are also sometimes done at a programmatic level, termed an activity plan.

BLM AND USFS PLANNING UNDER SERVICE FIRST

The BLM and the USFS share similar missions, partners, issues and constituents. In order to improve public service, the two land management agencies are developing ways to work together under a concept known as "Service First." The BLM and Forest Service Offices in southwestern Colorado are pioneering this Service First partnership strategy, which is designed to provide better stewardship of land and resources, to enhance customer service, and to provide more cost-effective delivery of services to users of the San Juan public lands (SJPL).

Under the Service First Interagency Agreement (June 5, 2005), employees of the San Juan Public Lands Center (SJPLC) and its Ranger District/Field Offices are working together as a single team in order to provide leadership in all aspects of land management. The improved efficiency and effectiveness of their combined workforces, the quality of their integrated resource management decisions, and the cooperative delivery of their products and services, in relation to the San Juan public lands, is enhancing the ability of both agencies to better serve the public. Many permit holders, recreation users, and other interested parties have become accustomed to Service First, and both agencies are committed to continuing this cooperative partnership in order to better serve the needs of the land and of the public.

This Draft Land Management Plan applies to the lands managed by the San Juan Public Lands Center (the Columbine, Dolores, and Pagosa Ranger District/Field Offices), except for the lands included in the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument (the Monument). The Monument has a separate Resource Management Plan, as directed by the Presidential Proclamation (Number 7317) that established the Monument. Because this Plan applies to two different agencies, its format and some of its terminology vary from typical land management plans for either agency.

This Draft Land Management Plan was prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), the 1982 regulations (36 CFR 219) as allowed by the transition provision of the 2000 regulations, the Federal Land Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and 43 CFR 1600. The Plan is intended to provide consistent direction across both BLM and National Forest System lands. Both agencies have similar missions and, for the most part, similar direction. These Plans attempt to use the same terminology to the extent possible but some exceptions exist where needed to match legal or policy direction that differs by agency.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this Plan is to provide broad guidance and information for project and activity decision-making needed to manage the San Juan Public Lands. This Plan will guide relevant resource management programs, practices, uses, and protection measures.

The key decisions made in this integrated plan for long-term management of the SJPL are:

- The establishment of desired outcomes, including multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11(b), 43 CFR 1601.0-5(k) (3)). (These are primarily expressed as desired conditions in Part 1, and as objectives in Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, which is described in detail in Volume 2.)
- The establishment of management requirements, including measures or criteria that would be applied in order to guide day-to-day activities (36 CFR 219.13 to 219.27, 43 CFR 1601.0-5(k) (2) and (4)). (These are primarily expressed as standards and guidelines and other design criteria in Part 3 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)
- The establishment of management area direction, including identifying allowable uses, and/or allocations, restrictions, and prohibitions (36 CFR 219.11(c) and 43 CFR 1601.0-5(k) (1), (2), and (3)). All lands within the planning area are allocated to one of seven management areas (MAs), or zones, that reflect different levels of development and suitable uses or activities. (Management areas are discussed under geographic areas in Part 1, and under suitability in Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)
- The designations of Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) (36 CFR 219.25, 43 CFR 1601.0-5(k) (1) and 43 CFR 1601.7-2). (Areas with these designations are identified in the special areas section of Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)
- The recommendations of lands for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (36 CFR 219.17). (These areas are identified in the special areas section of Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)
- The identification of river segments that are suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (PL 90-542 and 36 CFR 219.2(a)). (These are identified in the special areas section of Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)

- The designation of suitable timber land (16 USC 1604(k) and 36 CFR 219.14) and the establishment of allowable sale quantity (36 CFR 219.16). (These are described in the suitability and objectives sections of Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)
- The establishment of monitoring and evaluation requirements (36 CFR 219.11(d), 43 CFR 1601.0-5(k) (8) and 43 CFR 1610.4-9). (These are described in the monitoring section of Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative.)
- Allocation of livestock forage (AUMs) and areas available for livestock grazing on BLM-administered public lands (43 CFR 4100.0-8, BLM handbook 1601-1 Land Use Planning Appendix C II. B). (These are described in the suitability section of Part 2 of Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, and in Appendix L of the DEIS.)

A separate decision, apart from the Land Management Plan, that has been incorporated into this document is determining the National Forest System lands that will be administratively available for oil and gas leasing, as well as the associated stipulations. (A similar decision for BLM-administered lands is made as part of the RMP decision. The Forest Service considers leasing availability decisions to be separate from planning decisions, but closely linked to planning decisions, with both planning level and project level components.)

RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN TO OTHER PLANNING DOCUMENTS AND GUIDANCE

This Draft Land Management Plan is one key document in a set of documents that integrates and displays information relevant to management of the San Juan Public Lands. Other documents that will form the administrative record for the Plan include the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the Record of Decision (ROD), social, economic, and ecological assessments, Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) report, public participation documentation, objections and disposition record, and administrative corrections. Together these documents demonstrate comprehensive analyses, public involvement, and decision-making processes, and they form the foundation for adaptive management.

PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY

This Draft Land Management Plan is based on the results of two comprehensive and complementary planning efforts, one being resource-data-driven, and one being public-value-driven. The first effort provided technical analyses of conditions and trends for social, economic, and ecological elements related to the San Juan Public Lands. These analyses included consideration of new relevant information, and legal and policy changes that have occurred since the current plans were developed. This work is documented in several assessments and summarized in the AMS report.

The second major effort in Plan development (which is still ongoing) is to gather and utilize knowledge of people that are familiar with the planning area regarding their values, objectives, and uses of the San Juan Public Lands. Thus far, this extensive public participation effort has primarily focused on input related to vision, contributions, management challenges, land allocations, desired conditions, objectives, and suitable uses of the San Juan Public Lands. Results from the technical analyses were used in the public participation process to inform, focus, and enhance participant dialogue. A summary of the public participation activities, which incorporated the analysis information and greatly contributed to the development of this Plan, is given in Volume 3, Appendix A.

The assessments and knowledge gained through public involvement were used to shape the Draft Land Management Plan (Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative), as described in this volume as well as alternatives to it that are documented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Volume 1). Both the earlier documents and the DEIS include information on how the draft Plan would contribute to sustaining social, economic, and ecological systems. These documents do not address every potential topic that may arise in management of the San Juan Public Lands. Rather, they address the parameters and issues that the Responsible Officials (Regional Forester and BLM State Director) have determined to be pertinent to this planning process.

Forest Service

The current Land Management Plan was approved in 1983. It has been amended 21 times, including a significant amendment in 1992 that superseded the earlier version. This Draft Land Management Plan was developed using the provisions of the 1982 regulations (36 CFR 219), as specified by the 2000 planning rule and clarified by the 2004 Interpretative Rule.

National Forest management is authorized and guided by many laws, regulations, and policies (see AMS: Legal and Other Requirements). This body of governing legal direction is dynamic, with some pieces more subject to change than others. In addition, the Forest Service has a directives system that consists of the Forest Service Manual (FSM) and the Forest Service Handbook (FSH). These contain the agency's policies, practices, and procedures and serve as the primary basis for the internal management, control of programs, and administrative direction. The directives are available via the internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives/>. The direction contained within these sources will continue to evolve and apply as appropriate. Unless needed to provide context, clarity, or emphasis, direction from these sources will not be reiterated in this Plan.

Bureau of Land Management

The current Resource Management Plan was approved in 1985 and has been amended four times. Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are being managed under interim guidance provided by the Interim Management Policy and Guidance for Lands under Wilderness Review until such time that Congress makes a final wilderness decision. This draft Plan discusses how those lands would be managed if Congress released them from wilderness study.

This Draft Land Management Plan has been developed to meet the requirements of the BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1600). Those regulations require that plans be revised as necessary, without setting a specific lifespan. The 1985 RMP covered both the San Juan and San Miguel Resource Areas, as they were called at that time. This Draft Land Management Plan only applies to the lands that comprised the old San Juan Resource Area; now known as the Columbine, Dolores, and Pagosa Field Offices. The Uncompahgre Field Office will revise the Plan for the San Miguel area at a later date. A separate Plan is being developed for the portion of the San Juan Public Lands that comprises the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

BLM management is authorized and guided by many laws, regulations, and policies. This body of governing legal direction is dynamic, with some pieces more subject to change than others. In addition, the BLM has a directives system with manuals and handbooks, similar to the Forest Service. These contain the agency's policies, practices, and procedures and serve as the primary basis for internal management, control of programs, and administrative direction. BLM planning direction is available via the internet at <http://www.blm.gov/planning/library.html>. The direction contained within these sources will continue to evolve and apply as appropriate. Unless needed to provide context, clarity, or emphasis, direction from these sources will not be reiterated in this Plan; rather it is incorporated by reference.

Within the flexible and adaptive framework of both agencies planning regulations and directives, the guidance set forth by this Plan should continue to provide a meaningful framework and vision for management into the foreseeable future.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) COMPLIANCE

This Draft Land Management Plan (DLMP) is accompanied by a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as required by the regulations used in its development (43 CFR 1601.0-6 and 36 CFR 219.10).

LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN ORGANIZATION

The management guidance which is presented applies San Juan Public Lands-wide, or where appropriate, to smaller geographic scales. Guidance applies to both BLM and National Forest System lands unless otherwise noted. The Plan makes no decisions applicable to other ownerships.

The format of this Plan is different from that of those issued in the first round of planning that occurred beginning in the early 1980s for both agencies after the passage of the National Forest Management Act and the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act. It is designed to better communicate the concepts of strategic guidance and adaptive management.

Plan Structure

This Draft Land Management Plan is formatted into three interrelated parts. Part 1 is the “Vision” for the San Juan Public Lands. It sets the context for the Plan and describes the San Juan’s uniqueness on a regional and national level. It also describes the roles and contributions of the San Juan Public Lands and presents the desired conditions at several geographic scales. The vision is long-term and reflects ecological timeframes as well as social desires. In BLM planning terms, the vision includes desired outcomes and goals. In USFS planning terms, it includes goals and management area direction.

Part 2 is the “Strategy” which articulates how the BLM and Forest Service intend to move the San Juan Public Lands toward the desired conditions described in Part 1. The strategy is organized into four sections: objectives, suitable uses, special areas, and monitoring. In BLM planning terms, the strategy includes objectives; uses or allocations that are allowable, restricted or prohibited; some management actions (administrative designations and actions to achieve desired outcomes); and monitoring. In USFS planning terms, it includes objectives, suitability and capability, management area prescriptions, recommendations for the Secretary of Agriculture to take to Congress, and monitoring.

Part 3 is “Design Criteria” which identify sideboards for the strategy as well as subsequent projects designed to implement the strategy. In addition to specific standards and guidelines, this section includes references to other applicable guidance that the BLM and Forest Service use during project planning and implementation. The other guidance includes applicable Federal laws and regulations, Executive Orders (EOs), directives (manuals and handbooks), and State and local laws and regulations. In BLM planning terms the design criteria include some management actions (proactive measures and measures or criteria applied to guide day-to-day activities occurring on public land). In USFS planning terms, the design criteria include standards and guidelines.

PLAN SECTIONS

Table 1 shows how the key decisions, in the terminology of each agency, fit with the different sections of this Draft Land Management Plan. The key elements of BLM and USFS plans overlap in spite of different planning regulations and handbook direction.

Table 1 - Plan Components and Forest Service and BLM Decision Types

Plan Sections	USFS Plan Decisions	BLM Plan Decisions
PLAN PART I – Vision		
Desired Conditions	Goals Management Area Prescriptions	Desired Outcomes – Goals
PLAN PART II – Strategy		
Objectives	Objectives	Desired Outcomes: Objectives Management Actions: Actions anticipated to achieve desired conditions, including actions to maintain, restore, or improve land health
Suitability	Suitability and Capability	Allowable Uses: Uses, or allocations, that are allowable, restricted, or prohibited
Special Areas	Management Area Prescriptions, Congressional Recommendations	Management Actions: Administrative Designations
Monitoring	Monitoring Requirements	Monitoring Requirements
PLAN PART III – Design Criteria		
Standards and Guidelines	Standards and Guidelines (forestwide and management area-specific)	Management Actions: Measures or criteria that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities

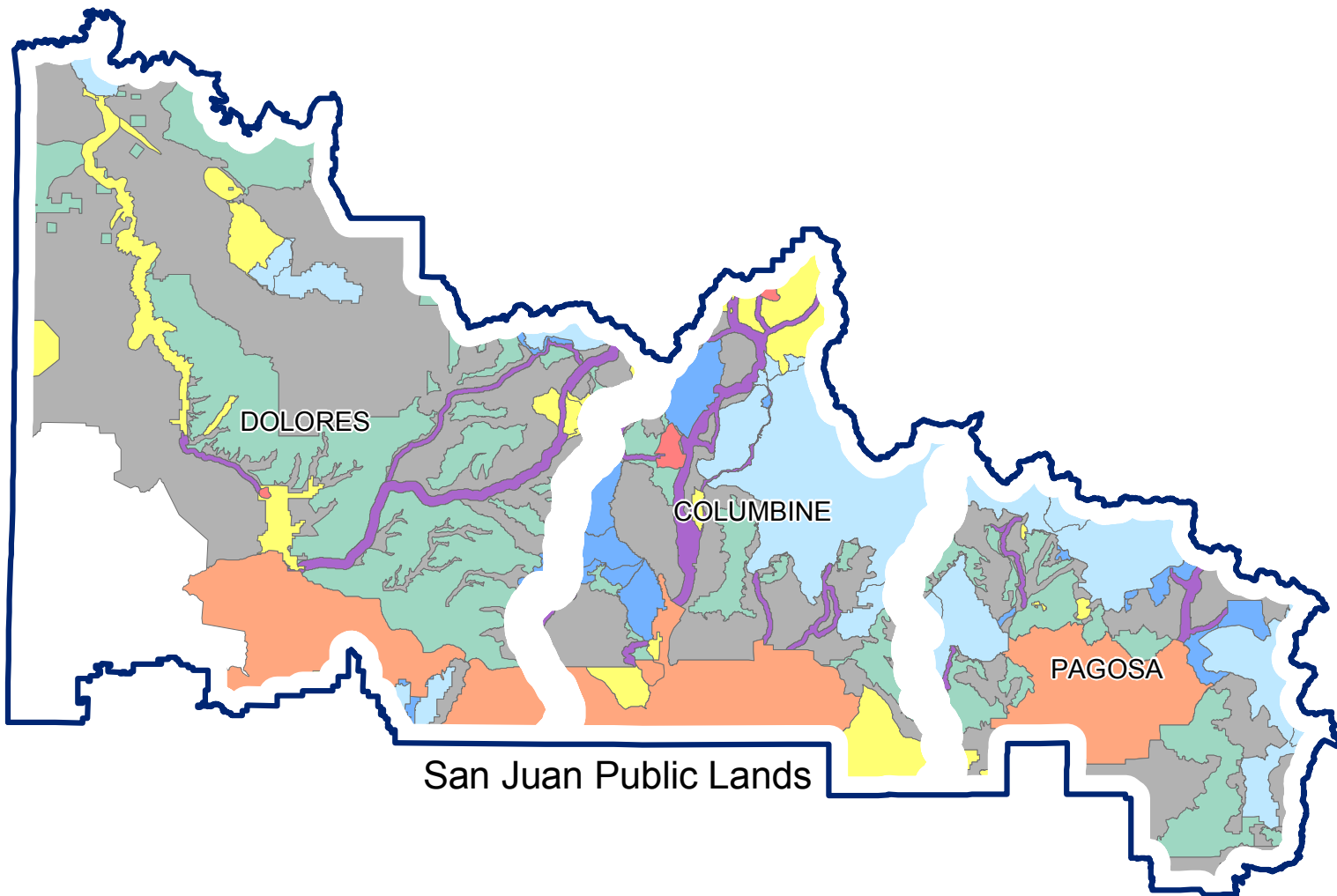
Vision - Desired Conditions

Desired conditions encompass the overarching goals of land and resource management. They are statements of the social, economic, and ecological attributes and values toward which management strives to achieve. These statements or descriptions characterize or exemplify the desired outcomes of land management. They describe how the area is expected to look and function in the future.

Some desired conditions are general, while others are quite specific. Desired conditions are presented at three levels of spatial detail (see Figure 1):

1. all San Juan Public Lands;
2. three Geographic Areas (Dolores, Columbine, and Pagosa Ranger District/Field Offices); and
3. seven Management Areas (smaller areas that reflect differing levels of management intensity, naturalness, and development).

Figure 1 - San Juan Public Lands, Geographic Areas, and Management Areas



Desired conditions are aspirations; they may only be achievable over the long term. Collectively, specific projects implemented subsequent to this Land Management Plan should contribute to maintaining and/or achieving desired conditions, but no single project should be expected to contribute to meeting all desired conditions. Identifying and establishing desired conditions is the central focus of this Draft Land Management Plan.

Strategy - Objectives

Objectives are concise projections of measurable, time-specific intended outcomes. Objectives are a means of progressing toward maintaining and/or achieving desired conditions. As with desired conditions, they are aspirations, not commitments or final project decisions. Objectives are presented at three levels of spatial detail:

1. all San Juan Public Lands;
2. three Geographic Areas (Dolores, Columbine, and Pagosa Ranger District/Field Offices); and
3. certain Management Areas (MA 2, Special Areas and Unique Landscapes).

Strategy - Suitability

The capability and suitability of areas for various uses and activities has been identified based on the following:

- inherent biophysical capability to provide the use or activity in a sustainable manner;
- public input; and
- balancing desired conditions for multiple resources.

Suitability is presented at two levels of spatial detail:

1. all San Juan Public Lands; and
2. Management Areas.

Uses or activities that are allowed, restricted, or prohibited are described for each Management Area in Part 2. Each Management Area has a different mix of uses and activities that are compatible with its management emphasis and desired conditions. If a specific use or activity is not discussed, it does not mean that the San Juan has no areas where it is appropriate. Suitability is also described at a broader level for some topics, including timber harvest and livestock management.

Strategy - Special Areas and Unique Landscapes

Special areas are portions of the San Juan Public Lands that are designated because of their unique or special characteristics. Special areas are designated administratively through Plan approval (e.g., botanical areas) or the Plan can recommend designation through statute, subsequent to Plan approval (e.g., wilderness recommendations). Most special areas on the San Juan Public Lands are included in Management Areas 1 or 2. Some special areas, including National Recreation and Scenic Trails, and Wild and Scenic Rivers, are relatively narrow, linear features that cross a mixture of Management Areas.

Some other areas without Congressional or administrative designations are highlighted, under Management Area 2, as unique landscapes. Desired conditions, objectives, and suitability are described in detail for these areas.

Strategy - Monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation of plan implementation is used to evaluate progress toward achieving desired conditions and objectives, and to determine how well management requirements such as standards and guidelines are being applied. Programmatic direction on monitoring and evaluation is described in the Land Management Plan in order to provide a framework for subsequent periodic monitoring.

Design Criteria - Standards and Guidelines

Standards and guidelines are criteria used in project design and implementation that protect resources and help ensure that Plan outcomes are achieved. They are project-level operational controls that help ensure that projects are consistently implemented in ways that reduce environmental impacts. They provide technical information and guidance for project and activity decisionmaking to help achieve desired conditions and objectives.

Standards and guidelines are presented at two levels of spatial detail:

1. all San Juan Public Lands; and
2. Management Areas.

The development of projects is also guided by other sources such as Best Management Practices (BMPs), State laws and/or policies, and terms and conditions from USDI Fish and Wildlife Service conservation strategies or biological opinions. Additional examples include leasing stipulations, conditions of approval, and conditions for protecting resources that apply to coal and natural gas development projects. These and other applicable guidance from laws, regulations, policies, and agency directives are generally not detailed in this Land Management Plan unless necessary in order to emphasize or highlight information.

The USFS and BLM will conduct environmental analysis, pursuant to NEPA, as well as public involvement activities when projects are proposed. During project planning, applicable and appropriate Land Management Plan guidance will be incorporated as required design features and/or mitigation measures when the project decision is made.

CONSISTENCY OF PROJECTS WITH THE PLAN

All projects and activities authorized by the BLM and the USFS must be consistent with the Land Management Plan (16 USC 1604 (i), 43 CFR 1601.5-3). A project or activity is considered consistent with the Land Management Plan if it is consistent with the plan decisions described earlier in the Introduction.

If a project or activity as proposed would not be consistent with the Land Management Plan, the Responsible Official has the following options:

- modify the proposal so that the project or activity will be consistent;
- reject the proposal; or
- amend the plan contemporaneously with the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity is consistent with the Land Management Plan, as amended. The amendment may be limited to apply only to the project or activity.