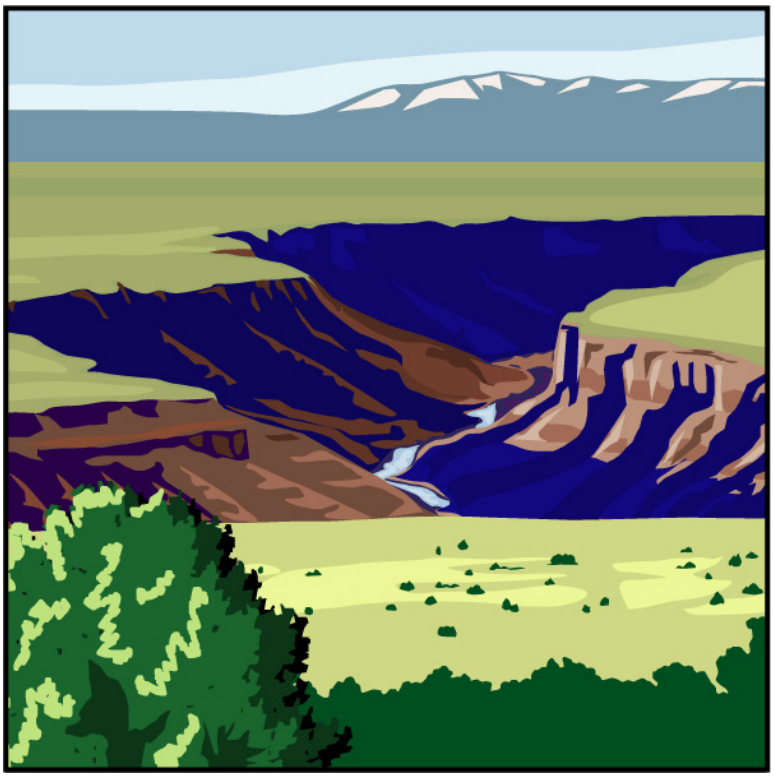
Taos
Resource Management Plan

October 1988, as Amended



US Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Farmington District
Taos Field Office
BLM-NM-PT-88-021-4410

Taos

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

OCTOBER 1988

PREPARED BY:
US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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New Mexico State Office

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Note: when the RMP was prepared, the Planning Area was a part of Albuquerque District. In 1998, Taos Resource Area became the Taos Field Office, reporting directly to the State Office. In 2004, Taos became a part of the newly created Farmington District.

Reader's Guide

The Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP) represents the work of many Bureau employees and members of the public over the past twenty years. The intent is to provide general management direction for public lands in the Planning Area, and guide all land and resource actions to achieve plan decisions.

Section 1 – Introduction provides background information on the planning area, the planning process, the planning issues, public involvement, and consistency with other plans.

Section 2 – Resource Management describes the management philosophy for administering public lands in the Planning area and identifies the planning decisions. Each resource program is then profiled through a written program objective, description of the program, program guidance, and land allocations, if applicable. Program decisions are identified under the Guidance heading including designations for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and off-highway vehicles.

Section 3 – Plan Implementation and Monitoring, describes the procedure through which the RMP will be implemented and monitored to track decision implementation.

Section 4 – Plan Maintenance and Evaluation, describes how the RMP will be managed to extend its usefulness by updating the text with new information. Procedures are also identified for evaluation how effective plan implementation is in accomplishing plan decisions. Forms are included in this section to be used in facilitating the tracking process.

Section 5 – Special Designations identifies areas which have been identified for special management attention. Each narrative provides a description of the designated area, primary management goals and management prescriptions as well as a corresponding location map. Some areas are not specifically shown due to the sensitive nature of resources in the area.

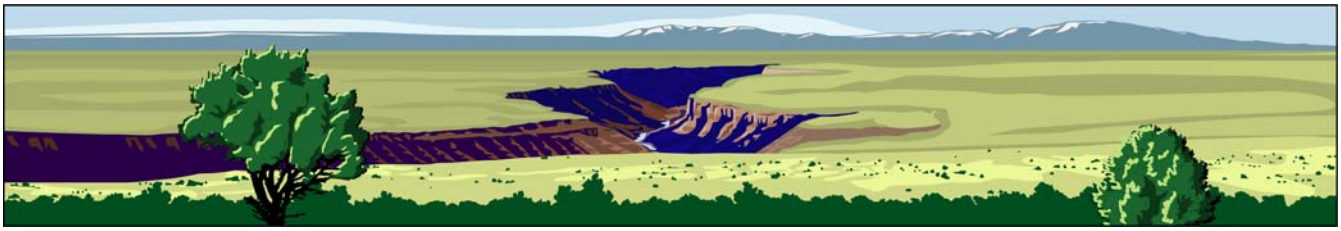
Section 6 – Land Ownership Adjustments and Easement Acquisitions, identifies state and private land acquisition priorities, public land parcels available for disposal, withdrawal reviews, and easement acquisition needs.

Updates to the Resource Management Plan

This version of the Taos RMP has been updated since its first publication in 1988. It now incorporates several amendments which have been made over the past 18 years; misspellings have been corrected; guidance for various resource programs have been updated to reflect changes in program direction, laws, or Executive Orders; and most of the maps have been updated to reflect changes in land ownership and boundary adjustments to special area designations. Several tables have also been revised to reflect updated information or progress made in implementing the original RMP.

The Taos Field Office will be revising this plan, beginning in 2006 and ending in late 2008 or early 2009. This updated RMP will serve as the No Action Alternative in the planning process now underway.

For information on the Taos Resource Management Plan Revision, go to:
www.nm.blm.gov/tafo/taos_rmpr/taos_rmpr.htm
or call the Taos Field Office at 505-758-8851.



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Section I: Introduction

Background

The Record of Decision for the Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP) was signed July 26, 1988 and set in motion the decisions and management prescriptions which address the resources and uses of the planning area. The Taos RMP has been prepared to provide a comprehensive framework for managing the public land and for allocating resources during the next 10 to 20 years using the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The RMP establishes areas for limited, restricted, or exclusive uses; levels of production; allowable resource uses; resource condition objectives; program constraints; and general management direction.

This RMP sets forth the land use decisions, terms and conditions for guiding and controlling future management actions on public lands in the Taos Planning area. All uses and activities in the Planning area must conform to the decisions, terms and conditions as described herein. The Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 for comprehensive land use planning for public lands. The management objectives and philosophies developed in this plan will be applied only to the public surface and/or mineral estate.

In addition, court-ordered and statutory requirements were met as a result of two of the decisions in this document. The first is the statutory requirement that public lands be designated as *open, limited, or closed* to vehicle use. Second, this RMP lists decisions for livestock grazing on public lands as required by the court-ordered settlement of a 1973 lawsuit filed against the Bureau of Land Management by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

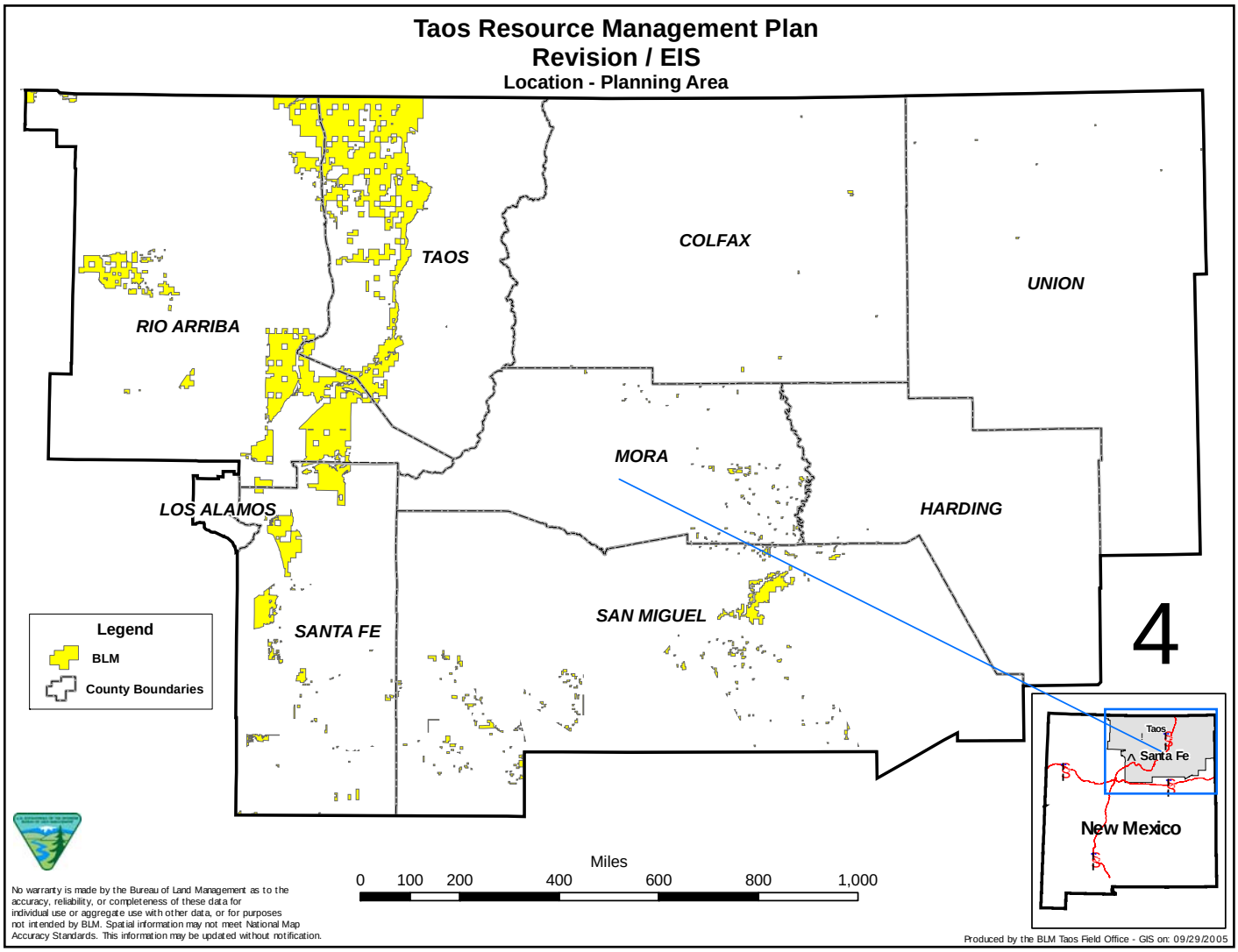
Plan amendments are intended to keep the RMP current with resource management needs and policies. To date (January 2007) seven amendments have been adopted:

Table 1-1 Amendments to the Taos RMP

Amendment	Year	Purpose
Oil and Gas Leasing and Development	1991	Established areas as opened or closed to oil and gas leasing, and determined levels of control on opened areas
La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern	1992	Amendment designated La Cienega Mesa Special Management Area as an ACEC, expanded the boundary, and changed prescriptions
Orilla Verde Recreation Area	1994	Established a Recreation Area and management prescriptions on land acquired from New Mexico State Parks
Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan	2000	Changed ACECs, Recreation Area boundaries and prescriptions, amended Right-of-Way Exclusion Areas, established Visual Resource Management classes for areas not designated in the RMP
Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management	2001	No RMP decisions were changed; RMP maintenance added a new paragraph to briefly summarize the standards and guidelines; Special Management Area prescriptions were revised as needed
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail	2004	Established a new Special Management Area, with prescriptions for management. Also amended RMP by designating Visual Resource Management classes along the trail corridor.
Fire and Fuels Management on Public Land in New Mexico and Texas	2004	State-wide amendment provided updated guidance for fire and fuel management practices

Prior to 1980, the Taos Field Office prepared land use plans, known as Management Framework Plans, for all public surface and minerals within its areas of jurisdiction. Due to changing policies and new land use conflicts and issues, a Resource Management Plan was initiated. Writing of the document itself began in 1986; however, a complex process of data gathering and other preparatory activities began earlier, in 1983. This process included resource inventory, public participation, inter-agency coordination, and preparation of an Analysis of the Management Situation report. A revision of this plan is now underway - initiated in 2006, the revision is scheduled to be completed in 2008–2009.

Map 1-1



Location and Size

The planning area, located in northeastern New Mexico, encompasses approximately 24 thousand square miles of mixed land ownership which includes Union, Mora, Colfax, San Miguel, Los Alamos, Harding, Taos, and Santa Fe Counties; and the eastern half of Rio Arriba County. Included within this area are approximately 594,000 acres of public surface estate and approximately 4,337,000 acres of subsurface minerals. Map 1-1 shows the planning area and its location within New Mexico. The population of the area is centered around the Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Espanola area to the south, and the Taos and Las Vegas area to the north.

The distribution of the public lands has an important influence on land management options. The public lands are fairly well consolidated in Taos, Santa Fe, and Rio Arriba Counties, while scattered or isolated ownership patterns predominate over much of the remaining planning area.

Table 1-2 Mineral Estate Managed by BLM

Surface Land Owner	Acres
BLM	584,000
Forest Service	2,503,000
Other Federal	51,000
Tribal	35,000
State	35,000
Private	1,129,000
Total	4,337,000

The Planning Process

Step 1 – Prepare to Plan
Develop a brief and concise Preparation Plan to determine preliminary issues or opportunities that need to be addressed, timelines for the new or revised plan, data needs, and staffing and budget requirements. The Taos Preparation Plan was completed for the RMP Revision in February 2006 (www.nm.blm.gov).

Step 2 – Issue a Notice of Intent to Prepare an RMP
This is an official notification to the public, Indian Tribes, other Federal agencies and local/state governments about our intent to develop a land use plan for a specific area. The Notice describes the preliminary issues, planning criteria, and gives information about planned scoping meetings.

Step 3 – Conduct Scoping
Scoping is a collaborative public involvement process to identify planning issues. These are disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Scoping also includes development of planning criteria, which are 'sideboards' that define the scope of the planning effort. The outcome of the public scoping process is the development of a Scoping Report (completed September 2006 for the Taos RMP Revision - www.nm.blm.gov).

Step 4 – Analyze the Management Situation
This step calls for deliberate assessment of the current situation. It includes a description of current BLM management guidance, a discussion of existing problems and opportunities for solving them, and a consolidation of existing data needed to analyze and resolve the identified issues. The end result of this step is the development of an unpublished companion document known as the Analysis of the Management Situation.

Step 5 – Formulate Alternatives
During this step several complete, reasonable resource management alternatives are prepared, including one for no action and others that strive to resolve the issues while placing emphasis either on environmental protection or resource production.

Step 6 – Analyze the Effects of Alternatives
The physical, biological, economic, and social effects of implementing each alternative are estimated in order to allow for a comparative evaluation of impacts.

Step 7 – Select a Preferred Alternative
Based on the information generated during Step 6, BLM identifies a preferred alternative. The Draft RMP/EIS is then prepared and distributed for public review.

Step 8 – Prepare a Draft RMP/EIS
This document describes the purpose and need for the plan, the affected environment, the alternatives for managing public lands in the planning area, the environmental impacts of those alternatives, and the consultation and coordination in which the BLM engaged to develop the plan.

Step 9 – Publish a Notice of Availability and Provide a Public Comment Period
The BLM must provide at least 90 days for the public to comment on the draft RMP and EIS. Public comments may be received in writing, electronically, or orally. These comments are analyzed and responses prepared, which may include modifying one or more of the alternatives, developing a new alternative, correcting errors, or changing the analysis of impacts.

Step 10 – Prepare a Proposed RMP/Final EIS
This document builds on the Draft RMP/EIS by incorporating public comments, correcting errors, and clearly displaying land use plan and implementation decisions.

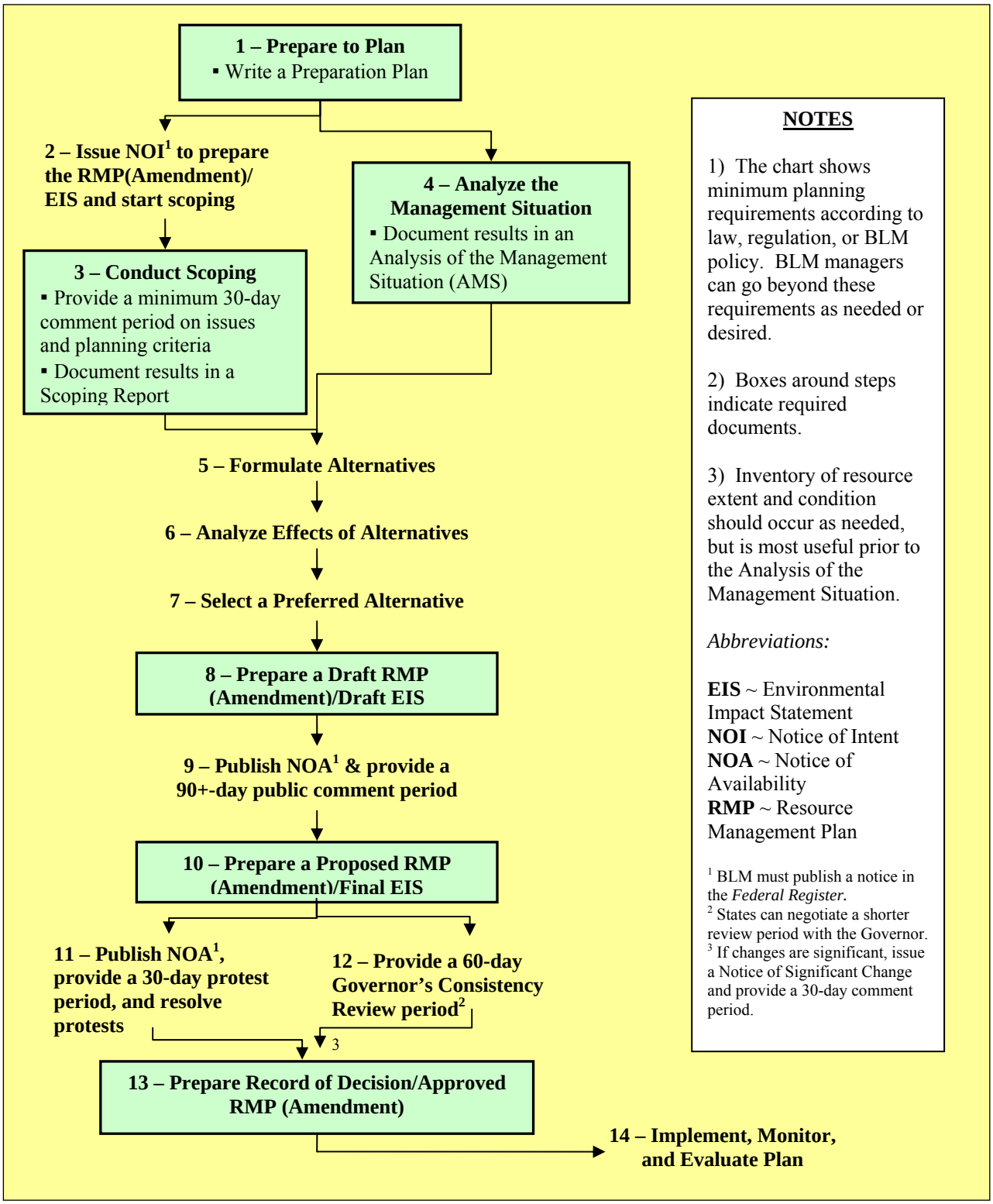
Step 11 – Publish a Notice of Availability, Provide a Protest Period, and Resolve Protests
Once the Proposed RMP and Final EIS are published, the public is given a 30-day period to protest any of the proposed decisions. The BLM must resolve any protests received before issuing a Record of Decision.

Step 12 – Provide a Governor's Consistency Review Period
In addition to the 30-day public protest period, the Governor is given a 60-day review period to ensure consistency with state and local plans, policies and programs. Any responses from the Governor on consistency must be resolved before BLM can issue the Record of Decision.

Step 13 – Prepare a Record of Decision and Approved RMP
This is typically the proposed RMP as modified in response to protests, the Governor's consistency review, or other considerations. It describes the goals, objectives, and management actions for fulfilling the management direction developed within the land use planning process.

Step 14 – Implement, Monitor and Evaluate Plan Decisions
This step involves the collection and analysis of long-term resource condition and trend data to determine the effectiveness of the RMP in resolving the identified issues, and to ensure that implementation of the RMP is achieving the desired results. Monitoring continues from the time the RMP is adopted until changing conditions require revision of the whole RMP or any portion of it.

Figure 1-1
Steps in the Land Use Planning Process



Planning Issues

The BLM planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 1600)) equate land use planning with problem solving and issue resolution. An issue is defined as an opportunity, conflict, or problem regarding the use or management of public lands and resources. Not all problems can be resolved through land use planning – some may require changes in policy, budget, or law. Issue-driven planning, which is the approach used in resource management plans, means that only those aspects of current management believed to be at issue are examined through the process of formulating and evaluating alternatives. The issue-oriented approach eliminates needless data gathering and analysis by focusing on existing conflicts and controversies.

The five issues addressed in the 1988 RMP were identified based on the judgment of the RMP interdisciplinary team of resource specialists, interagency consultation, state government input, review by BLM managers, and through extensive discussions and public meetings with individuals, industry representatives, and special interest groups.

The following five planning issues were identified for resolution in the 1988 RMP:

Issue 1 - Special Designations
What areas and resource values should be identified for special management attention?

How should such areas and resource values be managed?

Those areas having unusual, historical, cultural, paleontological, vegetative, fish or wildlife, mineral, recreational, natural hazard, or scenic values that represent natural systems or processes were identified as having greater than local significance or special local worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern.

Issue 2 - Transportation
What public lands should be designated as "open," "limited," or "closed" to vehicle use?

What transportation routes should be constructed, maintained, restricted from public use, or closed and rehabilitated?

What special use areas should be designated for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use to meet specific user group and general public demand?

What OHV designations would result in minimum conflict between people and resources and in what areas?

Public lands currently or historically used for organized or general OHV events may be designated open or limited to specific types of use if there are no special restrictions or compelling resource protection needs, user or landowner conflicts, or public safety issues to warrant further limitations.

Issue 3 - Vegetative Uses
What are the correct levels of vegetative use for livestock, wildlife, and watershed production?

Where should vegetative manipulation occur?

The BLM is obligated to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act requirements in the selection of rangeland management practices. The principal consideration for this issue is to determine changes in livestock grazing use, if any, needed to reduce conflicts between livestock grazing and other important resource values and uses. An ecological site inventory (ESI) was conducted in 1983 for the purpose of determining the ecological status of the grazing allotments and to facilitate the priority ranking of "I" category allotments.

Issue 4 - Land Ownership Adjustments
On which lands should ownership be adjusted (exchanged, disposed, and/or acquired) to facilitate more efficient management?

Which techniques should be used to facilitate more efficient management?

Special attention was needed to identify those portions of the planning area where land ownership adjustment might be needed to achieve more efficient management and use of public resources. Such ownership adjustments could include exchanges, sales, transfers, and leases.

Issue 5 - Right-of-Way Exclusion Areas
Which public lands in the planning area should be designated as utility exclusion areas?

What land-use restrictions should be placed on the public lands within identified corridors or windows?

Utility rights-of-way cross the public land in many directions. There is a need to ensure that development of linear rights-of-way does not result in undesirable impacts to other public resources and values. In general, right-of-way exclusion areas and/or windows would be designated to help guide the future placement of transmission lines and pipelines.

Changing the Plan

The RMP may be changed, if necessary, through amendment. Monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, and new or revised policies will be evaluated to determine if there is a need for an amendment. Any change in circumstances or conditions which affect the scope, terms, or conditions of the RMP may warrant an amendment. In all cases, a proposed action that does not conform to the RMP and warrants consideration before an RMP revision is scheduled would require an amendment. Generally, an amendment is site-specific or involves only one or two planning issues.

The RMP has been updated to correct errors, incorporate amendments, or to reflect change in program guidance.

An RMP revision, begun in 2006, involves the preparation of a new RMP for the entire planning area.

Public Involvement and Interagency Coordination

Throughout the development of this plan a complex process of data gathering and other preparatory activities began in 1983. This process included resource inventory, public participation, interagency coordination, and preparation of a Management Situation Analysis (MSA). The MSA is on file in the Taos Field Office, as is documentation of the public participation and interagency coordination. Consultation and coordination with agencies, organizations, and individuals occurred in a variety of ways throughout the planning process.

The planning process was officially initiated through a public notice in the *Federal Register* on January 26, 1984, announcing the formal start of the planning process. This notice invited the general public as well as other federal, state and local government agencies to identify major planning issues and to submit other comments or concerns regarding the planning effort to the BLM.

In January 1984, a number of day-long open houses were scheduled in Chama, Las Vegas, Santa Fe, Espanola, and Taos to identify the major planning issues of the Taos RMP.

The planning process was postponed late in 1984. It was resumed in April of 1986 and announced in the May 22, 1986 *Federal Register*. A mailer was sent to the public to determine if additional public meetings were necessary and to request comments on development of the alternatives. This mailer, the TAOS LAND USE PLAN, was sent in July 1986 to approximately 700 individuals and groups. No requests were received for additional planning meetings.

The ninety-day comment period for the Draft RMP began March 27, 1987 and ended July 1, 1987. The Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on March 27, 1987. In addition, public meetings and hearings were held in Taos, Las Vegas, Espanola, and Santa Fe to provide the opportunity for oral comments (see Table 1-3).

Table 1-3
Public Meeting and Hearing Summary (1987)

Location	No./Format of Meetings	Date	Attendance
Taos	2 official hearings	5-11-87	34
Las Vegas	1 information meeting	5-12-87	11
Espanola	2 information meetings	5-13-87	17
Santa Fe	2 official hearings	5-14-87	21

The public was notified about these meetings and hearings through notices in the *Federal Register*, local news articles and special newspaper inserts, on radio and television and through a direct mailing. The pertinent portions of the public hearing transcripts were reprinted in the comment and response section of the Proposed RMP and the full transcripts are available for public inspection at the Taos Field Office.

Informal coordination with the public has taken place throughout the planning process through personal contacts, telephone calls, and letters. In addition to the public meetings and hearings, numerous meetings or special management Area tours were conducted during the comment period.

In compliance with Section 8 of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, all permittees and lessees in the vegetative uses issue area were contacted by letter and informed of the selective management category assigned to the allotment and the implications of this designation. Consultation meetings with allottees have been conducted and additional meetings are being scheduled at their request.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required prior to initiation of any project by a federal agency that may affect and federally listed threatened or endangered species or its habitat. Consultation was required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This RMP is considered a major project, and letters of formal consultation are on file.

The NM Department of Game and Fish and NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department were contacted concerning state listed threatened or endangered wildlife and plant species. This plan is consistent with legislation protecting state listed species. Coordination and consultation with the state will be continued during implementation of the Plan.

The BLM cultural resource management program operates in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 800, which provides specific procedures for consultation between the BLM and the NM State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) incorporates procedures for exchanging information with the SHPO concerning cultural resources on public and private lands. It defines activities requiring consultation and establishes reporting standards.

The notice of availability of the Final EIS and the Proposed RMP was published in the *Federal Register* on September 30, 1987. The document was filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on September 30, 1987. The *Federal Register* notice announced a 30-day protest period ending on November 9, 1987. The document was distributed to participating departments of federal, state, county, city, and tribal governments and special interest groups and individuals.

The Bureau received two protests to the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The protests were denied by the Bureau Director and the Proposed RMP was accepted without changes.

Continuing Public Participation

The Taos Field Office will prepare an RMP summary update every year (prepared for 1989-1993, then discontinued). The purpose of this summary was to inform the public of the progress made in implementing the RMP. The summary also described the activity plans to be prepared the following year so that interested members of the public may request copies and comment on them. The BLM hopes that this will enable the public to become further involved in the specific land management actions resulting from the implementation of this RMP.

Consistency with Other Plans

The BLM's planning regulations require that resource management plans be "consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans, and the policies and procedures contained therein, of other federal agencies, state and local governments and Indian tribes, so long as the guidance and resource management plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands…" (43 CFR 1610.3-20). In order to ensure such consistency, plans were solicited from federal, state, and local agencies and groups as well as Tribal governments.

There are no identified inconsistencies between this RMP and officially approved and adopted resource related plans of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes.

SECTION 2 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This section describes the management direction – allocations, use limits, implementation strategy – for the resources and uses in the planning area. The Rio Grande Management Framework Plan referenced in several sections was approved in 1979; several of its decisions were carried forward into the planning effort that resulted in the 1988 Resource Management Plan. The following pages have been updated to reflect changes made by seven Amendments to the original RMP, as well as changes in resource program guidance that have been made by Federal law, Presidential Executive Order, or other policy changes.

Plan Decisions

Issue #1 – Special Designations
Thirty-three areas have received some form of special designation, including eight Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (see map 2-1). The management prescriptions for each designated area and the following Management Framework Plan decisions will direct how these areas and their resources will be managed:

1. Disallow any action where removal of vegetation would adversely alter areas with riparian habitat.

2. Control surface-disturbing activities on public lands in T 21 N, R 9 E, and R 10 E (the El Palacio area east of Alcalde).

3. Protect riparian habitat while providing water needs for the livestock industry.

4. Manage and monitor the upper Rio Chama from El Vado, south, as a wintering habitat for bald eagles.

5. Limit all new leasable mineral exploration and saleable mineral exploration and extraction activities in crucial antelope habitat in the northern portion of the planning area to activities that are compatible with antelope kidding periods.

6. Prevent channelization or dredging operations on public lands along all active riparian stream areas to preserve wildlife habitat and fishery resources.

7. Initiate studies in all permanent streams in the Planning area to establish minimum flows to maintain existing aquatic habitat.

8. Develop a Cooperative Management Plan with the US Forest Service and the NM Department of Game and Fish with respect to joint management of the San Antonio Mountain as a Wildlife Management Area. [Completed as part of the San Antonio – Pot Mountain Habitat Management Plan, 1991]

Goals for land allocation management will be achieved where stated and the management prescriptions will be implemented for each area with a special designation (see Section 5).

Issue #2 – Transportation
OHV use on most public lands to be retained in Federal ownership is limited to "existing roads and trails" (see map 2-2). This general designation covers approximately 479,000 acres of public lands located in Rio Arriba, Taos and northern Santa Fe Counties. In the remainder of the Planning area, about 85,000 acres of scattered tracts of public lands will be open to vehicle use. Exceptions to these two general area designations pertain to 33 Special Designations (see pages 2-37/38).

Issue #3 – Vegetative Uses
There will be an estimated long term increase of 13% in Animal Unit Months in the planning area. Vegetative manipulation to control sagebrush and increase perennial grass production will occur where there is extensive big-sagebrush growth.

Correct levels of vegetative use will be set, based on a four year monitoring plan. The ecological condition and vegetative productivity over the long term will be maintained and riparian areas, critical watersheds, and critical wildlife habitats will be protected.

Issue #4 – Land Ownership Adjustments
Within the planning area, 84,518 acres have been identified for exchange or disposal (see map 2-3 and maps 6-1 through 6-4). Lands not within these areas will be retained and expanded to consolidate federal ownership and improve public access.

The following Management Framework Plan decisions are carried forward as objectives in managing the planning area:

1. Transfer 619 acres of public land near Espanola from Federal ownership, by sale or a Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease.

2. Retain 20 acres of public land in Sec. 28, T. 25 N., R. 13 E., for a BLM administrative facility.

3. Transfer from Federal ownership though exchange or sale under Sections 203 and 206 of FLPMA, all scattered and isolated tracts of public lands in Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, and Taos Counties.

4. Acquire or obtain the necessary easements and/or rights-of-way.

5. Acquire certain State lands in the northern part of the planning area.

6. Transfer from Federal ownership, through exchange with the New Mexico State Land Office of any other interested parties, lands in the southern portion of the planning area.

7. Acquire certain State and private lands in the northern part of the Planning area for the purpose of "blocking" commercial timber and pinyon-juniper stands now under partial BLM jurisdiction.

8. Acquire all of Ute Mountain (T. 31 N., R. 12 E.) for its recreational values and for the buffer area it provides to the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, and restrict mineral leasing, development, and material sale in the buffer area (acquisition was completed in 2005).

Issue #5 – Right-of Way Exclusions Areas
Six rights of ways exclusion areas are identified under "Lands" in this section (see map 2-4). In addition, two areas are designated where right-of-way restrictions apply: 1) a scenic overlook of the Rio Grande from NM 68; and 2) the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River. Special stipulations and restricted placement of structures are required to minimize visual impacts and other public resources and values.

RESOURCE PROGRAMS

This section is arranged by resource program. Each program contains discussion on objectives, descriptions, guidance and applicable land allocations.

The program objective describes the mission and direction for program management. The program description identifies the existing resources and major programs currently operating within the Planning area. The program guidance portion identifies the major laws, regulations and policies directing resource management.

The OHV designations and ACEC designations that each resource program is responsible for during plan implementation are also listed. Land allocation decisions are listed for each program requiring land allocations as part of issue resolution.

The management prescriptions listed for each special designation discussed in Section 5, make up the action steps to be taken which have been identified at this stage of planning.

Stocking fish in the Rio Grande north of the Red River confluence

LANDS

Objectives

The lands program has two objectives: to facilitate the acquisition, exchange, or disposal of public lands to provide the most efficient management of public resources; and, to grant right-of-way corridors and acquire easements while minimizing undesirable impacts to other public resources and values.

Description

The Taos Field Office administers approximately 594,000 acres of public surface estate. These lands are fairly well consolidated in Taos, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe Counties. Throughout the remainder of the Planning area fragmented and isolated patterns of public land exist. An exception to the fragmented pattern is found in San Miguel County in an area known as the Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area, which contains approximately 17,000 acres and is well consolidated.

Lands administered by BLM in Taos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe Counties are contiguous with several Indian pueblos (Picuris, Ohkay Owingeh, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Pojoaque, and Nambe). Much of the adjacent public land is traditionally used by these pueblos for wood gathering and religious purposes.

The Rio Grande Management Framework Plan (1979) identified approximately 5,000 acres in Taos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe Counties as suitable for disposal. Within the remaining counties approximately 30,000 acres qualify as being isolated and difficult to manage.

In Santa Fe County the close proximity of public lands to population centers creates an active lands program for the Taos Field Office. Rights-of-way for access, utilities, and communication sites are in demand. A number of Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) leases and patents have been issued. These have primarily been for schools, churches, landfills and recreation areas. With the increasing numbers of requests for land sales and exchanges the work load will continue to grow as more land around these communities is developed.

Guidance

Land Ownership Adjustments - Acquisition and Retention Zones

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act states that public lands should be retained in federal ownership unless adjustment is in the public interest. Therefore, public surface will remain under BLM administration if resources of national, state, or regional significance area found on them, and the possible adverse effects of the adjustment action cannot be mitigated at reasonable cost. Examples of such resources are: habitat for threatened or endangered species, riparian areas, wetlands, and important cultural resources.

Management is improved by consolidating public lands in contiguous land ownership patterns. Acquisitions through exchange that consolidate ownership of public use areas, wildlife habitat, watersheds, land treatment areas, grazing lands, cultural resource sites and special designation areas will have priority.

Land Ownership Adjustments – Disposal Zones

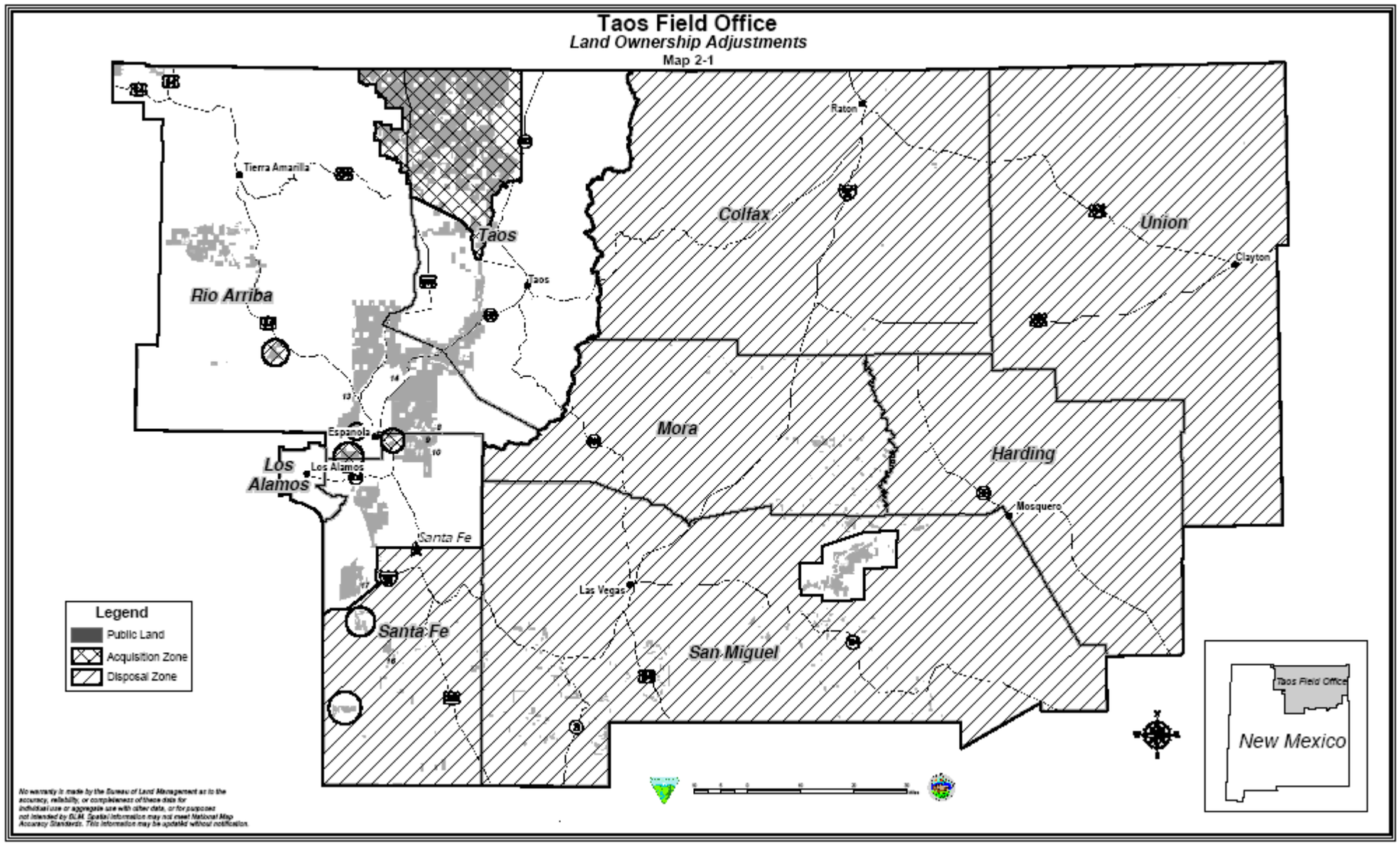
Any lands designated for land ownership adjustment must be so identified through the Bureau's land use planning process. Additionally, all lands identified for sale or exchange in this RMP must meet the criteria established in Sections 203 and 209 of FLPMA. Use authorizations such as Recreation and Public Purposes leases will be considered for approval as they are received.

The federal government will generally retain all mineral rights and reservations for ditches and canals. Rights-of-way and easements will also be retained, if necessary, when implementing exchanges or other types of disposal actions (see maps 6-1through 6-4).

Existing authorized permits, leases, rights-of-way, and licenses will be identified as valid existing rights. All exchanges or disposals of public land will be subject to valid existing rights. Holders of valid permits or cooperative agreements covered by Section 4 of the Taylor Grazing Act will be reimbursed, by the new land owner, for financial investments they have made in rangeland improvements on public lands if the BLM exchanges or disposes of the land.

Land Ownership Adjustments - Public Land Exchanges/Sales

All exchange proposals are prepared in conformance with FLPMA and National Environmental Policy Act requirements, including extensive public review. In 1984, the Bureau of Land Management's New Mexico State Director and the Commissioner of Public Lands of the State of New Mexico signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a comprehensive, long-term statewide land exchange program between the BLM and the State of New Mexico (USDI, BLM 1984b). The objectives of this program are to improve the land management potential of both state and federal lands; eliminate unnecessary federal and state conflicts


Taos Field Office
Land Ownership Adjustments
Map 2-1
Raton
Tierra Amarilla
Colfax
Union
Taos
Clayton
Taos
Rio Arriba
Mora
Harding
Espanola
Los Alamos
Los Alamos
Mosquero
Santa Fe
Las Vegas
Santa Fe
San Miguel
Legend
Public Land
Acquisition Zone
Disposal Zone
Taos Field Office
New Mexico
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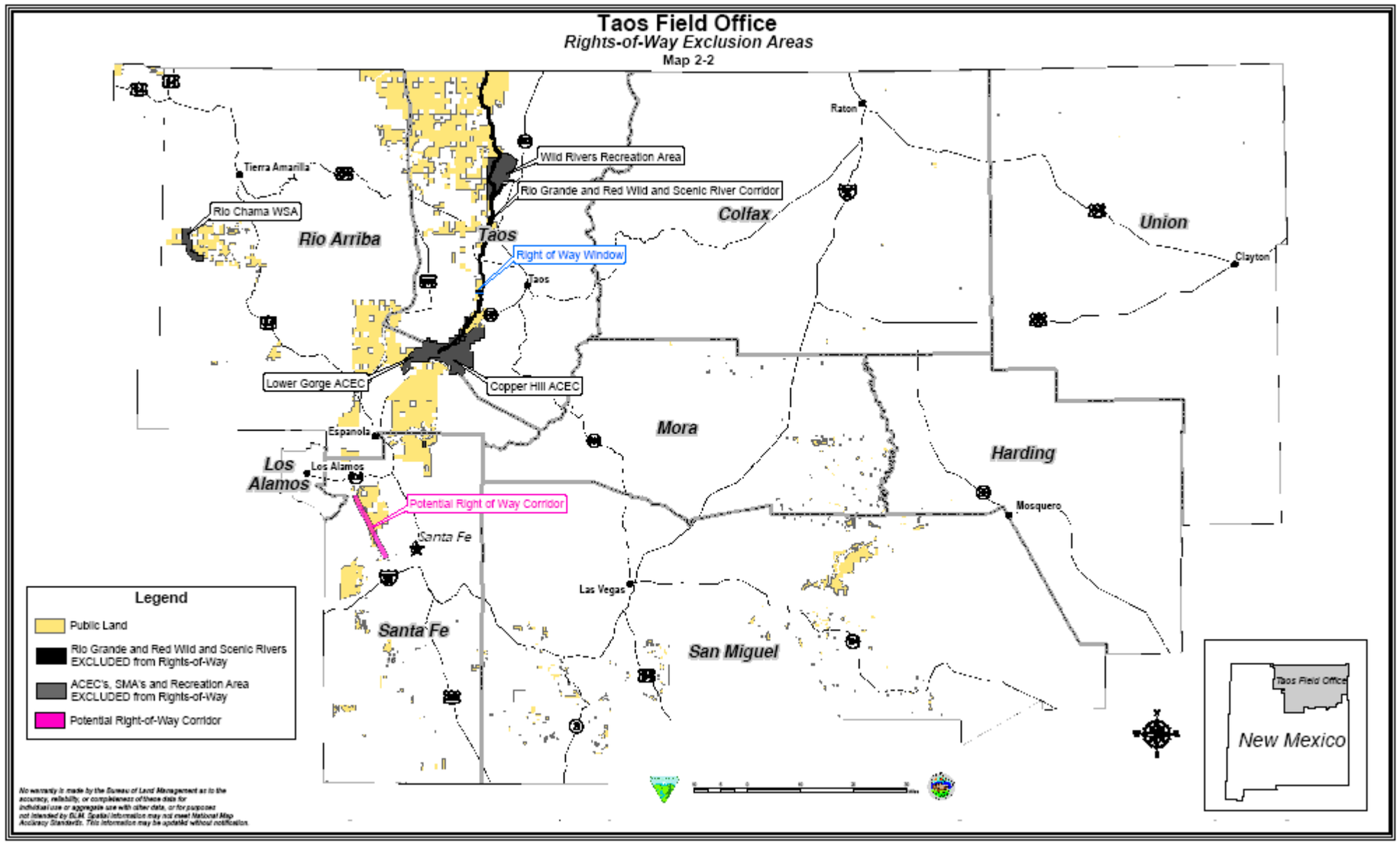

Taos Field Office
Rights-of-Way Exclusion Areas
Map 2-2
Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic River Corridor
Right of Way Window
Rio Chama WSA
Lower Gorge ACEC
Copper Hill ACEC
Potential Right of Way Corridor
Tierra Amarilla
Raton
Taos
Clayton
Espanola
Los Alamos
Santa Fe
Las Vegas
Mosquero
Rio Arriba
Colfax
Union
Mora
Harding
Los Alamos
Santa Fe
San Miguel
Legend
Public Land
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers EXCLUDED from Rights-of-Way
ACEC's, SMA's and Recreation Area EXCLUDED from Rights-of-Way
Potential Right-of-Way Corridor
Taos Field Office
New Mexico

generated by existing ownership patterns; facilitate the management of state and BLM lands by substantially realigning the scattered state and BLM sections and creating solid block or consolidated land ownership; and develop procedures that are most expeditious and cost effective.

Sales of public lands identified as suitable for adjustment in an approved land use plan are administered on a case-by-case basis. All sale actions are reviewed by the BLM-New Mexico's Land Tenure Steering Committee, and if approved, are then subject to public participation and review. Exchange or sale of any land must meet the adjustment criteria established for these types of actions in FLPMA.

Public Land Withdrawals
In an effort to keep as much of the public land open to the widest variety of uses, the BLM reviews existing withdrawals on public lands on a periodic basis. This review ensures that the reasons for the withdrawals are still valid and that only the acreage needed is retained in withdrawn status. Lands withdrawn and land recommended for withdrawal are shown in Table 2-3. Review of BLM and other federal agency withdrawals will be completed by 1991 for withdrawal. Upon revocation or modification of a withdrawal, all or part of the withdrawn land could be restored to multiple use management.

BLM policy is to minimize the amount of public land withdrawn, particularly from mining and mineral leasing, and where applicable, to replace existing withdrawals with rights-of-way, leases, permits, or cooperative agreements. Withdrawal applications will be reviewed to determine if formal withdrawal is needed.

Withdrawals to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the purpose of benefiting Indian groups will only be used for administrative sites and for segregating the land from operations under the mining laws in support of land exchange or sale proposals. They will not be used for transferring management responsibility.

Recreation and Public Purposes
A number of inquiries are received annually concerning the leasing of public lands under the authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act. Under the Act, the BLM can lease or patent public lands to governmental or non-profit entities for public parks, building sites, correction centers, or other public purposes. Applications are processed under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and are subject to public review.

Right-of-Way Exclusion Areas
The Taos Field Office grants rights-of-way, leases, and permits to qualified individuals, businesses, and governmental entities for the use of the public lands. Protection of natural and cultural resources is considered in the granting process. Listed below are the SMAs within which resource values would be significantly impacted by the construction of new right-of-way corridors. For this reason, future rights-of-way construction is prohibited in these areas:

Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Rio Chama Special Management Area
Copper Hill ACEC
(new rights-of-way are still allowed in the Central Protection Zone – see Rio Grande Corridor Plan, 2000)
Lower Gorge ACEC
(new rights-of-way will be excluded unless needed to administer recreation sites or to provide access or utility service to private or state lands where it is otherwise not possible. Utilities will be underground only and will be co-located with roads – see Rio Grande Corridor Plan, 2000).
Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area

The remaining special area designations contain management prescriptions that require special stipulations for informed placement of right-of-way corridors and windows before an application can be granted.

The remainder of the planning area would be available for rights-of-way on a case-by-case basis. Maximum use of existing rights-of-way is encouraged, including joint use whenever possible. All right-of-way actions will be coordinated with federal, state, and local government agencies, adjacent landowners, and interested individuals and groups.

Access
The Taos Field Office has not had an active easement acquisition program. This is largely due to the numerous roads located throughout the planning area that have historically been open to the public. Refer to Section 6 (page 6-6) for a list of easement acquisition needs. In addition, the development of a transportation plan will incorporate these access requirements.

Acquisition
An acquisition zone has been identified where public land would be retained and expanded to consolidate federal ownership and improve public access (Map 2-3). No active acquisition program would be pursued on lands not within this zone; however, acquisitions through exchange would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

MINERALS

Objective

The objective of the minerals program is to provide the opportunity for development of mineral resources in a manner which minimizes environmental damage and provides for the rehabilitation of affected lands.

Description

There are five types of mineral activities within the planning area that require management. They are oil, gas and carbon dioxide leasing; geothermal leasing; coal management; locatable minerals; and mineral materials. These programs will continue to be a high priority responsibility for the Taos Field Office.

Oil, Gas, and Carbon Dioxide Leasing
As of October 2006, there were 190 federal leases for oil and gas covering 1,244,042 acres. Oil and natural gas production is insignificant, but large amounts of carbon dioxide gas have been produced from the Buyeros field in the eastern part of the planning area. The Taos Field Office is responsible for processing Applications for Permit to Drill; pre-drill inspection of proposed drill sites; cultural resource and threatened or endangered species clearances; compliance inspections and enforcement of lease terms, conditions, safety requirements, production verification, site maintenance and security; and well site abandonment inspections. Records are maintained for all leases for which the Field Office has responsibility. They are continually updated to show status (active, inactive, producing, non-producing, etc.), changes in operators, assignments of lease rights and other actions. Any required Known Geologic Structure determinations and approval of agreements (such as unitization, communitization, and development contracts) within the planning area would be done by the Farmington Field Office.

Geothermal Leasing
The planning area currently has no federal geothermal leases; however, locations near Ojo Caliente, Taos, and Las Vegas have high geothermal resource potential.

Coal Management
The Raton Field is part of the Denver-Raton Mesa Coal Region. At present, no federal coal is being mined in the Raton Field and all production is from the privately owned Maxwell Grant. The Denver-Raton Mesa Coal Region was dissolved in the early 1980s leaving the area open to lease by application. The region was decertified because industry interest was too small to justify federally-initiated lease offerings.

The planning area's other coal field, the Cerrillos Field, was dropped from consideration for leasing in the Rio Grande Management Framework Plan (1979).

Saleable Minerals
Saleable minerals include such common variety materials as sand and gravel, fill, volcanic cinders and brick clay. In the planning area, five scoria (volcanic cinder), and three or four sand and gravel operations are normally underway. This level of use will probably continue or increase in the future.

Locatable Minerals
Locatable minerals in the planning area include molybdenum, beryllium, perlite, pumice, rare earth elements, mica, gold, silver, uranium, and copper. Field Office activities include processing Notices of Intent and Plans of Operation. Some validity examinations are conducted from time to time for Bureau actions such as surface conveyance in sales or exchanges.

Guidance

It is the policy of the Bureau to make mineral resources available for disposal and to encourage development of these resources consistent with national objectives for maintaining an adequate supply of minerals at reasonable market prices. At the same time, the BLM strives to ensure that mineral development is carried out in a manner which minimizes environmental damage and provides for the rehabilitation of affected lands.

Table 2-1
Areas Open and Closed to Fluid Mineral Leasing by the Taos RMP (as amended in 1991)

Management Category	Acres
Open: Standard Lease Terms and Conditions	1,240,500 *
Open: With Constraints – Timing Limitations	7,000
Open: With Constraints – Controlled Surface Use	145,500
Open: With Constraints – No Surface Occupancy	17,400
Closed: Discretionary	12,200
Closed: Nondiscretionary (Rio Grande/Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River, and Rio Chama, Sabinoso and San Antonio WSAs)	51,000 **
Total BLM-Managed Oil and Gas Estate	1,473,600 *

* Does not include Federal oil and gas interests under National Forest lands.
** Approximately 16,000 acres of Wild and Scenic Rivers and Wilderness Study Areas overlap areas with constraints in the San Antonio, Wild Rivers, and Rio Chama SMAs.

Oil, Gas, and Carbon Dioxide Leasing
The Field Office's responsibilities consist of permitting and inspection and enforcement programs. As a general rule, all public lands not managed under the Bureau Wilderness Management Policy (USDI, BLM 1981a) and Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for lands Under Wilderness Review (USDI, BLM 1979) are available for oil, gas and carbon dioxide leasing, exploration and development. In certain areas, oil and gas leases are issued with only standard stipulations attached. In other areas, leases may have special stipulations attached at the time of issuance to protect sensitive resources. In highly sensitive areas, where special stipulations are not sufficient to protect important resources, "no surface occupancy" stipulations are attached to leases. Site-specific decisions regarding lease issuance and the attachment of appropriate stipulations will continue to be based on the guidance and policy statements in this plan. Appendix A of the Plan describes the fluid minerals leasing process and special stipulations in more detail. Table 2-2 shows acres in the planning area which are open, open with constraints, and closed to leasing and development.

Geothermal Leasing
Although authorized under separate statute and implemented by different regulations, geothermal leasing is virtually identical to oil and gas leasing. The same sequence of activities and leasing actions is followed, whether the commodity is oil and gas, carbon dioxide, or geothermal fluids. Site-specific decisions regarding the attachment of appropriate stipulations will be based on the Taos RMP.

Coal Management
There is no known interest in federal coal in either the Raton or Cerrillos Fields. Because of the lack of interest, BLM management has decided that it would be premature to identify areas as acceptable for coal leasing. If the need arises, this can be handled through a subsequent plan amendment.

Material Sales and Permits
Federal lands are the major source of mineral materials (primarily sand and gravel) for industrial, state and local projects in Taos, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe Counties. The Field Office is responsible for the sale, permitting, and inspection and enforcement programs for mineral material activity. Regulations directing this program are found in 43 CFR 3600. Table 2-3 shows acres open and closed to saleable mineral disposal in the planning area.

Locatable Minerals Management
Mineral exploration and development on public land is regulated under 43 CFR 3800. The Field Office's responsibility in this program consists of completing validity examinations for patent or Bureau actions, and review and inspection of Notices of Intent to conduct operations, and Plans of Operation. Table 2-3 shows acres open and closed to mineral location in the planning area, as well as areas requiring a Plan of Operation for locatable mineral development.

Although the Taos Field Office does not have reclamation responsibility, it does have a responsibility to identify reclamation needs, and monitor operations.

Table 2-2 Areas Open and Closed to Operation of the Mining Laws and to Mineral Material Disposal		
Management Category	Locatable Minerals Acres	Mineral Materials Acres
Open: Standard Conditions	1,640,380 *	1,660,700 *
Open with Constraints: 3809 Plan of Operations required before surface disturbance on any mining claim in certain SMAs	38,350	0
Closed: Discretionary (certain Special Management Areas)	24,495	38,815
Closed: Nondiscretionary (Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River; and Rio Chama, Sabinoso and San Antonio WSAs)	51,675 **	51,675 ***
Other Withdrawals Potentially Restricted or Closed (restrictions vary by specific laws and orders; acreage included in Open with Standard Conditions)		
Power Withdrawals and Classifications	8,971	8,971
Rio Grande State Park (now Orilla Verde Recreation Area)	1,325	1,325
Total BLM-Managed Locatable and Saleable Minerals	**1,746,000 ***	**1,746.000 ***
* Does not include federal minerals under National Forest lands. ** Includes 8,900 acres of overlap with SMA restrictions and closures. *** Includes 5,200 acres of overlap with SMA restrictions and closures. NOTE: this table does not reflect changes made in withdrawals since 1988		

Withdrawals

The public lands recommended for withdrawal from future mineral entry and closed to mineral material disposal, and oil and gas leasing, subject to valid existing rights, are listed in Table 2-3. Refer to Section 5 for maps of the special designation areas. There are other special land withdrawals that may or may not prohibit mineral entry or material disposal. Review of these withdrawals will be done on a case-by-case basis as the need arises.

Land Allocations

Management Framework Plan Decisions Brought Forward

Reduce saleable mineral material trespass activities by developing a minerals trespass control plan.

Review the present inventory of material site rights-of-way within the Planning area, and solicit relinquishments of all rights-of-way which do not involve surface occupancy.

An attempt should be made to ensure that fossil materials, if present, are recovered from BLM sand and gravel quarries within the Taos Planning area by formally encouraging operators to report and/or salvage fossils uncovered in the quarry operations.

Table 2-3
Recommended Mineral Withdrawals/Closures

Special Management Area	Withdrawals/Closures Recommended in RMP or other plans			
	mineral entry-proposed acres	mineral entry-completed acres	material sale closures	oil & gas[1]
Orilla Verde Recreation Area	all- 8,406	5,911	closed	no lease
Lower Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern	all-16,351	4,820	closed	no lease
San Antonio Area				
San Antonio Special Management Area	none	n/a	open	open-CSU
San Antonio Wilderness Study Area	none	n/a	closed	no lease
San Antonio Gorge ACEC	all-267 acres	?	closed	no lease
Winter Range ACEC	none	n/a	520 acres	open-NSO
Wild Rivers Recreation Area	all-20,231	9,952.0	closed	no lease-5,000 acres open-NSO 15,231 ac
Rio Chama Area				
Rio Chama Special Management Area	6,588	4,236	closed	no lease
Rio Chama Wild & Scenic River	2,222	2,044	closed	no lease
Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area[3]	11,146	3,301	closed	no lease
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River	all-17,286	2,192	closed	no lease
Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern	pueblos-252	291	closed	open-CSU
Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern	17,262			
Embudo Canyon Protection Zone	2,644	1,713	closed	no lease
Agua Caliente Protection Zone	3,425	878	closed	no lease
Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone	482	0	closed	open-NSO
Central Protection Zone	10,711	4,386	closed	open
Sahiu Pueblo Special Management Area[4]	all	0	closed	open-NSO
Ku Pueblo Special Management Area	all-65	0		open-NSO
Ojo del Zorro Pueblo Special Management Area	all-24	0		open-NSO
Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area	all-159	0	closed	open-NSO
Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area	all-640	0	closed	open-NSO
La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area	included above		closed	open-NSO
Pueblo Sarco Special Management Area	all-10	0	closed	open-NSO
La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern	all-3,556	0	closed	open-NSO
San Lazaro Special Management Area	all-77	0	closed	open-NSO
Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Area[5]	selected acreage -not determined		closed	open-CSU
BLM Office Lot	all-20	0	open	open
Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern	none	n/a	open	open-CSU

1 Open-NSO=open to mineral leasing, with a No Surface Occupancy Stipulation; Open-CSU=open to mineral leasing with a Controlled Surface Use stipulation; Open-timing=open to mineral leasing with a stipulation limiting actions to a specific time of year (see Appendix A for more detail)

2

3 Only that portion of the Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area which is in the Special Management Area is recommended for withdrawal from mineral entry.

4 Because the area in which Sahiu Pueblo is located has never been legally subdivided, it cannot be precisely determined who owns which parts until a cadastral survey has been completed.

5 Because Riparian/Aquatic Areas traverse portions of public, state, and private land and they are incompletely mapped and studied, the total acreage associated with each riparian system is undetermined.

SOIL, WATER AND AIR RESOURCES

Objective

The soil, water and air program emphasizes the protection, maintenance and enhancement of these resources in the Planning Area. It also provides support, as needed, to other resource programs and activities.

Description

The planning area contains three of the six major soil regions in New Mexico. The highest and coldest, the Mountain Soil Region, is represented in the north-central portion where the topography includes steep canyons, mesa tops, foothills, and lava flows. Soils are developing on a variety of parent material and range from shallow to more than five feet thick. Textures range from moderately coarse to fine. Approximately 20% of the Planning area is in this region.

The public lands on the east side of the planning area are located in the East Central Plains Soil Region. This is an area of undulating to rolling uplands, with smooth valleys and closed basins. The Canadian River Gorge cuts through this region and has steep sides up to 1,000 feet high. Soil parent materials include deep alluvium, sandstone, shale, limestone, and acid igneous rocks. Shallow soils with cemented caliche horizons are common in undulating topography, while shallow to deep soils occur on level bottoms. Approximately 10% of the Planning Area is in this region.

The remaining 70% of the planning area is located in the Western Soil Region and consists of broad mesas, plateaus, and lava flows, all interspersed with deep canyons and dry washes. The Rio Grande cuts a 200 to 800 foot deep gorge through the northern half of this region. Soils on the steeper slopes are generally shallow, moderately fine textured, and contain a high percentage of coarse fragments. Mesa tops, plateaus, and lava flows have soils that are shallow to moderately deep, and moderately coarse to medium textured. Cobbles and stones are common to soils developing on floodplains, and the small areas of badlands range from shallow to deep, with medium to fine textures and few coarse fragments. Saline soils are confined to localized spots.

Erosion Condition
Based on data collected in 1978-79 for the Rio Grande Management Framework Plan, the erosion condition of areas within watersheds in the Upper Rio Grande Basin were described as one of the following: stable, slight, moderate, critical, or severe (USDI, BLM 1978b). There are 13 watershed areas delineated in this portion of the planning area. Scattered tracts on the east side of the planning area have not been inventoried and were not included in the watershed evaluation. Current watershed conditions and trends are generally consistent with this those identified in the Management Framework Plan because management has not changed. In 2006, the Taos Field Office completed a landscape scale data survey for the Fire Management Plan that includes erosion and sedimentation potential for much of the planning area.

Soil Surveys
Soil survey information for the entire planning area is available. Not all surveys have been published, however, and some are scheduled for updating. Soil surveys cover either individual counties or soil survey areas. The Taos soil survey covers Taos County and parts of Rio Arriba and Mora Counties.

Water Resources
The Planning Area is divided into three major surface water basins. Ninety percent of the planning area lies in the Upper Rio Grande Basin. The remaining ten percent consists of mostly small, scattered parcels and lies within the Pecos and Canadian River basins.

Upper Rio Grande Basin
The Upper Rio Grande Basin, as defined by the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission, covers about 7,500 square miles of the Rio Grande drainage area in north-central New Mexico, and extends from the Angostura Diversion Works below Cochiti Reservoir northward to the Colorado-New Mexico state line. Principal tributaries of the Rio Grande located in this basin include Red River, Taos River, Embudo Creek and Rio Chama, all of which sustain perennial flow throughout their length; and Rio Costilla, Rio Truchas, El Rito Creek, Rio Ojo Caliente, Pojoaque River, Santa Fe River, Santa Cruz River and Galisteo River, are some of the intermittent tributaries to the Rio Grande. Most tributaries in the planning area are ephemeral channels.

Surface Water Quantity
The Upper Rio Grande Basin is the major water producing area in the Rio Grande Basin of New Mexico. In the high mountain area of this Basin, including the Sangre de Cristo, San Juan and Jemez mountain ranges, snow pack has a relatively high average annual total, a relatively low rate of evapo-transpiration, and is responsible for the significant surface flows generated in the area. None the less, high community demand, variable annual precipitation and prolonged drought can result in extremely low surface flows and has caused some perennial tributaries to become intermittent.

Other water available to the Upper Rio Grande includes San Juan-Chama Project water, which diverts 150,000 acre-feet of water annually from the San Juan to the Rio Chama. This has increased the average annual flows in the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande below the mouth of the Rio Chama since 1972. The San Luis Valley Project is scheduled to be completed in 1990 and could increase flows of the Rio Grande in Colorado by 145 cfs or 105,000 acre-feet annually.

Surface Water Quality
The BLM is required to meet water quality standards under the Clean Water Act. The New Mexico Environment Department is responsible for monitoring perennial surface waters for compliance with the Clean Water Act. To this end, the Environment Department has identified surface waters, developed water quality criteria by which to set limits and collected water quality data for all surface waters in the Decision Area. For any stream reach or lake that does not meet standards for a particular parameter, the Environment Department lists the specific water body and impairment in the 303.d list. The Environment Department then develops a Total Maximum Daily Load report that sets the TMDL for the water body, reasons for impairment and potential mitigation to reduce load. The BLM and state work under a Memorandum of Understanding to meet water quality standards on public lands and follow permitting requirements.

Two impairments of particular concern in the planning area include sedimentation and temperature. Generally, waters in the planning area exceed sediment loads and temperature limits for designated uses such as cold water fisheries. Severe sediment production can occur when heavy precipitation (large quantities in short time frame) fall on erosive soils that lack adequate vegetative cover. The Taos Field Office can actively reduce sedimentation by assessing soil condition and increasing appropriate vegetative cover.

Ground Water Quantity
The development of ground water in the planning area is under the administration of the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer which defines and declares ground water basins for water rights purposes. A general map of those basins can be obtained from the State Engineer.

The Santa Fe Formation is the major aquifer in the region. Beneath the lava plateau, along the Rio Grande, both andesite-basalt and the alluvial sediments furnish an adequate supply of moderately hard water for domestic and livestock use. The water is encountered at depths of about 250 to 750 feet beneath the surface, although some perched ground water tables, yielding an intermittent water supply, are found at shallow depths along arroyos. The basalt generally does not produce as much water as the deeper Santa Fe Formation.

Ground Water Quality
The quality of ground water in the Upper Rio Grande Basin is generally good. Slightly saline ground water occurs near the confluence of the Rio Chama and El Rito Creek, in the mountainous area of central Rio Arriba county and northeast Sandoval County. Ground water in the basin is moderately hard but is generally adequate for irrigation, stock, and domestic consumption.

A five year study of water quality on the Rio Grande and Red Rivers was initiated in the fall of 1978. The study was designed to gather baseline information on surface water quality and to assess the impact of mine tailings effluent and spills on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River System. This study was extended two years to refine the data base and to include the monitoring of ground water. Ground water was added to the study when the Molycorp molybdenum mine proposed to expand their tailings facility into an area which could impact springs within the Rio Grande Wild River System.

The Canadian River Basin is characterized by wide fluctuations in flow, with little base flow and significant peaks in June-August from snow melt, combined with spring rains or thunderstorms in mid-summer.

Ground water in the Canadian River Basin is used in rural households and for watering livestock, for irrigation, and for supplying a number of municipalities. In general, the depth to ground water is less than 200 feet, with fairly large disbursed areas of depths to water of 200 to 500 feet. In most areas, ground water is difficult to obtain and at present has not been developed extensively.

The quality of ground water in the Canadian River Basin ranges widely between aquifers, in accordance with the solubility of the constituents of the various rocks through which the water flows. Most of the Basin is underlain, generally at succeedingly greater depths, with aquifers of less than 1,000 feet in thickness containing fresh, slightly saline, moderately saline, and very saline waters.

Air Quality
Air quality is estimated to be better than state standards throughout the planning area. There are eight Air Quality Control Regions in New Mexico. State regions 3 and 4 (corresponding to federal regions 154 and 157) cover the planning area.

The New Mexico state standards for air quality are presented in the New Mexico Environment Department Air Quality Bureau Annual Report. Within the planning area these standards are exceeded mainly in, or near, communities where fugitive emissions from vehicles, fires or dust degrade them periodically. Outside these communities the air quality is better due to an absence of these factors. BLM and Molycorp are cooperating to collect meteorological data at Guadalupe Mountain, near Questa, to develop a better model of potential air quality impacts.

Values for "suspended particulates" (solid or liquid matter which is dispersed in the atmosphere), the major air pollutant in regions 3 and 4, is given for each region in the Air Quality Bureau Annual Reports. Based on this information the planning area appears to have some of the best air quality in the state.

Guidance

Soil, Water and Air
Policy and guidance for the management of soil, water and air resources associated with lands administered by the Bureau are summarized in Manual Sections 7000.

Soils
Participation with the Natural Resource Conservation Service in the National Cooperative Soil Survey will continue. Continual evaluation and updating of older soil surveys is necessary to maintain a current database. Detailed soil surveys for individual projects will be conducted as needed. Soil information will be conducted as needed. Soil information will be used in planning, support, and implementation of all resource activities. Emphasis is placed on prevention of deterioration or degradation of soil and water resources as well as on their conservation.

The soils program will continue to provide support to other resource activities of the Field Office. The program will also continue to emphasize its legal mandates of protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the soil resources.

Hydrology
General program emphasis is on water rights, water quality, and watershed improvement—specifically water quantity (runoff) and channel stability (sediment yield). Additionally, the water resource program provides direct input to specific situations in proposed or ongoing resource development and management programs.

Water Rights
All water rights are acquired in accordance with state substantive and procedural law except where Congress or the Executive Branch has created a federal reservation with a reserved water right.

Federal reserved water rights are defined based on the Interior Solicitor's Opinion of June 25, 1979, as modified by Solicitor Coldiron's September 11, 1981, Opinion. BLM's federal reserved water right claims are primarily associated with the withdrawal established by the Executive Order of April 17, 1926, dealing with public water reserves, and the withdrawal for converted oil and gas wells under the Oil and Gas Well Conversion Act of June 16, 1934.

Water Quality
Water quality regulation in the United States receives its basic authority from two laws. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, as amended by the Clean Water Act of 1977, is the basic authority for instream water quality standards and maximum permissible pollutant discharges. The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 is the basic authority for domestic water standards.

The Bureau's water resource program includes participation with the state and EPA in water quality management. Specifically, the BLM works to ensure that management and development practices comply with state water quality standards. Monitoring of water quality in larger ephemeral drainages and water quality surveys of ground waters will be emphasized.

Watershed Activity Plans
The hydrology program will continue to emphasize its legislative mandates of protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the resources as well as provide support to other resource activities of the Field Office.

Air Quality
Reduction of air quality impacts from activities on public lands is accomplished by mitigation measures developed on a case-by-case basis through the NEPA or other statutory or regulatory processes. Each impact is evaluated to see if it is allowable and acceptable. Activities such as road construction and mining have dust abatement programs as part of their permits or contracts.

The BLM is required to comply with the New Mexico State Implementation Plan on air quality as well as meet responsibilities under the Clean Air Act, as amended, and FLPMA.

VEGETATION

Objectives

The objective for vegetation in the planning area is to manage use by wildlife and livestock to maintain or improve the health of watersheds, riparian areas, critical wildlife habitats, and long-term vegetative productivity.

Description

In the 1980s, the management of vegetation was addressed in the original RMP by making decisions that allocated forage to livestock and wildlife (described in the Range section of this section). Methods to manipulate vegetation cover were primarily through the use of chemicals, for example to replace big sagebrush with grass. The 1988 RMP also made several decisions to protect riparian areas – see Section 5, *Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Area.* Since 1990, the Taos Field Office made a commitment to use mechanical means such as hand pruning, chain-sawing or disking whenever feasible or practical. During the 1990s, fire as a management tool became more common – see the following Fire Management discussion later in this section on how fire is used to manage vegetation in the planning area.

Some vegetation types within the planning area are clearly defined, while others are broken and divided, with patches of similar biological assemblages separated by large expanses of land. Sky islands are mountain ranges or peaks that rise above the valley floor, creating an array of habitats from base to peak. They are not connected to similar habitats in the region. As a result, vegetative areas of ecological importance are scattered throughout the planning area and include riparian woodland, shrublands, piñon-juniper woodland, ponderosa pine forest, mixed conifer forest, and cave/rock/cliff.

The sagebrush community located in the north-central portion of the planning area is unique in the state of New Mexico and is optimum habitat for sagebrush dependent species. Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer stands on BLM lands include those found in Sabinoso, Archuleta Mesa, Copper Hill, Scout Camp and the north slopes of volcanic cones found in the North Unit. Riparian communities of vegetation are located along the major river systems in the planning area, including the Rio Grande and Rio Chama, and their tributaries. Shrublands, piñon-juniper woodlands and cave/rock/cliff habitat is scattered throughout the region.

Ecoregions

A complete inventory of vegetation in the planning area does not exist, but a fairly comprehensive overview is provided in the *Taos Field Office Fire Management Plan* (USDI-BLM 2005). To estimate the abundance and distribution of vegetation resources, the Taos Field Office uses information gathered from the Southwest Regional Gap Analysis Project (SWReGAP, http://fws-nmcfwru.nmsu.edu/swregap/). SWReGAP modeled 125 land cover types across New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah; 89 of these occur in New Mexico.

The SWReGAP model aggregates information to help with a large scale analysis of vegetation. The land cover types have been aggregated into seven Nature Conservancy (TNC) Ecoregions in New Mexico to provide a framework for a state- and region-wide perspective on vegetation. Originally based on Robert Bailey's US Forest Service ecoregions, these boundaries have been extensively modified by TNC's ecoregional planning teams (Bailey 1988, 1995, 1998). The major ecoregions occurring with the planning area are the Southern Shortgrass Prairie, Southern Rocky Mountains and the Arizona-New Mexico Mountains.

Southern Rocky Mountains Ecoregion

The Southern Rocky Mountains Ecoregion encompasses the north-central portion of the planning area (Taos, Rio Arriba and the northern third of Santa Fe Counties), bounded by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east and the San Juan mountain range to the west, with the Rio Grande intermountain valley between. Vegetation types found within this area include juniper woodland and savanna, piñon-juniper woodland, montane-subalpine grassland and ponderosa pine woodland.

Southern Shortgrass Prairie Ecoregion

The Central Shortgrass Prairie Ecoregion encompasses only about 500,000 acres (202,340 ha) in the northeastern part of the field office, therefore, for planning purposes, we have assimilated this ecoregion into the adjacent Southern Shortgrass Prairie ecoregion. The Southern Shortgrass Prairie ecoregion is characterized by high plains plateaus broken by escarpments and is found in the eastern and southern portions of the planning area (middle third of Santa Fe

County, all of San Miguel and other counties to the east of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains). Much of the topography is flat to rolling plains dissected by canyons and caprock escarpments. The ecoregion was historically dominated by expanses of shortgrass prairie, with blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) and buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*). The development and maintenance of this system was dependent on several ecological processes, most likely driven by climate. Bison grazing and fire were also important processes that maintained the grasslands of the shortgrass prairie (TNC 2005). Today the shortgrass prairie is replaced by mixed-grass prairie where greater moisture is available. Vegetation types found in the area include juniper and piñon-juniper woodlands and sand shrublands. Changes in natural processes have led to shrub invasion of the prairie systems. Riparian woodlands are typically dominated by cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*); however, tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.) and Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*) are significant non-native invaders.

Arizona-New Mexico Mountains Ecoregion
The Arizona-New Mexico Mountains Ecoregion encompasses the central highlands of New Mexico (in the planning area, the southern half of Santa Fe County). The prevalent vegetation types within this area include Rocky Mountain montane mixed conifer in the higher elevations and pinyon-juniper/piñon-juniper savanna, steppe and grasslands, and Western Great Plains shortgrass prairie in the lower elevations.

Factors influencing vegetation distribution
It is the manner in which a human activity or practice is conducted that determines if it has a negative or positive effect on vegetation populations. Many human activities across the landscape have the potential to be either beneficial or detrimental to vegetation. Factors that influence vegetation distribution and composition include:
• Abiotic resource use (human use of non-biological resources, including oil and gas, wind farms, etc.)
• Consumptive biological use (human harvesting or use of biological resources that removes them from the system, including harvesting of plant materials)
• Habitat conversion (loss or destruction of a site, including commercial development, volcanism, etc.)
• Invasive species (introduction and spread of species from one ecosystem to another, including expansion of alien or exotic plants)
• Modification of natural processes (human caused changes in ecosystem drivers, including water diversion or fire suppression)
• Pollution (human caused introduction and spread of unwanted matter into the ecosystem, including chemicals and radiation)
• Transportation infrastructure (development of narrow corridors for transporting people and goods)

Management Actions
Adaptive resource management is the broad approach for the vegetation management in this Field Office. Actions using various methods may be employed to overcome a problem or take advantage of an opportunity to bring about attainment of a desired outcome. Some actions that might be used to achieve desired condition include domestic grazing or non-grazing, prescribed fire or thinning, mechanical vegetation treatments, road closures and rehabilitation, herbicide weed treatments, and/or native plant augmentation.

Special Status Species
Special status plant species that are known to occur on BLM lands within the planning area are Santa Fe cholla (*Opuntia viridiflora*) and Ripley's milkvetch (*Astragalus ripleyi*). Ongoing inventories and activity level planning will continue to monitor for these and other special status species. The threatened and endangered species program ensures conservation of special status species through land use planning and directing maximum effort toward carrying out programs that will restore habitat and populations to a point that the provisions of special designation are no longer necessary. The objective of sound management of habitat is to maintain populations of plants and animals at a level that will avoid endangering species or the need to list species as threatened or endangered by state or federal governments. To manage these resources, the Taos Field Office recognizes the need for maintaining a partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and NM Department of Game and Fish, including information sharing, monitoring, development and evaluation of status recommendations, and all formal and informal coordination requirements pertaining to federally listed threatened or endangered species.

Guidance

Executive Order 13112 of February 1999 (Invasive Species) directs federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause.

Bureau of Land Management Taos Field Office Final Environmental Impact Statement for Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Management in the Taos Field Office (2000).

Bureau of Land Management Final Environmental Impact Statement Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in 13 Western States (1991).

Bureau of Land Management Taos Field Office Fire Management Plan (2004).

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Objectives

The objective of the Taos fire management program is to use wildland fire, prescribed fire, and other fuels management actions to accomplish a variety of resource goals, including watershed health, forest and woodland health, rangeland health and productivity, wildlife management objectives, resource protection, and public health and safety.

Description

Key components of the Taos fire management program are Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), rural fire assistance, prescribed fire, fuels management, wildland fire prevention and suppression, forest/range/watershed restoration and wildlife habitat improvement, and firefighter and public safety. The Taos fire management program is responsible for a wide variety of fuel types including: grasslands, sagebrush, sagebrush/grass, pinyon-juniper woodland, oak woodland, ponderosa pine and ponderosa pine/mixed conifer. Heavy encroachment of development adjacent to public lands presents urban interface concerns in all fuel types.

Seventy percent of the surface lands of the planning area are within 2-3 miles of structures. Although Taos has not reported a significant number of acres burned on an annual basis, there is great potential for structural and resource damage by wildfires. Much of this land is pinyon-juniper woodland with trees at concentrations of 500-1500 stems per acre. Most fires within the planning area are wind driven events and vary in size and intensity. Generally, high intensity fires occur in the heavily wooded areas and lower intensity fires occur in grassland and sagebrush rangeland.

Wildland Fire Management Strategies

Fire, as a critical natural process, will be integrated into land and resource management plans and activities based on a landscape scale and across agency boundaries. Response to wildland fire is based on ecological, social and legal consequences of the fire. The circumstances by which the fire occurs, and the resulting consequences, dictate the appropriate response to it. All unplanned ignitions will require a fire management response that put emphasis on fire fighter and public safety, minimizing suppression costs, and protecting resources. The protection of human life is the single, overriding suppression priority. Setting priorities among protecting communities, properties, improvements, natural and cultural resources will be done based on the values to be protected, human health and safety and the cost of protection.

The BLM is a partner in the *New Mexico Joint Powers Agreement for Interagency Wildland Fire Protection*, which coordinates wildland fire management activities among the federal wildland fire management agencies and the New Mexico State Forestry Division. Under the Agreement, New Mexico is divided into initial attack areas. In each of these areas, one agency has agreed to take the lead in providing initial attack protection for all lands, regardless of ownership. This provides an equitable exchange of protection and workload, and allows the use of the "closest forces" concept for fire suppression. The net result is a more efficient and effective suppression organization throughout the state.

The Field Office participates in the Taos Zone Operations committee, which includes Fire Management Officers from the Carson National Forest, Eight Northern Pueblos, State of New Mexico, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Town of Taos. The committee coordinates interagency efforts on fire prevention and education, dispatching, training, fuels management, suppression, rural fire assistance and preparedness. A steering group made up of agency managers meets regularly to guide the operations of the group and includes a Zone Chairman who is rotated on a biannual basis; the Taos Zone Chair represents the line officer from each agency. Taos Zone operates an interagency dispatch center and Taos Field Office funds a career seasonal dispatcher.

Wildland Fire Management Options

The planning area covers 14,700,000 acres, including private, state, Forest Service, Tribal and public lands. It has been divided into 21 fire management units. For each, objectives were established to reduce hazardous fuels, determine appropriate response to any wildland fires, decide whether prescribed fire is an appropriate tool, and establish goals for non-fire fuels treatments. Each unit is placed into one of four fire management categories, used to provide information for suppression, prescribed fire and fire use. They are based on wildland urban interface concerns, the values at risk, the topography of the unit and the ownership within and near the unit. Category assignment provides a quick reference for fire managers for the options available to them.

Fire management objectives and strategies identified for each fire management unit are based largely on their corresponding *fire regimes* and *condition classes*. The fire regime concept is used to characterize the behavior of a fire in a vegetation type: how often it visits the landscape, the type of pattern created, and the associated ecological effects. The five fire regimes are arrayed

from the most frequent (in fire regime I, in which fire frequency ranges from 0 to 35 years, to the least frequent (in fire regime V, where fire occurs at intervals greater than 200 years).

For a given vegetation type, the condition class describes the degree of departure from "historic conditions" in vegetation structure and fire frequency/severity. This measure describes both the health of the fire regime, and also the appropriateness of the vegetation community for the site.
Condition Class 1 corresponds to landscapes where these variables are intact.
Condition Class 2 includes lands having moderate departure in fire regime health and structural integrity.
Condition Class 3 landscapes have highly altered ecological integrity.

The predominant vegetation zones in the planning area fall under a fire regime with either a high fire return interval (I or II) or with variability in fire frequency that may include a high fire return interval (III or IV). Condition classes of these predominant vegetation zones show the highest departure from historic conditions.

Fire Management Categories

Category A: ***Areas where fire is not desired at all***
General Description: This category includes areas where mitigation and suppression are required to prevent threats to life and property. It includes areas where fire never played a large role historically in the development and maintenance of the ecosystem, or because of human development, fire can no longer be tolerated without significant loss or where fire return intervals are long.
Fire Mitigation Considerations: Emphasis should be focused on prevention, detection, and rapid suppression response and techniques that will reduce unwanted ignitions and threats to life, property, natural and cultural resources.
Fire Suppression Considerations: Virtually all wildland fires would be actively suppressed and no fires are prescribed except as required to combat an immediate threat to firefighter or public health and safety.
Fuel Treatment Considerations: Non-fire treatments employed. Unit costs for prescribed fire would be too prohibitive to implement efficiently. Pile burning of mechanically removed vegetation is acceptable.
FMUs categorized as A: Orilla Verde Recreation Area-10.

Category B: ***Areas where unplanned wildland fire is not desired because of current conditions***
General Description: Fire plays a natural role in the function of the ecosystem; however, these are areas where an unplanned ignition could have negative effects unless some form of mitigation takes place.
Fire Mitigation Considerations: Emphasize prevention/mitigation programs that reduce unplanned ignitions and threats to life, property, natural and cultural resources.
Fire Suppression Considerations: Fire suppression is usually the objective of unplanned wildfire.
Fuel Treatment Considerations: Fire and non-fuels treatments are utilized to reduce the hazardous effects of unplanned wildfire. Restoration treatments may consist of multiple non-fire treatments before the use of fire will be considered.
FMUs categorized as B: Cerro del Aire-6, Wild Rivers-7, Black Mesa/Ojo Caliente-9, Copper Hill WUI-12, Thirty-One Mile-13, Fun Valley/Chimayo-14, Sombrillo SMA/Santa Cruz Lake-15, Chimayo Scout Camp-16, Buckman-17 and La Cienega-19.

Category C: ***–Areas where wildland fire is desired, but there are significant constraints that must be considered for its use***
General Description: Fire is a desirable component of the ecosystem, however, ecological, social or political constraints must be considered. These constraints could include air quality standards, threatened and endangered species, identified cultural, archeological, or historic resources or wildlife habitat considerations.
Fire Mitigation Considerations: Fire programs should mitigate potential threats such as risks to the WUI areas, threatened and endangered (T&E) species and archeological sites before ignitions occur and reduce unwanted human-caused ignitions.
Fire Suppression considerations: Areas in this category would generally receive lower suppression priority in multiple wildland fire situations than would areas in "A" or "B" Fire Management Units.
Fuel Treatment Considerations: Fire and non-fuels treatments may be utilized to ensure constraints are met or to reduce any hazardous effects of unplanned wildfire. Treatments may consist of multiple non-fire treatments before the use of fire is considered.
FMUs categorized as C: TFO-rest of office-1, North Unit/Pot Mountain-2, Rio Grande Corridor ACEC-3, San Antonio Gorge ACEC-4, San Antonio WSA-5, Cebolla/Abiqui-8, Copper Hill ACEC/Sebastian Martin Grant-11, and Archuleta Mesa-20.

Category D: ***Areas where wildland fire is desired, and there are few or no constraints for its use* (*Wildland Fire Use*)**
General Description: Areas where wildfire or planned ignitions may be used to achieve desired objectives, such as, improving vegetation, wildlife habitat or watershed conditions.
Fire Mitigation Considerations: Implement programs that reduce unwanted human-caused ignitions, as needed.
Fire Suppression/Use Considerations: These areas offer the greatest opportunity to take advantage of the full range of options available for managing wildland fire. Health and Safety constraints will apply. Fire use considerations similar to those described for Category C may be identified if needed to achieve resources objectives. Areas in this category would be the lowest suppression priority in a multiple fire situation.

Fuel Treatment Considerations: There is generally less need for hazardous fuel treatment in this category. Prescribed fire for hazardous fuel reduction is not a priority except where there is an immediate threat to health and safety. If treatment is necessary, both fire and non-fire treatments may be used. Prescribed fire to obtain desired resource/ecological condition is appropriate.

Fire Management Units categorized as D: Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area-18 and Ute Mountain-21. NEPA analysis and a burn plan will identify the special conditions under which wildland fire use can occur.

Descriptions of Fire Management Units

In Table 2-5, each Fire Management Unit has been prioritized according to different goals and concerns including: Prescribed Fire, Wildfire Suppression, Non-Fire Fuels Treatments and Community Protection/Assistance. The rankings are High, Medium or Low priority. A general ranking of management priority (prioritization number) throughout the field office has been assigned to each fire management unit, with 1 being the highest priority.

Table 2-4
Natural Fire Regimes

Fire Regime	Fire Frequency	Fire Effect to Dominant Vegetation	Representative Ecosystem
I	0-35 years	Low severity	Dry pine and oak forests, piñon-juniper forests
II	0-35 years	Stand replacement	Grasslands, many shrub communities
III	35-100+ years	Mixed severity	Shrublands, mixed conifer forests
IV	35-100+ years	Stand replacement	Certain lodgepole pine, dry Douglas-fir forests
V	200+ years	Stand replacement	High elevation whitebark pine, spruce-fir and Pacific coastal forests

Table 2-5
Fire Management Unit Priorities

Priority	Fire Management Unit	Suppression	Prescribed Fire	Non-Fire Fuels Treatments	Community Protection/ Assistance
1	**16 - Chimayo Scout Camp**	High	High	High	High
2	**6 - Cerro del Aire**	High	High	High	High
3	**7 - Wild Rivers Rec Area**	High	High	High	High
4	**12 - Copper Hill WUI**	High	High	High	High
5	**13 - Thirty-OneMile**	High	High	High	High
6	**17 - Buckman**	High	Med	Med	High
7	**1 - Rest of Taos Field Office**	High	Med	Med	Med
8	**8 - Cebolla/Abiqui**	Med	Med	Med	Med
9	**20 - Archuleta Mesa**	Med	Med	Med	Med
10	**10 - Orilla Verde Rec Area**	High	Low	Med	High
11	**3 - Rio Grande Corridor**	Med	Low	Low	Med
12	**18 - Sabinoso WSA**	Low	High	Low	Med
13	**11 - Copper Hill ACEC**	Med	Med	Low	Low
14	**2 - North Unit/Pot Mountain**	Low	High	Med	Low
15	**5 - San Antonio WSA**	Low	Med	Med	Low
16	**21 - Ute Mountain**	Low	High	Low	Low
17	**9 - Black Mesa/Ojo Caliente**	Low	Low	Med	Low
18	**19 - La Cienega ACEC**	Low	Low	Low	Med
19	**4 - San Antonio Gorge ACEC**	Low	Med	Med	Low
20	**14 - Fun Valley/Chimayo**	Low	Low	Low	Low
21	**15 - Sombrillo ACEC**	Low	Low	Low	Low

Guidance

The Fire Management Plan has been tiered to the *Rio Grande Corridor Plan* (2000), the *Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy* (2001), and the *Fire and Fuels Plan Amendment and Environmental Assessment for Public Land in New Mexico and Texas* (2004). These plans provide the basis for the development of fire management goals and objectives.

The Fire Management Plan derives overall program guidance from the following:

- 1998 BLM Handbook 9214, "Prescribed Fire Management" which describes authority and policy for prescribed fire use on public lands administered by the BLM.
- September 2000, "Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment."
- October 2000, National Cohesive Strategy wherein the goal is to coordinate an aggressive, collaborative approach to reduce the threat of wildland fire to communities and to restore and maintain land health.
- August 2001, "Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment -10 Year Comprehensive Strategy" which provides a foundation for wildland fire agencies to work closely with all levels of government, tribes, conservation, and commodity groups and community-based restoration groups to reduce wildland fire risk to communities and the environment.
- May 2002, "Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy - Implementation Plan."
- August 2002, "Healthy Forests - An Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities."

Further detail on fire management program guidance can be found in the Taos Field Office Fire Management Plan (2005).

RANGE

Objective

The objective of the range program is to administer the grazing of livestock on public lands in such a manner as to maintain and improve the health and condition of the public rangelands so that they become as productive as feasible for all rangeland values.

Description

Operations and Period of Use
Presently, there are 236 livestock operators within the Taos Field Office on 324 allotments, which includes 142 Section 3, and 182 Section 15 allotments. Section 3 and 15 refer to those allotments that were established under Section 3 and 15 of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. The current preference, for the Taos Resource Area is 60,754 AUMs, of which none are suspended, and all AUMs are available for livestock grazing.

The class of livestock and type of livestock operations in the Taos Resource Area have remained relatively unchanged over the past ten years.

Because of the large variation in elevation, climate, and topography, the season of use varies in the Resource Area from seasonal to year-long. Several permittees in the Resource Area hold permits on USFS lands as well as public lands resulting in dual use periods. This necessitates close coordination with the USFS.

This plan will provide for a balance of resource uses through a program of improved grazing management. Future changes in management will be developed to resolve resource conflicts. Vegetative treatments will occur in conjunction and cooperation with other disciplines. As funds and personnel become available treatments will be identified and implemented. Exclusion areas indicated on Map 2-3 apply only to treatments for the purpose of increasing available forage for livestock. Treatment to improve wildlife and T & E species habitat, promote forest and watershed health and enhance recreational opportunities will still be allowed in these areas.

Forage Demand
The degree of economic and cultural dependence of public land forage remains high in specific areas of the Field Office Area. While in other parts of the Resource Area it is a cultural dependence more than economic because the permittees have strong ties to the land.

There has been an actual decline in the number of permittees in the Taos Field Office over the past 20 years. A major issue affecting the allotments is the exurban/rural residential growth surrounding the cities and towns. Base properties and waters are being purchased for the purpose of development into housing subdivisions. Many of the individuals who are using public lands no longer have a tie to the livestock production aspect of public lands. Grazing of the public lands associated with these base properties will have to be addressed on an individual basis.

Guidance

The livestock grazing program in the Taos Resource Area is authorized by the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978. In addition to issuance of grazing permits and leases, unauthorized use detection and abatement, allotment supervision, and other actions authorized by the previously mentioned legislation.

Current management of the livestock grazing program is also guided by 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4100-4190, the New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management as amended January 12, 2001, current manuals, and handbooks.

Selective Management Categorization
Each of the grazing allotments has been placed into one of three selective management categories based on present resource conditions and potential for improvement. Selective management categorization provides a system for establishing priorities for implementing changes in grazing management. Selective management categories can be changed as additional resource data become available. Changes in categories

would result in management changes appropriate to the new category, consistent with the objectives of the approved RMP.

The three selective management categories are: Maintain (M), Improve (I), and Custodial (C). The "M" category allotments will be managed to maintain current satisfactory ecological condition. The "I" category allotments will be managed intensively to improve unsatisfactory ecological condition and resolve resource conflicts. The "C" category allotments will be managed to prevent resource degradation. The "C" allotments have a low potential for improved ecological condition, improvement is not economically feasible, and/or current management is satisfactory, considering the current resource conditions.

Rangeland Health Standards
The New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management were approved as amended January 12, 2001. Under the guidance of Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) and 43 CFR 4180 all allotments are to be evaluated to determine if the hydrologic, soils, flora and fauna components are in proper functioning condition. If an allotment is found not to be in conformance with the S&Gs appropriate action will be taken under the guidance of the current CFR. In cases where the S&Gs are not being met and the BLM is only a fraction of the ranches operation, such as in the case of most of the Section 15 allotments, the BLM will consult with the allottee and other agencies to determine a management strategy to address the needs of the resource.

Monitoring Studies
Vegetative monitoring studies are being conducted on public lands in the Taos Resource Area. Condition and trend studies are being established on all allotments and conducted in accordance with the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978. Intensive vegetative monitoring studies, including the collection of precipitation, utilization, and actual use data, are being conducted on the "I" category allotments to evaluate changes in grazing management and to aid in the determination livestock grazing capacities.

Grazing Management Plans
Specific management prescriptions to resolve the identified resource conflicts will be developed in Grazing Management Plans. These plans will be prepared in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the affected allottees, interested publics, and/or other affected parties in accordance with Section 8 of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, and with input from other specialists to ensure that all resource needs are considered. The manner and extent to which livestock grazing use will be conducted and managed will be specified in these plans and will be consistent with the objectives of the RMP.

Livestock Grazing Management and Use Adjustments
Adjustments are made by changing one or more of the following: the kind or class of livestock grazing on the allotment, the season of use, the Animal Unit Months (AUMs) authorized for grazing, and/or the pattern of grazing. Generally, the estimated changes in AUMs available for livestock grazing use are applicable to the "I" allotments; however, use adjustments will continue for the "M" and "C" allotments in response to changes in resource demands and conditions.

A final determination of any needed livestock grazing use adjustments will be based on a program of systematic vegetative monitoring studies as well as the current vegetative condition and by the current guidance provided in the current CFR.

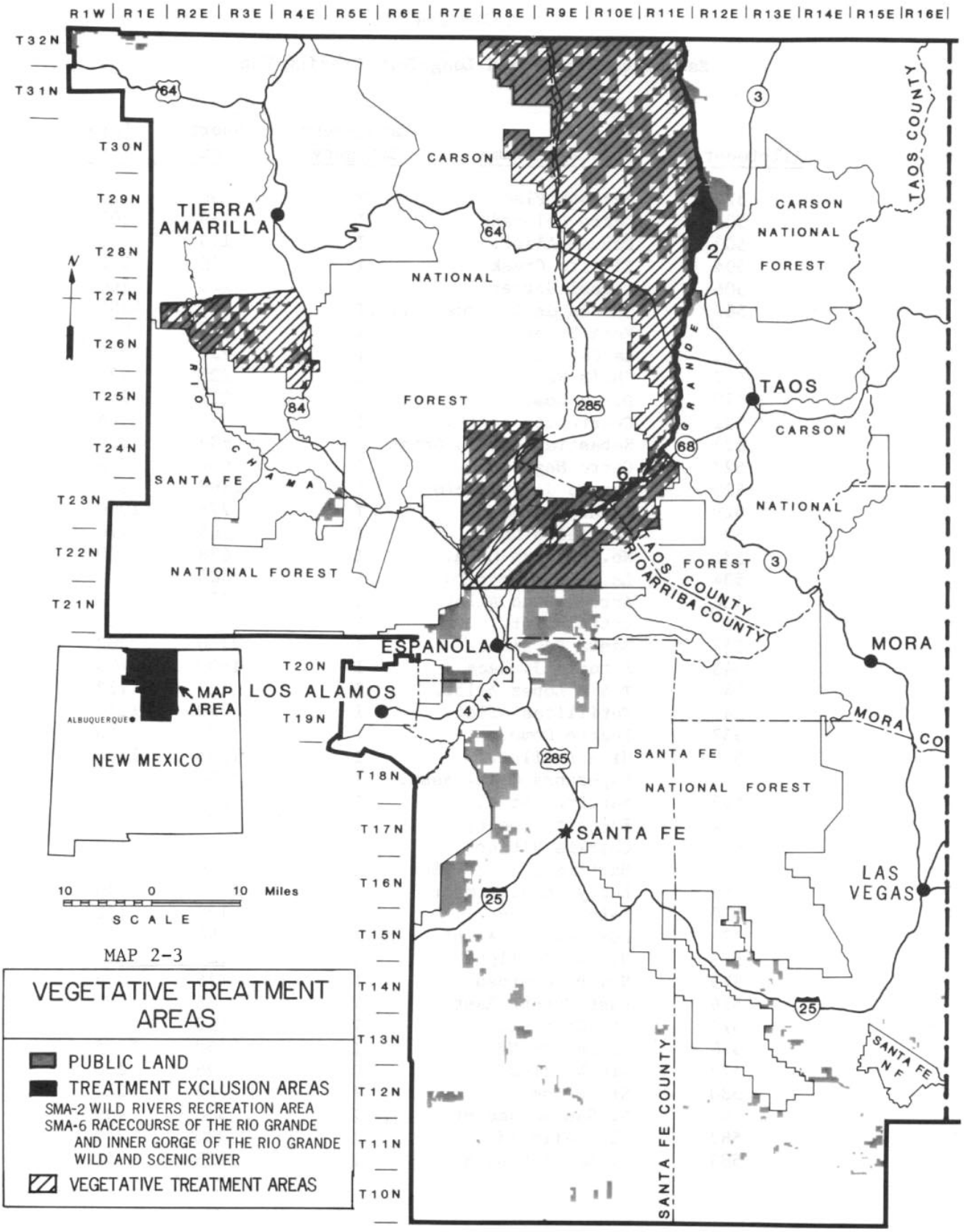
Vegetative monitoring studies will also be used to evaluate the changes in resource condition resulting from grazing management practices and to evaluate the effectiveness of changes in grazing management to resolve the identified resource conflicts.

The changes in AUMs allocated for livestock grazing use can be implemented either through documented mutual agreement with the affected allottee or by a grazing decision. Adjustments implemented by a grazing decision will be based on consultation with the affected allottee and will be in accordance with the guidance in CFR.

While the *no grazing alternative* was not considered feasible, practical or implementable, elimination of livestock grazing may be advisable in selected areas where resource degradation or conflicts make livestock grazing undesirable. If this situation occurs an environmental assessment will be prepared before grazing is eliminated.

Rangeland Improvements
Additional rangeland improvements may be developed in accordance with current BLM policy. Future rangeland improvements will be designed and constructed to meet the management objectives proposed in the RMP and be in conformance with BLM manuals and direction.

The extent, location, and timing of such actions would depend on the improvements needed for each allotment, allottee contributions, and BLM funding capability, and would be developed with consideration for other resource uses. All allotments for which rangeland improvement funds are to be spent will be subjected to economic analysis. This analysis will be used along with other considerations to develop a final priority ranking of allotments for the commitment of the range improvement funds needed to implement Grazing Management Plans. In general, the highest priority for implementation will be assigned to those improvements for which the total anticipated benefits exceed the costs.



MAP 2-3

VEGETATIVE TREATMENT AREAS

- PUBLIC LAND
- TREATMENT EXCLUSION AREAS
  - SMA-2 WILD RIVERS RECREATION AREA
  - SMA-6 RACECOURSE OF THE RIO GRANDE AND INNER GORGE OF THE RIO GRANDE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER
- VEGETATIVE TREATMENT AREAS

FORESTRY

Objective

The objective of the forestry program is to manage forest resources to achieve multiple use goals and objectives through development of Forest Activity Plans which present specific silvicultural practices and management prescriptions.

Description

The western portion of the planning area contains substantial pinyon-juniper woodlands. It is estimated that approximately 11,000 acres are harvestable but no inventory has been conducted to verify this figure.

Northern New Mexico is characterized by the predominant use of piñon and juniper as an alternative energy source for an estimated 85% of the population.

The Planning area has less than 8,500 acres of productive timberland. These stands, scattered throughout the Planning area, are located primarily on the several small, isolated mountain areas common to northern New Mexico. Three Special Management Areas – Wild Rivers Recreation Area, Rio Chama, and Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern – are identified as having timber resources. The management prescriptions for these areas will determine how these resources will be managed. Most of the forest land areas are primarily ponderosa pine, except for the higher elevations, where typical tree zones occur.

The present available timber volume-per-acre is quite low, due to poor stocking in all age classes. Except for some stands on the better sites, most of the forest is marginal for timber production. However, timber harvesting technology has advanced to a degree that areas previously not economically feasible to harvest are now considered harvestable.

Guidance

The Field Office forestry program consists of managing limited ponderosa pine stands and extensive piñon-juniper woodlands. Congress has mandated through FLPMA that the forestry and woodland program be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield. The Material Disposal Act of 1947, as amended, establishes the authority under which the BLM disposes of timber and other forest products.

Further guidance is provided in the DOI Departmental Manual Part 135, Section 1.2 which is to "sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations…" In addition, the Departmental Manual Part 586, Forest Management, Section 1.3, Policy states "Forest lands are to be managed to yield the highest combination of products and benefits consistent with the purposes specified by Congress. All Forest management activities are directed in accordance with sound silvicultural practices, multiple use, and environmental enhancement. The protection of streams, wildlife, and other forest values are taken into account in developing a forest management plan. Further under this section under C (2) Forest regeneration, " nonstocked forest lands resulting from harvesting or fire will be promptly regenerated. The method of regeneration may be natural or artificial seeding or planting. The tree species used for reforestation purposes should be suitable to the site and climatic conditions so as to produce optimum growth and yield." Under Section 1.3, C (3), "Every reasonable effort will be made to protect forest values from destruction by fire, insects, diseases, and other destructive agents…"

Other forest program information can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations at 43 CFR 5000.
The Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) was established by President Bush in August 2002, with an objective of improving administrative procedures needed for hazardous fuels reduction and forest and rangeland restoration projects. The administration and a bipartisan majority in Congress supported the Healthy Forests Restoration legislation and were joined by a variety of environmental conservation groups. President Bush signed into law the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires while upholding environmental standards and encouraging early public input during review and planning processes.

Section 102(e)(2) provides that the USDA Forest Service and DOI BLM, when carrying out covered projects using HFRA authority, are to "fully maintain, or contribute toward the restoration of, the structure and composition of old-growth stands according to the pre-fire suppression old-growth conditions characteristic of the forest type, taking into account the contribution of the stand to landscape fire adaptation and watershed health,

and retaining the large trees contributing to old-growth structure."

Section 102(e)(3) provides that old-growth direction in resource management plans established on or after December 15, 1993, (so-called "newer plan direction") is sufficient to meet the requirements of Section 102(e)(2) and will be used by agencies carrying out projects under the HFRA. December 15, 1993, refers to the date old-growth direction was adopted into the plan, which may have been after the date the current plan was originally adopted (if the plan was amended to include updated old-growth direction). For example, old-growth direction would not need to be revised in plans encompassed by the *Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision*, because these plans contain old-growth standards adopted after December 15, 1993.

Any amendments or revisions to management direction for old growth made after December 3, 2003, must be consistent with Section 102(e)(2) for the purpose of carrying out "covered" projects in old-growth stands. To comply with Section 102(e), field units must have a process in place to identify old-growth stands or their equivalent before they use HFRA authorities. The HFRA does not mandate particular definitions of old growth or the specific process to identify old-growth stands, nor does the HFRA require that old-growth stands be mapped. "

Ponderosa Pine
The long-term goal of ponderosa pine management in the Planning area is to increase reproduction and stand vigor, as well as to reduce encroachment of pinyon-juniper into the ponderosa pine stands. Providing for the long-term maintenance of the ponderosa pine stands is also a goal of the program. Existing ponderosa pine is managed for enhancement and protection of the stands rather than the maximization of forest products. All forestry practices implemented in the Planning area will be in conformance with standard silvicultural practices and the 1981 environmental assessment for the Timber Management Plan (USDI, BLM 1981c), covering the Rio Puerco, Socorro, Farmington and Taos Field Offices. All activity plans developed for forestry and woodland products are examined through the NEPA process and are subject to public review and participation.

Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands
The primary guidance for the pinyon-juniper woodlands program is the BLM Public Domain Forest Management Manual H-5001 (USDI, BLM 1991). Additional guidance is also from the HFI and HFRA field guide as mentioned earlier. The long-term goals of the woodland management program in the Planning area are to:
1) manage pinyon-juniper woodlands for multiple resource values through development of harvest prescriptions and sound management practices, and
2) encourage orderly and legal acquisition of wood products and other vegetative materials by designation of harvest areas, development and distribution of pertinent information on vegetative material sales, and cooperation in interagency law enforcement efforts.

The piñon-juniper woodlands within the Planning area are managed on a sustained yield basis. The first priority sources for fuelwood supply are, when practical, dead-and-down wood from tree thinning areas. Specific silvicultural standards are established at the activity planning stage and are written on a site-specific basis. The silvicultural standards are consistent with acceptable methods for the species and site.

Land Allocations

MFP Decisions Brought Forward
• Conduct individual stand analyses on productive forest lands.
• Protection measures should be initiated to achieve maximum stocking of desirable species.
• Weeding of undesirable species in conjunction with the thinning projects.
• Treat diseased and infested productive forest lands either in conjunction with timber sales or with thinning contracts.
• Acquire certain state and private lands in the northern part of the planning area for the purpose of "blocking" commercial timber and pinyon-juniper stands now under partial BLM jurisdiction.
• Conduct an intensive woodlands inventory on approximately 11,045 acres of commercial pinyon-juniper stands.
• Following intensive inventory in the Sebastian Martin Grant, La Cienega, Buckman Canyon, Penasco, and Ojo Caliente areas, designate an adequate number of areas to accommodate present demand for minor forest products.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Objective

The objective of the wildlife program is to maintain, improve, and expand wildlife habitat on the public lands for both game and non-game species. This program is also responsible for the protection and recovery of Federal/State proposed, candidate or listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

Description

The emphasis of this program in the past has been terrestrial habitat management in the form of big game habitat management for deer, elk, and pronghorn; endangered species habitat management and recovery of the Southwestern willow flycatcher; and riparian habitat protection and management. Additional key program components include fisheries, nongame, raptors, special status species, inventories, studies and monitoring, and habitat projects.

Major ecoregions occurring within the planning area are the southern Rocky Mountains, southern shortgrass prairie, central shortgrass prairie, and Arizona-New Mexico mountains. Approximately 50 soil associations are found throughout the planning area and vegetation types include coniferous forest, woodland, savanna, grassland, scrubland and riparian (Dick-Peddie 1993).

Riparian
Riparian areas are one of the top management priorities. Aquatic/riparian habitats comprise a much higher percentage of acreage in the planning area than for the remainder of BLM-administered lands in New Mexico. Maintenance and enhancement of wetlands and other riparian habitat is important to waterfowl associated with the Central Flyway and a suite of species obligate and semi-obligate to these unique ecosystems. The program goal is to achieve a healthy and productive riparian condition with long-term benefits and values in concert with the Rangeland program. An interdisciplinary approach ensures planning efforts include monitoring, protection, restoration, inventory and classification into an aquatic and riparian habitat database with the result of improving riparian management.

Management of riparian areas under the 1988 RMP followed BLM guidance with the objective of restoring and protecting riparian areas within the context of authorizing other land management activities. Within this management scheme proper functioning condition (PFC) surveys were conducted annually, and riparian areas were managed based on apparent trend toward PFC. Current and foreseeable future management of riparian areas now includes the development of specific goals and endpoints (i.e., desired future conditions) for each individual riparian area. This type of adaptive management requires the development of specific survey techniques for each identified endpoint. Likewise, types and frequency of riparian habitat monitoring is defined by the desired future condition of a site. Vegetation composition and structure, erosion and deposition conditions, status of threatened and endangered species, livestock grazing, wildlife use, and recreational use are among the types of conditions that will be monitored, quantified and evaluated.

Fisheries
The Taos Field Office manages habitat for nongame native and sport fish that reside on public lands that are of high economic, social, or scientific value. To effectively manage fishery resources, the Field Office has maintained active partnerships with the NM Department of Game and Fish, the US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and private interests. Through these partnerships, the field office has identified habitats that are required for the conservation and restoration of high value species; and improved habitats for such species through land use and activity level planning. The BLM cooperates with water managers and users to maintain streamflow necessary for healthy fisheries. Acquisition of riparian, wetland, or aquatic resources, and the associated water rights, will help meet planned fisheries management goals.

Big Game/Upland Game
Critical winter ranges for deer, elk, and pronghorn comprise a higher percentage of acreage in the planning area than for the remainder of BLM-administered lands in New Mexico. The maintenance of big game and upland game species and their habitats is recognized to be of critical social and economic importance. To manage these resources, the Taos Field Office recognizes the need for

maintaining a partnership with the NM Department of Game and Fish and private interests; identifying habitat requirements and limiting factors for these species; and improving habitats for these species through land use and activity level planning.

Nongame Species
Historically, little attention has been paid to nongame species that are not listed by state or federal agencies as being at risk of extinction. Game species are those designated by the state for the purpose of sport hunting, fishing or trapping. However, the importance of nongame species has received increasing public and agency recognition and support through the New Mexico Share with Wildlife Program and public input. Nongame species and habitat concerns will be included in new and revised wildlife Habitat Management Plans and other activity plans as appropriate, including future inventories and studies, while cooperating with state nongame programs in management of nongame wildlife resources.

Raptors
Raptors are of high public interest and the planning area has an important number and diversity of raptor species and unique cliff-dwelling habitat in the Rio Grande Gorge. Suitable habitat conditions for birds of prey on public lands are provided by conservation and management of essential habitat components, including habitat for prey species, especially in areas where raptors concentrate. To assist in management decisions, a monitoring and inventory program is in place for known raptor populations in the area.

Inventories
The Taos Field Office maintains inventory data on wildlife habitat and species occurrence. Annual surveys are conducted for special status species including Southwestern willow flycatcher, raptors, burrowing owls, mountain plovers and prairie dogs. Other inventories include a cooperative effort between the University of Wyoming and the Taos Field Office to determine population locations and potential habitats of rare and endemic plants.

These and other inventory data are used in land use planning, habitat management, multiple use decisions and the determination of impacts on threatened and endangered plants and animals. Species occurrence lists for the Taos Field Office are prepared and updated by continued small-scale inventories and individual observations. Lists of potential species occurrence, along with varied occurrence lists, are available for the Rio Grande, Rio Chama, Santa Fe River and Rio San Antonio. Aquatic inventories have been conducted on the Rio Grande, Rio Chama, Red River, and Rio Embudo.

Studies and Monitoring
To investigate natural resource problems, management opportunities, species habitat needs, habitat suitability and capability, and effects of management practices, several monitoring studies are ongoing in the Taos Field Office, including those on the Rio Truchas, Santa Fe River and the Orilla Verde Recreation Area. The purpose of monitoring is to evaluate progress in meeting resource management objectives.

Habitat Projects
Habitat development projects include vegetation manipulation, water developments and fencing projects for the benefit of wildlife, along with maintenance to ensure that projects continue to produce the results intended. Various actions include maintaining signs and vehicular barriers to minimize human disturbance of habitat; maintenance of water catchments and impoundments; modification of fences for big game passage; stream improvements to enhance fisheries; and prescribed fire or herbicide applications to restore native vegetation and increase forage or wildlife habitat.

Animal Damage Control
Animal damage control on BLM-administered land is conducted by the US Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Services – Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) in accordance with a national-level Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and Wildlife Services. Department of the Interior policy and the annual Animal Damage Control Plan for the Taos Field Office, prepared jointly by BLM and Wildlife Services, guide animal damage control activities on public land within the Planning Area. Wildlife Services has overall responsibility for the program and supervises all control activities. The BLM has approval responsibility for the specific control actions on public land. BLM and Wildlife Services will continue to meet annually to develop and implement a work plan for the Taos Field Office.

Guidance

Legislation such as the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978, as amended, have directed the BLM to improve management of wildlife habitat to meet wildlife needs in the face of increasing demands for basic energy supplies, building materials, and food products. It is the responsibility of the BLM to identify opportunities to maintain, improve, and expand wildlife habitat on the public lands for both consumptive and non-consumptive use, and identify portions of the wildlife resource deserving special attention. Furthermore, it is Department of the Interior policy (as specified in 43 CFR 24.4) that Interior agency fish and wildlife management strategies assist state agencies in accomplishing fish and wildlife resource plans.

Guidance is also provided by these laws or directives; additional guidance is also found in BLM Manual 6500 – 6680.

- The *Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918*, as amended, implements various treaties and conventions between nations for the protection of migratory birds wherein taking, killing or possessing migratory birds is unlawful.
- The *Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978* directs that the condition of the public rangelands be improved so that they become as productive as feasible for wildlife habitat and other rangeland values.
- The *Sikes Act of 1960*, as amended, provides for the conservation, restoration, and management of species and their habitats in cooperation with state wildlife agencies.
- *Executive Order 13186 of January 2001 (Migratory Birds)* directs federal agencies to support the conservation intent of the migratory bird conventions by integrating bird conservation principles, measures, and practices into agency activities and by avoiding or minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on migratory bird resources when conducting agency actions.

Projects have been, and will continue to be developed under the guidance of existing planning documents. Projects completed will continue to be maintained. Other management decisions, including studies and monitoring will also be implemented. All actions are reviewed and given site specific analysis during the environmental assessment process to determine whether the action will affect wetland or riparian areas. Also considered are impacts to resident species' habitat or habitat improvement projects. All range and watershed improvements will continue to be designed to achieve both range and wildlife objectives. This includes location and design of water and vegetative treatment projects.

Habitat Management
Several special designation areas contain proposals to manage wildlife habitat: San Antonio, Wild Rivers Recreation Area, Rio Chama, Warm Springs, Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area, Sabinoso, Riparian/Aquatic Areas and Black Mesa. These special designations would provide for the enhancement and protection of key winter ranges for mule deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope. Improving habitat privacy while still providing public access is a general management objective for special designation areas. Other management objectives include promoting habitat diversity, protection and enhancement of riparian aquatic habitats, increased forage availability, and non-game species considerations.

Vegetative Use
The resolution of the Vegetative Uses Issue provides for continued studies, adjustments in livestock numbers, and season of use. The management objectives are to improve or maintain forage availability and species composition and to reduce wildlife-livestock conflicts.

OHV Use
Limiting OHV traffic to existing or designated roads and trails will provide increased protection for wildlife habitats and reduce harassment by OHVs. The impacts of vegetation damage, soil erosion and compaction, and the creation of new roads will also be reduced by restricting OHV use. Other OHV restrictions include seasonal use areas and limited designations that would be identified in future transportation plans. These restrictions would reduce habitat damage and improve overall habitat effectiveness for wildlife species.

Land Allocations

Special Designations
Develop and implement management plans for the San Antonio Gorge, Winter Range and Copper Hill Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

OHV Designations
Limited: San Antonio Special Management Area
Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Area

Management Framework Plan Decisions Brought Forward
Maintain or improve quail and other small game habitat in their present condition and develop water sources, where appropriate, to accommodate wildlife needs.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Objective

The major objectives of the program are to:
• ensure compliance with the statutory requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by conducting inventories of threatened or endangered species habitat;
• assist in the preparation and implementation of recovery or other management plans;
• prevent further listing of plants or animals by ensuring projects on federal lands do not adversely affect threatened or endangered species;
• monitor habitats to ensure that objectives for threatened and endangered habitat development and protection are being met; and
• consult with the US Fish & Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Description

This program is responsible for the protection and recovery of those species that have been designated as threatened or endangered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and/or the State of New Mexico, as well as species that are declining in abundance but may not be formally designated. BLM responsibilities include ensuring that any federal action authorized, funded, or carried out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. When competition occurs between wildlife and other uses, BLM will strive to maintain optimum habitats by mitigating adverse impacts where feasible. Some of the management practices used in restoration of these species includes protection and acquisition of key habitats and cooperation with state and federal wildlife agencies on habitat management projects.

The threatened and endangered species program ensures conservation of special status species through land use planning, incorporation of recovery plan objectives into activity plans, and directing maximum effort toward carrying out programs that will restore habitat and populations to a point that the provisions of special designation are no longer necessary. The objective of sound management of habitat is to maintain populations of plants and animals at a level that will avoid endangering species or the need to list species as threatened or endangered by state or federal governments. To manage these resources, the Taos Field Office recognizes the need for maintaining a partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and NM Department of Game & Fish, including information sharing, monitoring, development and evaluation of status recommendations, and all formal and informal coordination requirements pertaining to federally listed threatened or endangered species.

Guidance

Legislation directs the BLM to improve management of wildlife habitat to meet wildlife needs in the face of increasing demands for basic energy supplies, building materials, and food products. It is the responsibility of the BLM to identify opportunities to maintain, improve, and expand wildlife habitat on the public lands for both consumptive and non-consumptive use, and identify portions of the wildlife resource deserving special attention. Furthermore, it is Department of the Interior policy (as specified in 43 CFR 24.4) that Interior agency fish and wildlife management strategies assist state agencies in accomplishing fish and wildlife resource plans.

An overview of the legislative and executive direction for the special status species program is set forth below:

• The *Endangered Species Act of 1973*, as amended, provides for the protection of endangered species, threatened species, and their habitats, and requires federal agencies to ensure that the continued existence of listed species is not jeopardized and that designated critical habitat of listed species is not destroyed or adversely modified.
• DOI Manual 632.1 – Endangered Species
• BLM Manual 6840 – Threatened and Endangered Species Management
• Memorandum of Understanding between USDI/BLM and USDI/FWS (1986)

BLM policy extends a conservation mandate to all special status species. Special status species are defined as plant or animal species which are officially listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the FWS under the provision of the ESA; those listed or proposed for listing by the State of New Mexico in a category implying potential endangerment or extinction; and those designated by the BLM State Director as sensitive.

The Endangered Species Act directs all federal agencies to conserve federally listed threatened or endangered species and the habitats upon which they depend, which means they are to use methods and procedures necessary to bring such species to the point at which the protective measures provided by ESA are no longer necessary. It also requires each agency to ensure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. BLM Manual Section 6840 further defines protection levels.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Objective

The objective of the cultural resources program is to protect and manage those resources found in areas of Bureau responsibility.


Survey work at Pueblo Sarco

Description

The Planning Area contains archaeological and historic resources that range from PaleoIndian sites to 20th century historic sites. These sites span over 10,000 years of occupation including the earlier PaleoIndian and Archaic cultures, and the later Anasazi, Pueblo, Apache, Ute, Hispanic and Anglo cultures.

To date, 22,100 acres, or 3.67 percent of the public land in the Planning Area have been inventoried for cultural resources. A total of 654 sites have been recorded during these inventories. Based upon this rate of sites-per-acre inventoried, it is estimated that there may be 18,000 archaeological sites on the public lands within the planning area.

Two sites, San Lazaro and Hupobi, have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and 100 other sites have been determined eligible for inclusion on the register.

The pueblo ruins of San Lazaro, Ku, Hupobi, Posi and Ponsipa Akeri have been listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties.

Site types within the Planning Area range from "PaleoIndian lithic" to various "Archaic" special activity areas, to the full range of Pueblo sites, i.e., pueblos, garden plots, petroglyphs, ceramic scatters, and so on. There are also historic dwellings, trails, and agricultural features. Of special interest are ten large pueblo ruins, all dating to the late Coalition and Classic Periods.

Guidance

The BLM's cultural resource program has two roles: primary and support. The elements in the primary role include inventory, nominations to the state and National Registers and the National Historic Landmark program, Cultural Resource Management Plans, protection of cultural properties, and issuance of cultural resource use permits. The support role focuses on the BLM's responsibilities for compliance with state and federal law, particularly with Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. Both primary and support activities of the program are based on legislated responsibilities outlined in the Antiquities Act of 1906, the NHPA as amended, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Executive Order 11593, the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA), the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), and PL 96-550. Policy and management guidance are provided in BLM's 8100 manual for cultural resources.

Since 1998, the BLM and the NM State Historic Preservation Office have implemented a protocol for how BLM meets Section 106 and some Section 110 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act (*Protocol Agreement between New Mexico Bureau of Land Management and New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer).* This protocol has streamlined the process towards more programmatic consultation between the two agencies with an emphasis on more proactive program accomplishments as a result.

Additional program directives can be found in the New Mexico State Office Manual Supplement series. These include 8100 (Cultural Resource Management), 8131 (Cultural Resource Protection), 8141 (Physical and Administrative Protection Measures), 8142 (Recovery of Cultural Resource Data), 8143 (Avoidance and/or Mitigation of Effects on Cultural Resources), 8160 (Native American Religious and Cultural Concerns), and H-8100-1 (Procedures for Performing Cultural Resource Fieldwork on Public Lands in the Area of New Mexico State BLM).

Nominations
The BLM prepares and submits nominations of significant cultural resource properties located on public lands to the National Register of Historic Places. The BLM also coordinates with other agencies and organizations in nominating cultural resources eligible for inclusion in federal and state cultural resource registry systems.

Cultural Resource Management Plans
Cultural Resource Management Plans (CRMPs) are planned for the Ojo Caliente, Sahiu Pueblo, Ku Pueblo, Ojo del Zorro Pueblo, Pueblo Quemado, La Caja Pueblo, Pueblo Sarco, La Cienega Mesa, San Lazaro, and Lower Embudo Special Management Areas. Other CRMPs for specific cultural resource properties and areas will be developed in the future.

Protection
Administrative measures for protection of cultural resource sites include determination of eligibility for and listing on the National Register, designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and National Historic Landmarks, mineral withdrawals, road closures, land acquisition, easements, and public education programs. Physical protection measures include stabilization, monitoring of site condition, patrol and surveillance programs, signing, and fencing.

Permits
Issuance of cultural resource permits is a top priority for the cultural resources program and is mandated by ARPA. Permits are issued to qualified applicants for inventory, collection, and excavation on public land. Most permits are for non-collection and non-surface-disturbing inventory for small projects conducted prior to earth disturbing activities. Project-specific permits are issued for all projects requiring collection, testing, or excavation. The BLM is able to track and monitor activities related to cultural resource inventory, recordation, and mitigation through this permitting system.

Compliance
Section 106 requires that BLM take into account the effects of its actions or authorizations on cultural resources. The BLM's policy is to avoid impacts to sites, but if impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation may be required prior to approval of the undertaking. Determination of effect on cultural properties is completed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and follows procedures outlined in NMSO-168. NMSO-168 is a procedural agreement issued pursuant to 36 CFR 800, the Federal Regulation which implemented Section 106 of the NHPA.

Program Direction
Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act states that it is the responsibility of each federal agency to establish a program to locate, inventory and nominate all properties under the agency's ownership or control that appear to qualify for inclusion in the National Register. The Taos Field Office's Cultural Resource program will meet its responsibilities to Section 110 by establishing a goal for completion of a 10 percent inventory of the Planning area over the approximate 20-year life of the plan. This Class II inventory would be conducted in the retention zone, SMAs and ACECs; however, the 10 percent inventory would not be project-driven. Inventory outside the retention zone which is required prior to land exchanges or transfers also would not be included in the 10 percent inventory acreage goal.

Although the 10 percent sample would be stratified across the entire Planning area, the initial focus will be on under-surveyed areas, including the Northern Unit (the area north and west of Taos), the Cebolla Unit (the area along the Rio Chama), and the Sabinoso Area. This sample will provide comprehensive data which may be used to determine significance of sites and enable the BLM to make well-balanced decisions for protection of cultural resources. Emphasis will also be placed on inventories needed to complete and implement Cultural Resource Management Plans.

Another goal of the Area cultural resources program is that National Register of Historic Places nominations would be prepared on a regular basis. A goal of ten nominations over the life of the RMP has been set. Nominations are important because they would strengthen the current management approach and enhance the protection of significant archaeological sites.

Land Allocations

Special Management Areas
Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions to consolidate land ownership.

Sahiu Pueblo Special Management Area
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions.

Ku Pueblo Special Management Area
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions to consolidate land ownership and acquire access easement.

Ojo del Zorro Pueblo Special Management Area
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions.

Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area

Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions to consolidate land ownership and acquire access easement.

La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions.

Pueblo Sarco Special Management Area
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions.

La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions to acquire access easement.

San Lazaro Special Management Area
Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions to consolidate land ownership and acquire access easement.

Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern
(Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone) Develop management plan and implement necessary prescriptions to consolidate land ownership.

Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Implement necessary prescriptions.

OHV Designations

Limited: Ojo Caliente ACEC (individual pueblo sites only)
Sahiu Pueblo SMA
Ku Pueblo SMA
Ojo del Zorro SMA
Pueblo Quemado SMA
La Caja Pueblo SMA
Pueblo Sarco SMA
La Cienega ACEC
San Lazaro SMA
Copper Hill ACEC (Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone)

MFP Decisions Brought Forward

Complete the Class II Survey of the Rio Grande Management Framework Planning Unit.

Acquire, through exchange or other appropriate methods, that portion of San Lazaro Pueblo on private land, and prepare a detailed activity plan to implement long term protection of the site, including structural stabilization, if necessary.

Acquire Manby springs through exchange or other appropriate means.

PALEONTOLOGY

Objective

The objective of the paleontology program is to manage and protect the paleontological resources found on the public land.

Description

A variety of paleontological resources exists in the Planning Area, from vertebrates and invertebrates to petrified wood and trace fossils. These occur in the Late Jurassic and Cretaceous continental sediments up through the Tertiary age sediments of the Eocene, Miocene, Pliocene and Pleistocene Periods.

A paleontological survey and assessment was conducted in the Santa Fe Group in 1978. There have been both reconnaissance and site specific inventories, and those combining both types. Due to the high rate of erosion in these formations, much of the earlier site specific data is now unreliable. Areas that have been shown to be productive in previous reconnaissance inventories will probably continue to be important as they are potentially capable of producing important paleontological material.

The Sombrillo area was designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for paleontological resources. Within this ACEC are extensive exposures of the three most fossiliferous subdivisions of the Tesuque Formation, the Nambe, the Skull Ridge, and the Pojoaque. Fossils found here are almost entirely mammalian. They include a mixture of essentially modern forms, primitive representatives of some modern groups, and unfamiliar mammals which are now extinct. Collection permits may be issued for research, museum, or educational projects.

For the most part, the paleontological resources are available for both public and scientific uses. ACEC designation of the Sombrillo area will facilitate preservation of a fossil record representing important evolutionary developments 15 to 5 million years ago.

Guidance

To protect paleontological resources, and to realize their value, the following guidance will be used:

• Facilitate paleontological research and collection on public lands.
• Provide for other paleontological resource uses such as education and recreation.
• Protect scientifically and educationally valuable paleontological resources when in conflict with other natural resources and land uses.
• Accord the protection provided under law to scientifically valuable fossils.
• Allow commercial and hobby collection of invertebrate and plant fossils under 43 CFR 8365.15.

To achieve this guidance, the paleontological resource management program will implement the following:

• Identify and evaluate paleontological resources so they may be adequately addressed by the BLM planning system and environmental analysis documents.
• Increase the awareness of federal land managers and the public regarding the importance of paleontological resources and management requirements, and encourage public participation in their management.
• Develop volunteer or cooperative management agreements and associations with individuals, professional paleontologists, local organizations, universities, museums, and governmental entities in order to facilitate the management and protection of paleontological resources.
• Avoid or mitigate impacts to scientifically valuable paleontological resources at a level commensurate with their importance.
• Promote awareness among users of the public lands of the importance of paleontological resources in order to augment management and protection objectives. Efforts will continue to be made to avoid focusing attention on the exact location of scientifically important paleontological resources if such attention would conflict with management objectives for those resources.

Land Allocations

Special Management Areas
Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Develop and implement a management plan.

OHV Designations
Limited: Sombrillo ACEC

RECREATION

Objective

The mission of the program is to ensure the continued availability of public land for a diverse array of quality resource-dependent outdoor recreation opportunities and settings for the attainment of diverse experiences and benefits to individuals and society.

Description

Recreation Program Overview
The Field Office recreation program is diverse. The program is, however, heavily involved with water-based recreation resources, including the Wild Rivers Recreation Area, the "Racecourse" section of the Rio Grande (the highest whitewater boating use section in New Mexico), the Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River, and the Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area.

Much of the recreation use is authorized through Special Use Permits, especially for commercial use. Recreation programs in the planning area are managed according to multiple-use principles, unless otherwise specified by law. Recreation use is managed to protect the health and safety of users, to protect natural and cultural resources, and to promote public use and enjoyment of public lands. Priority is given to both developed and undeveloped recreation use areas experiencing resource damage, user conflicts, consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of fish and wildlife resources, or threats to visitor safety and where public investment has been made.

River Management
The planning area contains three separate river sections, which together account for the majority of the commercial and private floatboating use in New Mexico. These sections are 71 miles of the Rio Grande, four miles of the Red River, and 13 miles of the Rio Chama, most of which are Congressionally designated as Wild and Scenic. Since the passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968, the Taos Field Office has acquired about 2,500 acres to consolidate land ownership along these river sections. These river sections are in the acquisition zone and additional acreage will be identified and acquired on a case-by-case basis in the future.

The Taos Field Office strives to administer the river management program to protect natural resources, to promote the safety of all users of these areas, to guarantee continued public access to these river segments, and to minimize user conflicts. All competitive, commercial, and private uses of these river segments are examined on a case-by-case basis through the Special Recreation Use Permit process. Permit stipulations for the approved users are designed to limit adverse impacts to the environment, protect and promote the safety of the user, and minimize user conflicts with other resource values. Recreation Management Plans are in use for the management of the Rio Grande (USDI, BLM, 2000) and the Rio Chama (USDI, BLM et al, 1990).

Developed Recreation Sites
Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Wild Rivers Recreation Area, located five miles west of Questa, New Mexico, is a developed 20,231 acre recreation area adjacent to and within the Rio Grande and Red River canyons. A visitor center and 28 developed campsites are located above the rim. Nineteen camping sites are located below the rim and are only accessible by foot trails. Water, toilets, camping shelters, and barbeque grills are available. No recreation vehicle hookups of any kind are available at any of the developed sites.

The trail system at the Wild Rivers Recreation Area is also included in the National Recreational Trail System. The trail system is 12 miles and includes all the developed and maintained trails located within the Recreation Area. Management of this area is covered in the Rio Grande Corridor Plan (USDI, BLM, 2000). The area provides opportunities for recreation use including camping, hiking, picnicking, sightseeing, and boating and has an active environmental interpretation program.

Orilla Verde Recreation Area
Orilla Verde Recreation Area is located 16 miles south of Taos along State Route 570 near Pilar. The most popular activities are camping, fishing, boating and hiking. Other activities include sightseeing and swimming.

Developed and undeveloped camping is provided along the river in the Rio Grande Gorge at six locations. Facilities in developed campgrounds include water, restrooms, showers, electricity, grills, shelters and group shelters. Other facilities include float-boat launches and hiking/biking trails.

Recently the Taos Valley Overlook was incorporated into the Recreation Area. The Overlook property includes Taos Junction Bridge, the confluence of the Rio

Grande/Rio Pueblo de Taos, and much of the rim area between NM 68 and the Gorge.
Trails within the Recreation Area include the West Rim Trail system, La Vista Verde Trail, and about 20 miles of non-motorized trails on the Overlook rim area.

Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area
The Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area is located about 30 miles northeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The most outstanding recreational attraction here is the Santa Cruz Reservoir itself. This artificial lake was formed by the construction of a dam on the Rio del Medio and Rio Frijoles, owned and operated by the Santa Cruz Irrigation District.
Currently, BLM maintains about 30 day-use/camping sites at the northern end of the lake, and 13 sites on a bluff overlooking the lake. Other facilities include a trail network, boat launch ramp, fishing platform, several parking areas, restrooms, and drinking water.

The trail system at the Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area is also included in the National Recreational Trail System. The trail system is 6 ½ miles in length and includes Vista Valle, La Caja, and Santa Cruz Overlook Trails.

Guidance

The Resource Management Plan outlines decisions to be implemented which affect outdoor recreation, and provides a framework in which future decisions will be made. Future decisions must be consistent with guidance in the Resource Management Plan, as well as with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

The Legal Framework
There are several laws which give important guidance to the recreation program. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provides for management of outdoor recreation on public lands. Section 202[c](9) calls for land use planning consistent with statewide outdoor recreation plans. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended, provides for protection of outstanding river resources. It requires the identification and study of rivers or portions of rivers (wild, scenic, or recreational) and directs Federal agencies to cooperate with state governments. Other national laws that govern recreation management include the Wilderness Act of 1964; BLM Wilderness Management Policy, 43 CFR 8560; National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended; the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964, as amended; the Recreation and Public Purpose Act, as amended; and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004.

Other guidance includes the New Mexico Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan (2004), the BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services (2003), and County plans or ordinances.

Recreation and Visitor Services
The recreation program is re-emphasizing experiences and benefit outcomes and putting its focus on providing physical, social and administrative settings that will help visitors achieve their experience goals. The level and type of developments and visitor management strategies are now used as implementing actions to meet those setting goals and objectives. The planning process begins with the identification of a niche within three possible markets – destination, community, or undeveloped. These markets are depicted as zones within planning areas, each having their own set of unique prescriptions. The next step entails writing objectives to produce opportunities that will attain experiences and outcome benefits, such as running on a trail to achieve peace of mind and physical fitness. Prescriptions will be written to provide the settings required to produce the experiences and benefit objectives. Activity plans, when developed, will address management, marketing, monitoring and administrative actions. These areas will be managed as Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs).

Areas not identified as a Special Recreation Management Area will be managed as Extensive Recreation Management Areas. These do not require activity plans, being limited to custodial actions that include recreation management, marketing, monitoring and administrative support, but do not require maintenance of setting character or production of benefit outcomes.

The Resource Management Plan has identified eight Special Management Areas which have recreation as a dominant use (Section 5). Three are developed recreation areas (Orilla Verde, Wild Rivers and Santa Cruz Lake), three are rivers (Rio Grande, Rio Chama, Rio Embudo), two are National Historic Trails and one is to accommodate OHV use (Fun Valley). Decisions to be implemented include developing or updating activity plans for the Special Management Areas, improved signing, and acquisition of Manby Hot Springs and Ute Mountain [both areas have been acquired since 1988]. The remaining public lands in the planning area would be managed as an extensive recreation management area. Management actions to facilitate dispersed recreation use would be limited primarily to providing basic information on public safety, access and recreation opportunities, as well as conducting occasional patrols.

Providing opportunities for back-country recreation close to major urban areas will be stressed. Motorized vehicle recreation including off-highway vehicle use will be maintained, following guidance contained in the 2001 National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands. A concentrated effort will be made to locate and establish use areas and

trails compatible with social and natural environments in close proximity to heavily populated areas.
The outdoor recreation program uses the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS; BLM Manual 8320) as a planning and management tool to identify and define recreational setting objectives and prescriptions. The general aim or concept is that different settings will provide different experiences, addressing not only the physical but also the psychological benefits of recreation.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum provides an important role in future decision making. It provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation opportunity environments. As conceived, the Spectrum has application to all lands, regardless of ownership or jurisdiction. Recreation opportunities can be expressed in terms of three principal components: *activity, setting,* and *experience.* Possible mixes of these components have been arranged along a continuum, ranging from 'primitive' to 'urban.'

Land Allocations

Special Designations

Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Implement the Wild Rivers Recreation Area Management Plan [included in the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan, 2000].

Rio Chama Special Management Area
Develop and implement a management plan [completed in 1991 for the Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River].

Lower Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Develop and implement a management plan [the Racecourse ACEC was rescinded in 2000, and replaced by the Lower Gorge ACEC. Management of the area is provided by the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan, 2000].

Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area
Develop and implement a management plan [completed in 1989].

Fun Valley Special Management Area
Develop and implement a management plan.

Orilla Verde Recreation Area
Develop and implement a management plan.

Off-Highway Vehicle Designations

Closed: Rio Chama Special Management Area
Limited: Orilla Verde, Wild Rivers and Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Areas
Open: Fun Valley Special Management Area
Arroyo Seco OHV Area (Española area)

MFP Decisions Brought Forward

•Develop a cooperative management plan with the US Forest Service and New Mexico Department of Game & Fish for the joint management of San Antonio Mountain as a Wildlife Management Area.
•Acquire all of Ute Mountain (T 31 N, R 12 E) for its recreational values and for the buffer area it provides to the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, and restrict mineral leasing, development, and material sales in the buffer area (acquisition completed 2005).
•Work to eliminate incompatible uses within the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.
•Develop a Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River signing program to accomplish the visitor use objectives of visitor safety and natural resource protection.
•Develop programs and construct facilities to better handle visitor management problems with the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River corridor.

SCENIC QUALITY

Objective

The objective of the BLM's Visual Resource Management program is to identify scenic values; and analyze and minimize impacts of projects using basic design principles.

Description

Visual Resource Management is BLM's system to help identify visual (scenic) resources, minimize visual impacts to the landscape character of public lands. It provides a "language" for looking at landscapes. In 1988, the RMP established visual resource management classes for several areas, as shown in Table 2-6.

Ratings from scenic quality classes, visual sensitivity levels, and distance zones are combined to form VRM classes. A VRM class identifies the suggested degrees of human modification that should be allowed in a certain landscape (see below).

Scenic quality classes are rated for landform, water, color, vegetation, intrusions, and uniqueness. These elements are combined and the area is classified as Class A – unique, outstanding features; Class B – outstanding features common to the physiographic region; or Class C – features common to the physiographic region.

Sensitivity levels are determined on the basis of frequency of travel through an area, use of the area, and public knowledge of the area. These elements are rated and the area is assigned a high, medium, or low sensitivity level.

Distance zones are placed in three categories: foreground-middleground zone, background zone, and seldom seen zone. The foreground-middleground zone is closest to the viewer and requires more attention and consideration in management decisions, because of the great detail that can be seen in the landscape. The background and seldom seen zones are seen in less detail by the viewer, and most impacts blend with the landscape, because of the distance.

Table 2-6
Visual Resource Management Class Designations

Area	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern	1,775	4,789	10,716	0
San Antonio Wilderness Study Area	0	7,050	0	0
Camino Real National Historic Trail	0	998	0	0
Rio Chama Wild & Scenic River (BLM portion outside WSA)	1,690	0	0	0
Rio Chama Special Management Area/Wilderness Study Area	3,160	9,664	0	0
Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area	0	15,760	0	0
Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area	0	640	0	0
Rio Grande – Lower Gorge, including Lower Gorge ACEC & Orilla Verde Recreation Area	0	22,090	24	0
Rio Grande – Upper Gorge, including Wild & Scenic River and Wild Rivers Recreation Area	12,413	24,143	21	0

Objectives for the four visual resource management classes are:

Class I: to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Class II: to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the pre-dominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class III: to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class IV: to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of

the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

Congressionally designated areas are typically managed under Class I visual resource management guidelines. Wilderness Study Areas are subject to an interim Class II category. Special Management Areas recommended for and designated in the Taos Resource Management Plan will contain the visual resource management class/objective in their prescriptions if applicable. The VRM system will continue to be the basic tool for inventory, planning, and management of visual resources on public lands.

Future efforts will concentrate on updating the visual resource inventory database, protecting the quality of visual resources and maintaining the established VRM class objectives on designated landscapes. The BLM recognizes the constantly changing natural resource base and its effects on scenic quality. Each multiple-use program involved in resource development work should incorporate visual design into projects and complete visual contrast ratings for all projects regardless of location.

Guidance

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 broadly directs Federal agencies to assure "esthetically pleasing surroundings" and use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will ensure the use of environmental design arts in planning and decision making. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 directs BLM to manage the public lands in a manner that will protect the quality of scenic resources, including inventories of scenic values; and requires that all rights-of-way contain terms and conditions which will minimize damage to the scenic and esthetic values. More detailed guidance is provided by BLM Manual 8400-Visual Resource Management. This "instruction manual" gives specific information on how to inventory the public lands for scenic quality, guidance on establishing Visual Resource Management classes, and on the use of the contrast rating process as a tool in project design and as a tool for project assessment during environmental review.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Objective

The objective for the Taos Field Office's transportation and access program is to provide for motorized and non-motorized access to the public lands on a network to roads and trails, while protecting natural and cultural resources.

Description

The Taos RMP has designated all public lands in the planning area as *open, closed,* or *limited*. These designations are defined as follows:

1. Open areas and trails: Designated areas and trails on the public lands where OHVs may be operated, subject only to the operating conditions set forth in 43 CFR 8341 and 8343.

2. Closed areas and trails: Designated areas and trails on public lands where the use of vehicles is permanently or temporarily prohibited.

3. Limited areas and trails: An OHV designation where the use of vehicles is subject to restrictions considered to be appropriate to correct a problem or to provide a specific recreation opportunity. Limited designation in the planning area would also apply to areas devoted to intensive OHV use. Management efforts would be more intensive for this type of designation than for open designation areas which normally affect the majority of lands. Restrictions may limit the number or types of vehicles allowed, dates and times of use, locations within the area where vehicles can be operated and similar situations.

Organized commercial and competitive OHV events are examined through the NEPA process on a case-by-case basis. Permit stipulations for the various approved events are designed to limit adverse impacts of OHV use and provide for visitor safety.

Emergency closures can be made and remain in effect only until an interim or standard designation can be made, or until the adverse effects are eliminated and measures to prevent heir recurrence have been implemented. Interim designations are used when the normal planning schedule does not permit the timely resolution of OHV-related issues through the resource management planning process.

OHV use on most public lands in the planning area to be retained in Federal ownership is limited to "existing roads and trails" (see map 2-2). This general designation covers approximately 479,000 acres of public lands located in Rio Arriba, Taos and northern Santa Fe Counties. In the remainder of the planning area, about 85,000 acres of scattered tracts of public lands will be open to vehicle use. Exceptions to these two general area designations pertain to the following specific areas where additional restrictions are in place:

San Antonio Special Management Area
30,000 acres are limited to authorized vehicles only and 20,000 acres are limited to an April 1 to November 30 annual season of use.

Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern
17, 261 acres are limited to designated routes of travel.

Rio Chama Special Management Area
6,680 acres are closed to vehicle use.

Fun Valley Special Management Area
19,200 acres are open with special stipulations to protect cultural and paleontological resources.

Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern
13,200 acres are limited to designated roads and five pueblo sites (4,500 acres) are limited to authorized vehicles only.

Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern
8,865 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

San Lazaro Special Management Area
77 acres are limited to authorized vehicles only.

La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern
3,356 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

Pueblo Sarco Special Management Area
10 acres are limited to authorized vehicles only.

Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area
555 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area
85 acres are limited to authorized vehicles only.

Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area
159 acres are limited to authorized vehicles only.
Ku Pueblo Special Management Area
65 acres are closed to vehicle use.

Sahiu Pueblo Special Management Area
2 acres are limited to authorized vehicles only.

Wild Rivers Recreation Area
20,231 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

Riparian / Aquatic Special Management Area
Some 128 miles of streams and their associated banks are limited to designated roads and trails.

Sabinoso Special Management Area
15,760 acres (Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area) are limited to authorized vehicles only and the remaining 16,240 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

Lower Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern
16,351 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

Ute Mountain
This recently acquired 14,344 acre area has an interim designation of limited to designated roads.

Orilla Verde Recreation Area
5,763 acres are limited to designated roads and trails.

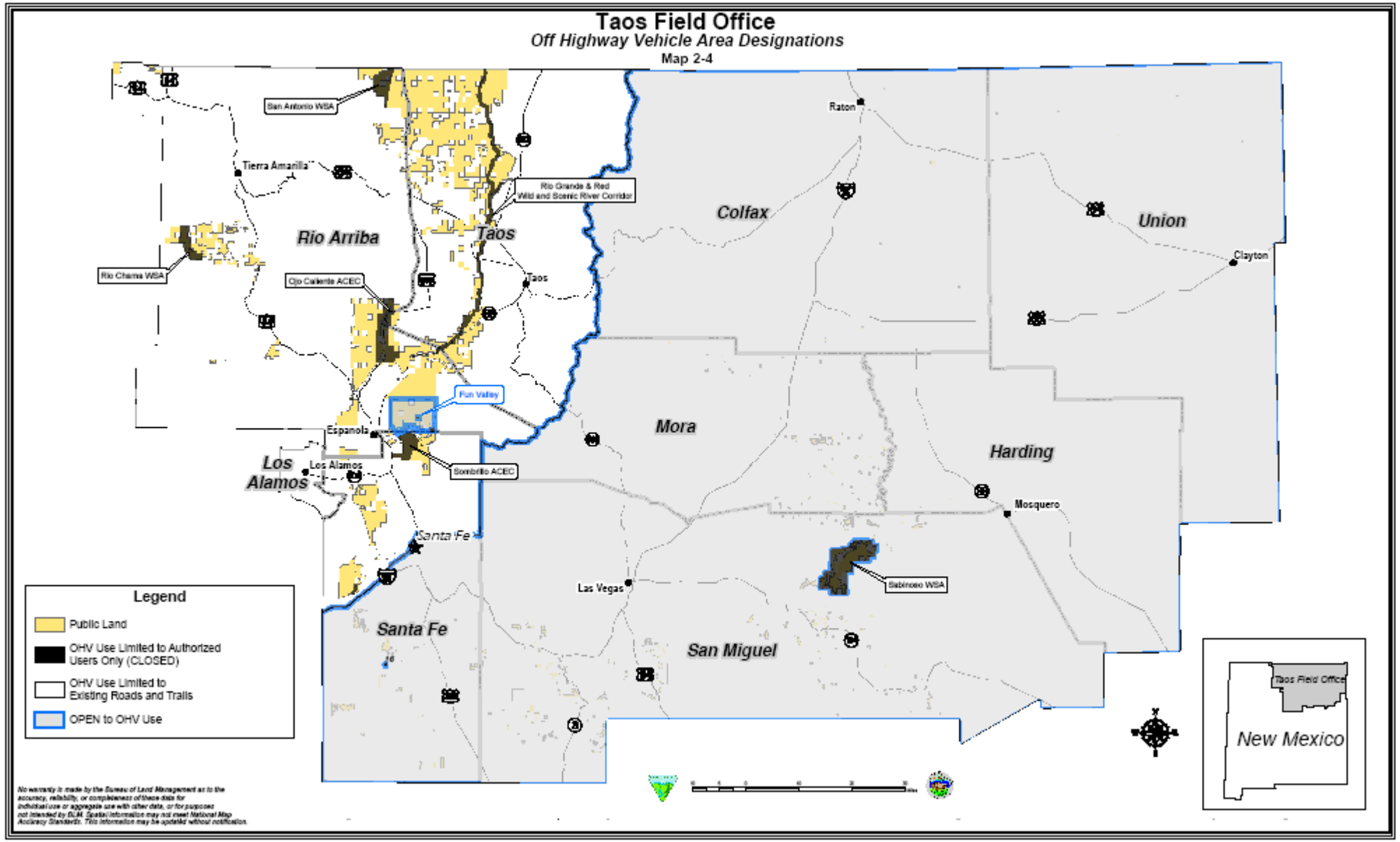
Table 2-7 Vehicle Management Areas

#	Name	Status
1	Fun Valley/ Santa Cruz Lake	Inventory complete, no on-ground implementation pending cultural/paleo resource review
2	Wild Rivers	Rio Grande Corridor Plan, 2000
3	Copper Hill	Rio Grande Corridor Plan, 2000
4	Sabinoso	Will be addressed in comprehensive management plan, scheduled start FY 2006
5	Rio Chama - west	Wild & Scenic River corridor completed
6	North Unit (Taos Plateau)	North Unit Transportation Plan, 1991
7	Ojo Caliente	ACEC Plan, 1990 (40% of tract)
8	Buckman	No action
9	Extensive	Several large scattered tracts – no action to date on most
10	Rio Chama - east	No action

Guidance

Primary guidance for this program derives from the *National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands* (USDI, 2001). This document lists several strategic actions to be implemented at the national, state and local levels concerning coordination, easements and acquisitions, education, environmental considerations, fees and funding, inventory and monitoring, law enforcement, and implementation.

Other guidance is provided in Appendix C of the Bureau's *Land Use Planning Handbook* (USDI 2005, pp 17-20). Listed are requirements to delineate travel management areas in a land use plan, designate all public land areas as *open, closed or limited* to off-highway vehicles, and implement decisions in a manner that identifies specific areas, roads and/or trails that will be available for public use.


Taos Field Office
Off Highway Vehicle Area Designations
Map 2-4
San Antonio WSA
Tierra Amarilla
Rio Grande & Red Wild and Scenic River Corridor
Rio Arriba
Taos
Colfax
Union
Raton
Clayton
Rio Chama WSA
Ojo Caliente ACEC
Taos
Fun Valley
Mora
Espanola
Los Alamos
Los Alamos
Sombrillo ACEC
Harding
Mosquero
Santa Fe
Las Vegas
Sabinoso WSA
Santa Fe
San Miguel
Legend
Public Land
OHV Use Limited to Authorized Users Only (CLOSED)
OHV Use Limited to Existing Roads and Trails
OPEN to OHV Use
Taos Field Office
New Mexico

WILDERNESS

Objective

The objective of the wilderness program is to protect and manage designated wilderness and wilderness study areas in accordance with all appropriate laws and regulations.

Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area

Description

The Field Office manages three Wilderness Study Areas. Wilderness resources in the Planning area have been inventoried using the *BLM Wilderness Inventory Handbook*. The task of assessing wilderness suitability was completed on an accelerated, statewide basis in the mid-1980s. The *Final EIS* was incorporated into a wilderness study package that was submitted by the Department of the Interior to the President in 1991. A summary of the current status and recommendations for the WSAs is given in the table below:

Table 2-8
Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

Name	Acres	Wilderness Recommendation
San Antonio	7,050	Nonsuitable – all
Sabinoso	15,760	Nonsuitable – all
Rio Chama	11,985	Suitable – 5,232 acres Nonsuitable – 6,753 acres

Guidance

The three Wilderness Study Areas are managed under the *Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review* (USDI, BLM 1979, as amended) until they are added to the National Wilderness Preservation System or removed from further wilderness consideration.

If designated as wilderness, they will be managed under the *Wilderness Management Policy*. If removed from further wilderness consideration, they will be managed under the principles prescribed by this Resource Management Plan. The San Antonio and Sabinoso WSAs have been recommended by the BLM as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

This Resource Management Plan makes no assumptions concerning the final outcome of the New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study. Any recommendation made for lands within WSAs is confined to the identified Resource Management Plan issues. This Plan provides management guidance for these lands if they are not designated as wilderness.

Land Allocations

Special Area Designations
The three Wilderness Study Areas are within areas designated by the Taos RMP as Special Management Areas or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Management plans will be developed and implemented for each area that protects the wilderness characteristics of the WSA portion, following guidelines in the *Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review* (USDI, BLM 1979, as amended):

Sabinoso Special Management Area
Rio Chama Special Management Area
San Antonio Special Management Area
San Antonio Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Off-Highway Vehicle Designations
Limited: San Antonio SMA and Sabinoso
Closed: Rio Chama Special Management Area

SECTION 3 – PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

All future resource management authorizations and actions, including budget proposals, will conform or, at a minimum, not conflict with the Plan. All operations and activities under existing permits, contracts, cooperative agreements or other instruments for occupancy and use will be modified, if necessary, to conform with this Plan within a reasonable period of time, subject to valid existing rights. Decisions in this Plan will be implemented over a period of years. In some cases, more detailed and site specific planning and environmental analysis may be required before an action can be taken.

Plan Implementation

There are three levels of decisions to be implemented in order to resolve the five planning issues listed in Section 1. All three levels of implementation are identified in Section 2, Management Program. The first level of implementation is to strive to meet the issue decisions which are the proposed resolutions of each planning issue. The second level of implementation is to meet the program objectives by accomplishing the program decisions listed as guidance for each resource program. The third level of implementation is to complete the land allocation decisions listed under each applicable resource program.

Implementation Procedures
After midyear, prior to establishing program packages, the Implementation Priorities Summary Worksheet (BLM Manual Form NM-1617-1) is completed by the specialist. The output is a list of decisions to be implemented or that have been implemented and their associated target or completion dates. The Implementation Worksheet (BLM Manual Form NM-1617-2) is then completed with an outcome of management prescriptions or sequence of events with estimated cost targets and dates. For decisions to be implemented, the prescriptions and estimated costs are worked into the budget cycle process for the next fiscal year. Forms NM-1617-1 and NM-1617-2 are collected by the Branch chiefs and given to the Planning and Environmental contact Person for automation using the computerized system created by the New Mexico State Office for statewide RMP tracking.

The worksheets provide the basis for accountability in the development of Performance Improvement and Position Review (PIPR) elements to ensure commitment to implement the decisions of land-use planning. It is the duty of the Branch Chiefs to ensure that decisions which are to be accomplished be written into the PIPR of the responsible specialist.

Plan Monitoring

Monitoring provides a record of the progress made in implementing the RMP. The record contains information for use in routine plan evaluations which provides a source of monitoring data to evaluate the Plan's effectiveness and usefulness in the management of public land resources. Documentation also provides information needed for the Annual RMP Report.

While implementation of the plan is the ultimate responsibility of the Taos Field Manager, the overall tracking of the plan will be conducted by the Planning and Environmental Contact Person. However, the tracking of specific decisions will require a commitment from the Area Manager, Branch Chiefs, and Resource Specialists to ensure plan implementation actions are documented.

Monitoring Procedures
As the decisions are implemented, the Resource Specialist responsible for the action will complete a Plan Management Worksheet (BLM Manual Form NM-1617-3) to provide a transition from implementation to tracking the decisions. The Branch Chiefs will compile each section's worksheets and file them with the Planning and Environmental Contact Person. Form NM-1617-3 will be three-hole punched and placed in the "Master RMP" in a section labeled Decision Evaluation. This section will form the basis for plan evaluation in the Annual RMP Report.

SECTION 4 – PLAN MAINTENANCE & EVALUATION

Plan Maintenance

The completed Taos Resource Management Plan provides general guidance for management of the public lands in the Planning area. The useful life-expectancy of the RMP is expected to be approximately 15 years. To ensure the document maintains viability and usefulness for the intended life-expectancy, maintenance of the RMP must be accomplished. Plan maintenance includes correcting errors in the text, updating data bases, and correcting map errors.

Plan maintenance is different from the two other methods of modifying land use plans (plan amendment and revision). The following three definitions are provided to clarify the differences of these types of plan modifications and provide a better understanding of what constitutes plan maintenance.

Maintenance
Plan maintenance is a minor change in data or plan material, will not change a land use decision, no NEPA document is required, no public involvement is needed, and documentation is informal. For example, a change in a word or correction of a typographical error would come under this category.

Amendment
Plan amendments are usually major changes in plan material, will change one or more decisions, will need NEPA compliance, will need public involvement, must be formally documented, and need to be signed off by the approving authority (State Director).

Revisions
Plan revisions are a total review and possible rewrite of the plan material accomplished after the useful life of the RMP has expired, many decisions could change, NEPA compliance and public involvement is required, formal documentation is required, and basically the same steps used in the preparation of an RMP are required.

Plan Maintenance Procedures
Taos BLM will use a standardized form (figure 4-2) to identify plan maintenance needs, rationale for the change, and document management approval. These maintenance actions will be tracked on another form (figure 4-1). Once approved, the appropriate changes will be made on the on-line version of the Resource Management Plan and any future reprintings.

Plan Evaluation

A formal evaluation of overall plan adequacy must be accomplished at a minimum at the end of every fifth year after plan completion. To assist in this process a yearly evaluation will be completed in the Annual RMP Report. The purpose of the yearly evaluation is to measure 'what is' versus 'what should be.' Thus the effectiveness of plan implementation will be measured by the level achieved in accomplishing plan decisions, program objectives and completing the land allocation decisions identified in Section 2.

Evaluation Procedures
The yearly evaluation will be documented in the Annual RMP Report along with the Rangeland Program Summary updates and other pertinent information. The evaluation will focus on implementation of plan decisions as discussed in Section 2. The evaluation, at a minimum, should cover the points below.

1. What is the status of implementing Special Management Area prescriptions? What is the status of ACEC implementation plan completion?

2. How many access easements were acquired? What is the status of completing OHV designations? Were any emergency closures initiated?

3. What is the status of rangeland monitoring?

4. How many land ownership adjustment proposals were initiated and / or completed?

5. How many rights-of-way applications were received? How many were issued?

6. What is the status of meeting program objectives for each resource program? What program-specific decisions were implemented to accomplish the objective?

7. What is the status of implementing the land allocation decisions under each responsible program? What management prescriptions and planned actions were accomplished?

Figure 4-1

Form RMP-1 Taos Resource Management Plan Maintenance Index Sheet		
CHANGE NUMBER (PAGE & NUMBER)	DATE	CHANGED ITEM SUMMARIZED STATEMENT

Figure 4-2

Form RMP-2
TAOS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN-CHANGE NUMBER ____
(Relates to Change Number on Form RMP-1)

Page _____

Location _____
column, paragraph, heading, sentence, etc

Describe what is to be deleted, added, rewritten, etc

CHANGE:

Describe rationale for above change; include reference to EAs, Amendments, Instruction Memoranda, or law

REASON:

Signature as Appropriate:

Resource Specialist_____ Date _____

NEPA Coordinator _____ Date _____

Field Manager _____ Date _____

SECTION 5
SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Introduction

This section contains general descriptions of 24 special designations which include eight Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Special area designations are large or small sites requiring special attention to protect one or more resources or values. Special area designations may include non-public lands that BLM wishes to acquire or to bring under a Cooperative Management Agreement to better manage the area. At a minimum, an activity plan will be prepared for each special designation area.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are designated where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

The narratives for each special designation area include a general description, the management objectives, management prescriptions and a location map. Detailed maps are not included for some cultural resource Special Management Areas because these sites are sensitive and could be subject to vandalism; see map 5-1 for their general location.

Detailed activity plans will be developed and will contain more specific information. The management objectives and prescriptions identified provide the reader with the general management emphasis the Special Designation area will receive.

It should be noted that as BLM obtains new resource data, the boundaries and management prescriptions of the special designation areas may be modified. Additionally, new special designations could be identified and designated in the future. In either case, a plan amendment would be required.

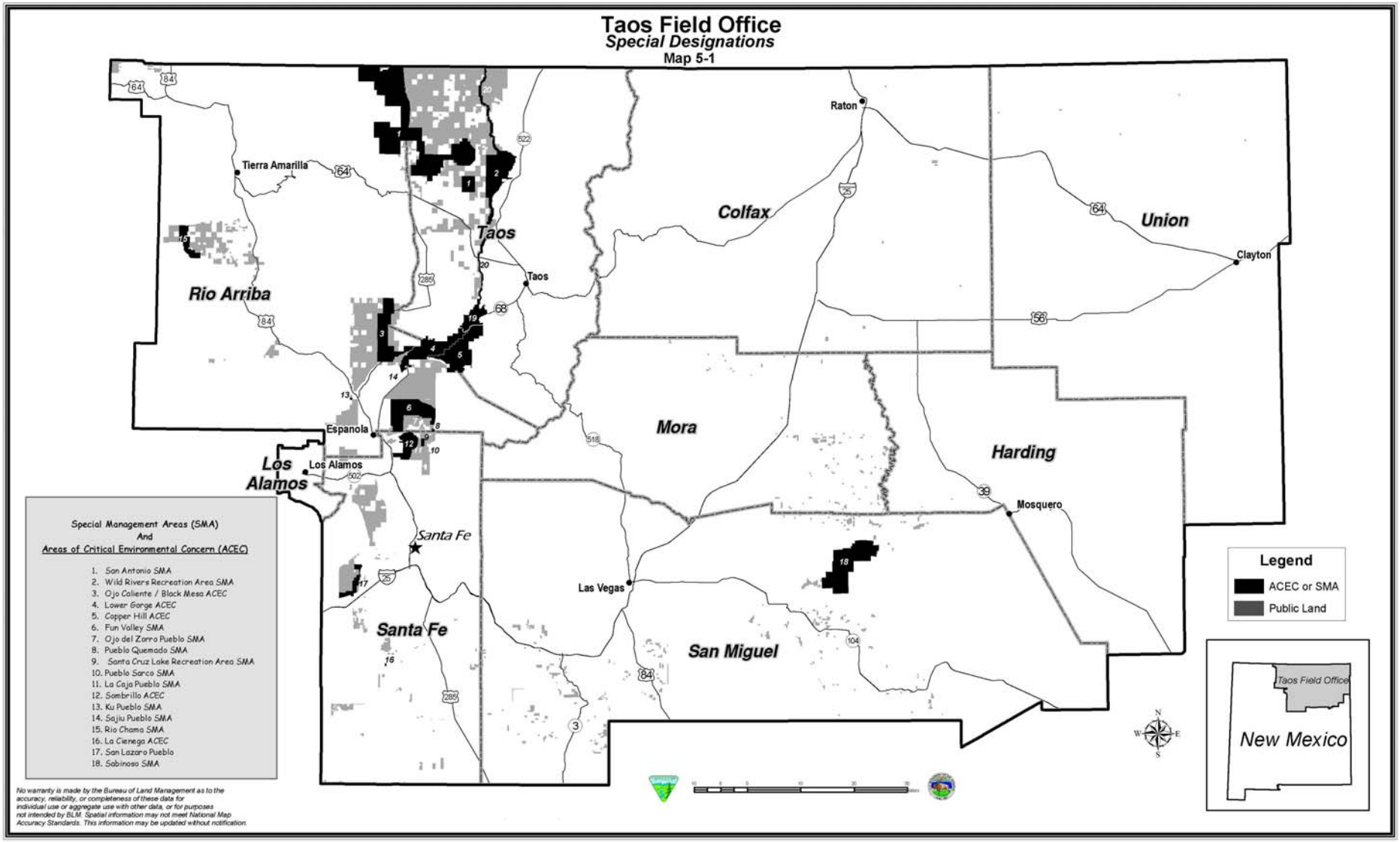
Since the RMP was approved in 1988, there have been several changes made to the original designated areas – these changes are summarized in Table 5-2.

Table 5-1
Index of Special Designations by Type

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Special Management Areas
Black Mesa La Cienega Copper Hill Lower Gorge Ojo Caliente San Antonio Gorge Sombrillo Winter Range	La Caja Pueblo Fun Valley Ku Pueblo Ojo del Zorro Pueblo Pueblo Quemado Pueblo Sarco Rio Chama Riparian/Aquatic Sabinoso Sahiu Pueblo San Antonio San Lazaro
Back Country Byways	
Wild Rivers Back Country Byway	
Congressional Designations	**Wild and Scenic Rivers – Eligible Segments**
Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Old Spanish National Historic Trail Rio Chama Wild & Scenic River Rio Grande/Red Wild & Scenic Rivers	Rio Grande Bosque Rio Embudo Box Arroyo Hondo Tierra Amarilla Canyon Agua Caliente Canyon Cañada de Ojo Sarco Rio de las Trampas
Recreation Areas	**Wilderness Study Areas**
Orilla Verde Santa Cruz Lake Wild Rivers	Rio Chama Sabinoso San Antonio

Table 5-2
Special Designations

	Name of Special Designation Type of designation	Map	Date of Designation	Status of Activity Plan
Multi-County	**Riparian / Aquatic** Special Management Area	-	 1988	 Plan completed 2000
	Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern Agua Caliente Canyon – W&SR eligible Arroyo Hondo – W&SR eligible Cañada de Ojo Sarco – W&SR eligible Rio de las Trampas – W&SR eligible Rio Embudo Box - W&SR eligible Tierra Amarilla Canyon – W&SR eligible	5-2	 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000 2000	Includes Agua Caliente/Warm Springs ACECs and six stream segments eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation Rio Grande Corridor Plan (2000)
	San Antonio Special Management Area San Antonio Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern Winter Range Area of Critical Environmental Concern San Antonio Wilderness Study Area	5-3	 1988 1988 1988 1988	 Planning completed as part of North Unit Habitat Management Plan (1992)
	National Historic or Scenic Trails Continental Divide National Scenic Trail El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail Old Spanish National Historic Trail	5-4	 1978 2000 2002	 Route in Rio Arriba County not determined Plan/RMP Amendment completed 2004 Plan initiated 2006
Rio Arriba County	**Black Mesa** Area of Critical Environmental Concern	5-5	 1988, 2000	Plan completed 2000 Rio Grande Corridor Plan changed boundary
	Fun Valley Special Management Area	5-6	 1988	
	Ku Pueblo Special Management Area	5-1	 1988	
	Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern	5-7	 1988	 Plan completed 1990
	Ojo del Zorro Pueblo Special Management Area	5-1	 1988	
	Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area	5-1	 1988	
	Rio Chama Special Management Area Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Study Area	5-8	 1988 1968 1988	 W&SR Plan completed 1990
	Sahiu Pueblo Special Management Area	5-1	 1988	
	Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern	5-9	 1988	 Plan completed 1992
San Miguel	**Sabinoso** Special Management Area Wilderness Study Area	5-10	 1988 1988	 Plan initiated 2006
Santa Fe County	**La Cienega** Area of Critical Environmental Concern	5-11	 1988, 1992	SMA amended to be an ACEC (1992) La Cienega ACEC Plan (1995)
	Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act San Lazaro Special Management Area	5-12	2004 1988	Plan in progress for sites identified in Act Will be covered in Galisteo Basin Plan
	Pueblo Sarco Special Management Area	5-1	 1988	
	Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area	5-13	 1988 1988	 Santa Cruz Lake Plan (1989) Santa Cruz Lake Plan (1989)
Taos County	**Lower Gorge** Area of Critical Environmental Concern	5-14	 2000	Part was originally in Racecourse ACEC Rio Grande Corridor Plan (2000)
	Orilla Verde Recreation Area	5-15	 1994, 2000	Former Rio Grande Gorge State Park Rio Grande Corridor Plan (2000)
	Rio Grande/Red River Wild and Scenic Rivers Rio Grande Bosque – W&SR study segment	5-16	 1968, 1994 1994, 2000	 Rio Grande Corridor Plan (2000)
	Wild Rivers Recreation Area Back Country Byway	5-17	 1988, 2000 1990	 Rio Grande Corridor Plan (2000)


Taos Field Office
Special Designations
Map 5-1
Raton
Tierra Amarilla
Colfax
Union
Clayton
Taos
Taos
Rio Arriba
Mora
Harding
Espanola
Los Alamos
Los Alamos
Mosquero
Santa Fe
Las Vegas
Santa Fe
San Miguel
Special Management Areas (SMA)
And
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
1. San Antonio SMA
2. Wild Rivers Recreation Area SMA
3. Ojo Caliente / Black Mesa ACEC
4. Lower Gorge ACEC
5. Copper Hill ACEC
6. Fun Valley SMA
7. Ojo del Zorro Pueblo SMA
8. Pueblo Quemado SMA
9. Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area SMA
10. Pueblo Sarco SMA
11. La Caja Pueblo SMA
12. Sombrillo ACEC
13. Ku Pueblo SMA
14. Sajiu Pueblo SMA
15. Rio Chama SMA
16. La Cienega ACEC
17. San Lazaro Pueblo
18. Sabinoso SMA
Legend
ACEC or SMA
Public Land
Taos Field Office
New Mexico
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RIPARIAN / AQUATIC
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

All Counties

General Description

The Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Area includes all riparian and aquatic habitats within the planning area.

This Special Management Area includes the areas of the Rio Grande, Rio Chama, Santa Cruz River and Lake, Red River, Rio Hondo, Rio Embudo, Rio Medio, Ocate Creek, Agua Caliente Creek, Rio Cebolla, Rio Nutrias, Rio Frijoles, Rio Pueblo, Ojo Caliente River, Rio San Antonio, Rio Los Pinos, Canadian River, Canada Agua Arroyo, and numerous other areas that reveal, through their existing or potential soil/vegetation complex, the influence of surface or subsurface water and its associated aquatic ecosystem.

Southwestern riparian and aquatic zones are known to be some of the most valuable and limited of wildlife habitat types. The existing conditions of these habitats vary from "non-functional" to "proper functioning" condition, the latter providing outstanding structural and species diversity.

Management Objectives

The management objectives for the components of the Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Area will be to protect and maintain high quality systems and to restore and improve degraded habitats and associated watersheds.

Management Prescriptions

1. Limit OHV use in riparian zones to designated roads or trails.

2. Limit grazing and livestock use to maintain desired riparian condition where feasible. Close riparian areas to grazing where livestock degradation is occurring and cannot be mitigated.

3. Mineral material sales are excluded from riparian and aquatic systems. Initiate mineral withdrawal on riparian and aquatic project improvement areas and on non-compatible ACECs.

4. Prepare activity plans to extensively describe and define individual management prescriptions for all riparian and aquatic habitats in the planning area [note – planning was completed for 22 riparian areas, including the Rio Grande corridor, in 2000].

5. Fire suppression will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
6. Acquire state and private lands within the Special Management Area through exchange or purchase.

7. BLM will evaluate for exchange those riparian habitats that would improve overall riparian management capabilities within the planning area.

8. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation II, Controlled Surface Use (see Appendix A).

9. Watershed activity plans may also be developed to support riparian and aquatic management objectives.

10. Evaluate riparian/aquatic systems to determine potential for designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

COPPER HILL — Rio Arriba & Taos Counties

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN
AGUA CALIENTE CANYON – W&SR ELIGIBLE
ARROYO HONDO – W&SR ELIGIBLE
CAÑADA DE OJO SARCO – W&SR ELIGIBLE
RIO DE LAS TRAMPAS – W&SR ELIGIBLE
RIO EMBUDO BOX - W&SR ELIGIBLE
TIERRA AMARILLA CANYON – W&SR ELIGIBLE

General Description

This area, covering 17,262 acres of public lands south and east of NM 68 (map 5-2), is named after Copper Hill, one of the higher peaks in this area. Several streams that drain this portion of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains characterize the unit, the most significant being the Rio Embudo. Access in much of the unit is limited by the steep, densely wooded terrain, but NM 75 is the main route.

The ACEC includes the now-rescinded Warm Springs (12,567 acres) and Lower Embudo Special Management Areas (SMAs), and the Agua Caliente (664 acres) and Embudo Canyon (1,212 acres) ACECs. The new ACEC is divided into four zones:

1. The Agua Caliente Protection Zone, which includes the area from the south boundary of the Agua Caliente Wild and Scenic River Study Area north to the ACEC boundary. The Agua Caliente drainage supplies water to the village of Pilar that is used for irrigation. This watershed is covered by stands of piñon, juniper, ponderosa pine, aspen, and Douglas fir, and contains noteworthy riparian and fish habitat.

2. The Rio Embudo Protection Zone, which includes the area from the north boundary of the Rio Embudo Wild and Scenic River Study Area south to the ACEC boundary. The Embudo Canyon is a deep, five-mile-long box canyon with outstanding scenic, wildlife, and recreation values. Since designation of the Special Management Area, inventory has shown that the area also contains critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl.

3. The Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone, which covers the same 500 acre area as the former Lower Embudo SMA. It encompasses portions of the river valley as well as flat terraces and rolling hills overlooking it. The area contains archaeological sites dating to the Coalition Period (A.D. 1200-1325); three of these are small pueblos with associated agricultural and special-use areas.

4. The Central Protection Zone, which covers the remainder of the ACEC.

Copper Hill ACEC –Acres by Owner

Zone	BLM	State	Private
Agua Caliente	3,425	764	262
Rio Embudo	2,644	632	0
Lower Embudo	482	0	18
Central	10,711	1,050	1,917
Total: 21,905	**17,262**	**2,446**	**2,197**

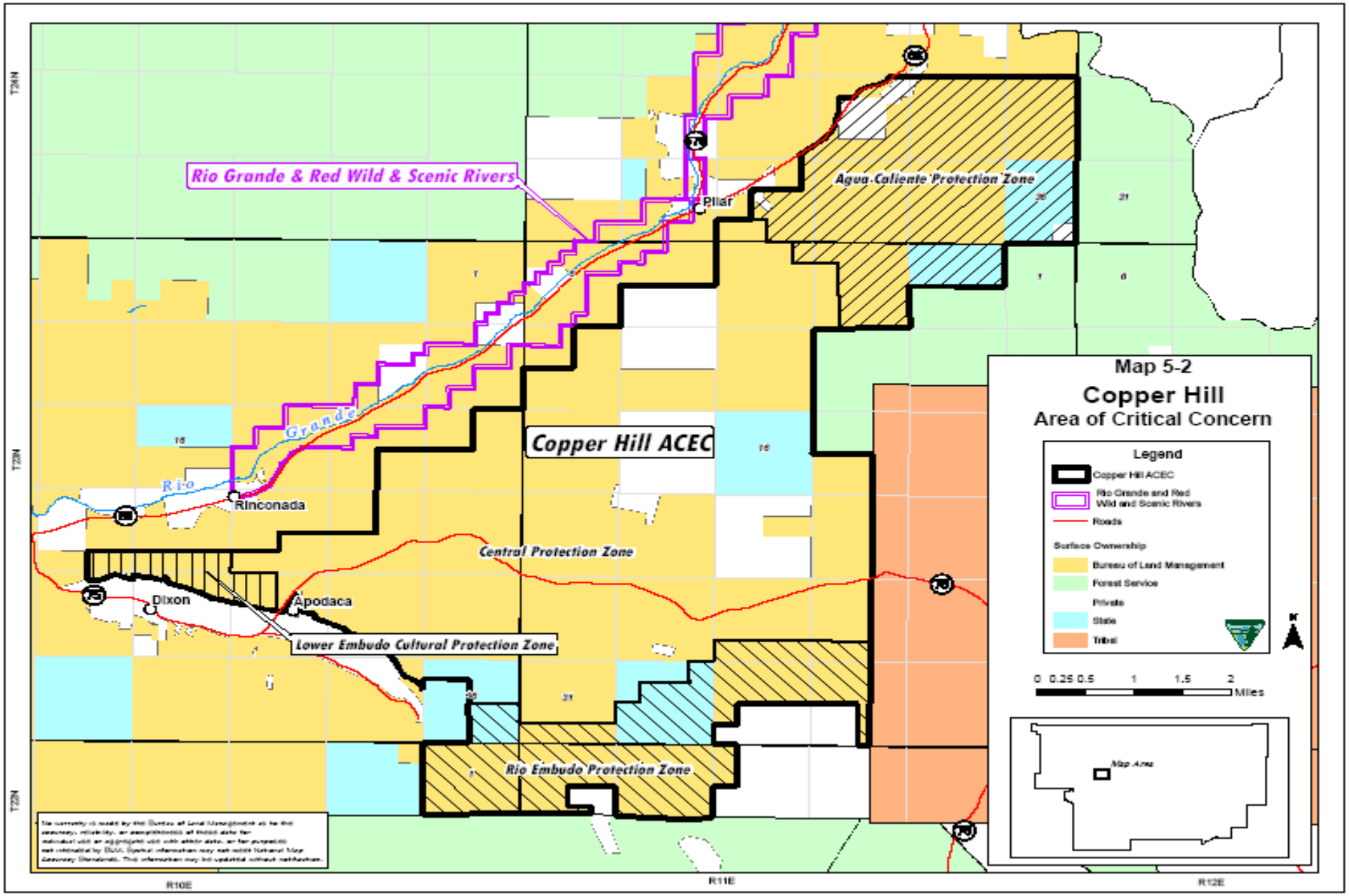
Management Prescriptions

Access
Vehicle use is restricted to designated roads and trails (see Rio Grande Corridor Plan, Map 6-e for designations). BLM will try to acquire administrative access to Agua Caliente for fisheries management.

Land Ownership and Realty Actions
State and private lands within the ACEC will be acquired by purchase or exchange with willing owners. New rights-of-way will only be allowed in the Central Protection Zone, and will be excluded in the remainder of the ACEC.

Livestock Management
Livestock in Allotment 521 will be managed under guidelines shown in Table 3-4, Rio Grande Corridor Plan. When the current permittee chooses to stop grazing, the permit will be retired.

Minerals
The ACEC will be withdrawn from the public land and mineral entry laws. Mineral leasing will only be allowed within the Central Protection Zone.


Rio Grande & Red Wild & Scenic Rivers
Agua Caliente Protection Zone
Pilar
Copper Hill ACEC
Rio Grande
Rinconada
Central Protection Zone
Dixon
Apodaca
Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone
Rio Embudo Protection Zone
T24N
T23N
T22N
R10E
R11E
R12E
Map 5-2
Copper Hill
Area of Critical Concern
Legend
Copper Hill ACEC
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State
Tribal
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2
Miles
Map Area

Prehistoric and Historic Resources
A Class III (100%) cultural resources inventory will be completed, and all archaeological sites recorded. This inventory will be phased over time and tied to priority areas (based on protection needs). Eligible archaeological sites will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Access to the pueblo ruins in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone will be limited to permitted users only.

Use limited techniques to suppress fires in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone. Suppression techniques causing earth disturbance (e.g., fire lines built by bulldozers or hand tools, off-road vehicles) will not be used within this zone.

Recreation
Primitive camping will be allowed except within 100 feet of rivers or streams to protect riparian habitat. The area will remain open to casual recreation uses. Trails will be marked in the Rinconada Hill and Agua Caliente areas to limit surface disturbance.

Scenic Quality
Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines will apply to 1,775 acres of the Rio Embudo and Agua Caliente Wild and Scenic River study segments. VRM Class II is assigned to the remainder of the Agua Caliente and Rio Embudo Protection Zones (4,789 acres). VRM Class III is assigned to the 10,711 acre Central Protection Zone.
BLM will protect the visual resources of the ACEC through land acquisitions, coordination with Rio Arriba and Taos Counties concerning zoning regulations, and other limitations on surface-disturbing activities.

Watershed
Manage all woodland and forestry resources to enhance wildlife habitat, ecosystem health, and scenic values.

Wild and Scenic Rivers
The BLM will recommend a five-mile segment of the Rio Embudo known as the Embudo Box for designation as a wild component of the Wild and Scenic River System. Proposed boundaries are shown on Map 5-2, and management prescriptions will be those discussed throughout the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan.

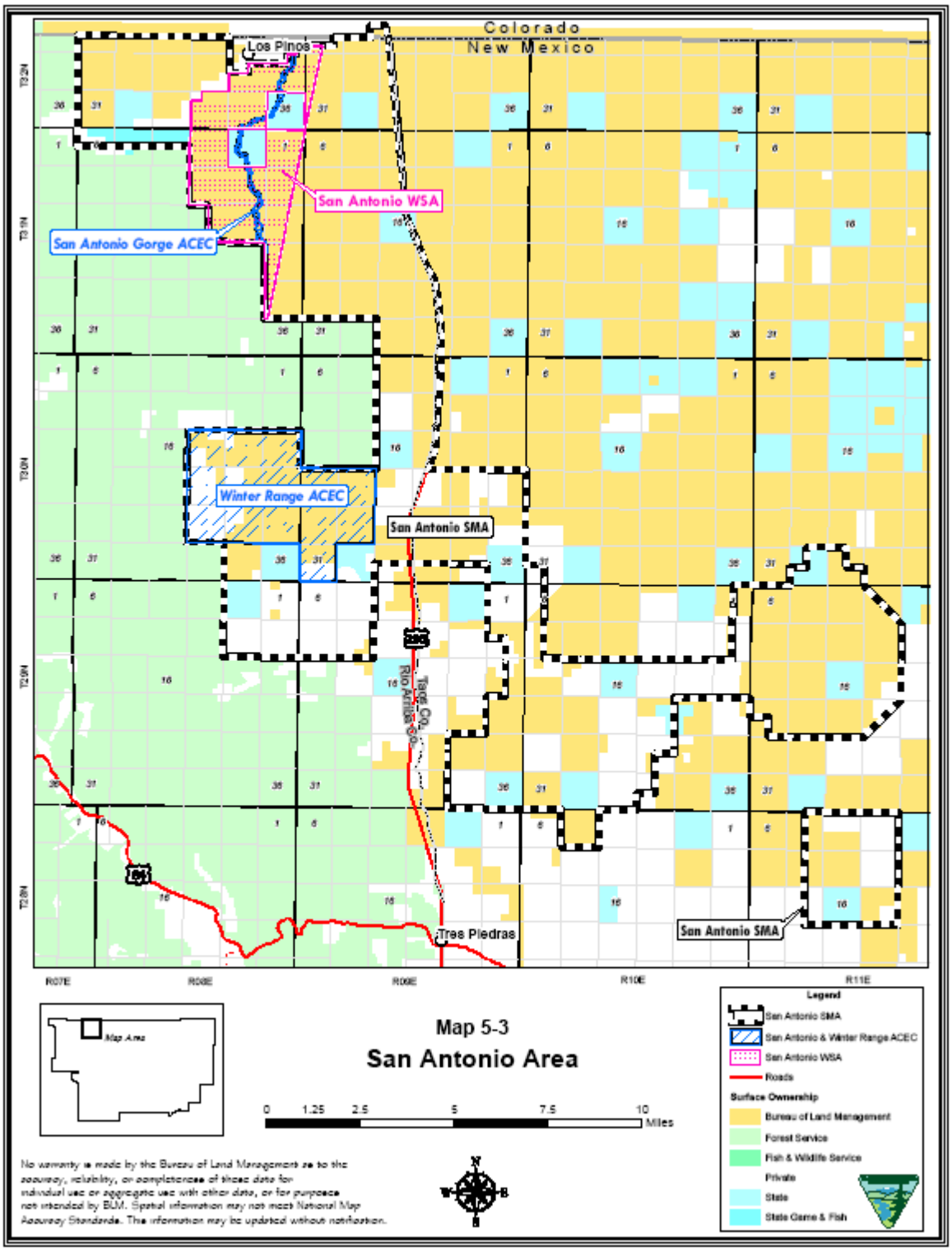
The BLM will complete suitability studies with the Carson National Forest on their adjoining portions of the following 10.1 miles of streams and river segments (tentative classifications are shown in parentheses): Arroyo Hondo (scenic), Tierra Amarilla Canyon (scenic), Agua Caliente Canyon (scenic/wild), Cañada de Ojo Sarco (scenic), and Rio de las Trampas (scenic). The BLM will manage these segments for protection of their wild and scenic values until the Congress determines their status. The interim boundaries will be 0.25 mile beyond the ordinary high water line.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat
Acquire administrative access to Agua Caliente for fisheries management.

Prohibit all surface-disturbing projects, vegetative removal, and mineral material sales to protect Mexican spotted owl critical habitat area NM-BLM-3 in the new Copper Hill ACEC. The habitat area has been withdrawn from public land and mining laws and closed to mineral leasing.

Continue the cooperative effort with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for the reintroduction of Rio Grande cutthroat trout to Agua Caliente Canyon after the existing population of rainbow trout is removed. In addition, the BLM will designate the Rio Grande cutthroat trout as a BLM sensitive species in New Mexico.

Study plot-Copper Hill wildland/urban interface thinning project


Colorado
New Mexico
Los Pinos
San Antonio WSA
San Antonio Gorge ACEC
Winter Range ACEC
San Antonio SMA
San Antonio SMA
Rio Arriba Co.
Tres Piedras
T32N
T31N
T30N
T29N
T28N
R07E
R08E
R09E
R10E
R11E
Map Area
Map 5-3
San Antonio Area
0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10
Miles
Legend
San Antonio SMA
San Antonio & Winter Range ACEC
San Antonio WSA
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Fish & Wildlife Service
Private
State
State Game & Fish
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SAN ANTONIO — Rio Arriba & Taos Counties

SAN ANTONIO SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA
SAN ANTONIO GORGE AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN
WINTER RANGE AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN
SAN ANTONIO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

General Description

This complex of special designations, shown on map 5-3, is primarily intended to provide for enhanced wildlife management.

San Antonio Special Management Area, totaling 83,000 acres, is located north of Tres Piedras, New Mexico. It runs south, from the Colorado State line near Los Pinos, and is bordered by the Carson National Forest on the west (see map 5-3). It extends east to include the small isolated volcanic mountains, Pot Mountain (Cerro de la Olla) and Wind Mountain (Cerro del Aire). Based on public comment, the boundary of the Special Management Area was expanded to include quality habitat for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. The area lies within the existing 783,000 acre San Antonio/Pot Mountain Wildlife Habitat Area.

The major vegetative associations include half shrub grasslands on high elevation rolling uplands, mixed shrub hillsides, sagebrush rolling uplands, piñon-juniper hills, and isolated stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, white fire and aspen.

Approximately 49,880 surface acres of public land are included in this SMA, which provide crucial winter habitat for Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. Essential migration zones are also included in the SMA. In terms of providing winter forage for wild ungulates, this area is the most important habitat within the planning area.

Elk use is heaviest in the western half of the Special Management Area. The area on and around San Antonio Mountain is extremely crucial winter habitat. Department of Game and Fish identified this area in 2003 as the most important winter habitat on public lands for the interstate elk population that moves between Colorado and New Mexico. Each winter 5,000 to 10,000 elk can be expected to move into this area from several hundred square miles of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. During more severe winters larger numbers of elk move to Wind and Pot Mountains. Pot Mountain provides the stabilizing core habitat, an area with dense protective cover and forage base, which maintains the long term deer population. The most limiting factor of this area is the lack of adequate thermal cover.

The wintering areas used by antelope populations overlap with much of the habitat important to deer and elk. Several hundred antelope can be expected to use the half shrub grasslands and sagebrush habitats in this SMA during a severe winter.

Other resource uses in or adjacent to the SMA include grazing, woodland products, mineral materials sales, mining, rights-of-way, and recreation.

The San Antonio Wilderness Study Area is located within the San Antonio Special Management Area. This is a 7,050 acre tract (see map 5-3) presently recommended as “unsuitable” for wilderness designation. However, it will be managed under the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review (USDI, BLM, 1995). This management emphasis will continue until Congress decides which lands are suitable for wilderness designation.

The San Antonio Gorge ACEC (376 total acres; 267 BLM) is located within the Wilderness Study Area. The creek flows almost due north for approximately six miles through public lands before entering the Rio Los Pinos. The area provides significant wildlife, natural and scenic value. The gorge cuts through the basalt plain and is several hundred feet deep with many vertical walls. The narrow canyon is in many ways similar to the Rio Grande Gorge except on a small scale. For example, the vegetation in this area demonstrates the inverted ecosystem with ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and aspen descending down the canyon. The canyon walls provide excellent habitat for prairie falcons, golden eagles, red-tail hawks and other birds of prey. A wide diversity of passerine birds also uses the canyon and riparian zone. Numerous game trails cross the canyon providing important winter movement for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn.

The Winter Range ACEC (6,688 acres) includes public lands south of San Antonio Mountain, within T. 30 N., R. 8 E., Sections 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26, and T. 30 N,. R. 9 E., Sections 19, 20, 29, 30, and 31. This area is the most significant wildlife habitat in the planning area. It provides yearlong habitat for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn, with large wintering populations moving into the area. This ACEC is considered to be the most important elk winter range on public lands in the state. ACEC designation provides for continuation of a variety of multiple use and protection of the remaining important habitat components.

Management Objectives

Objectives for the San Antonio Special Management Area include protection of the thermal cover, in both crucial winter ranges and summer ranges, for elk, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. The Taos Field Office will work with the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish and the Carson National Forest to determine herd size objectives for the winter range. Habitat objectives include improving both forage quality and vegetative cover, and increasing habitat diversity. Management of the San Antonio Special Management Area would emphasize wildlife habitat and scenic values as the highest priority over other resource uses when considering proposed actions within its boundary. The San Antonio/Pot Mountain Habitat Management Plan would be revised to incorporate these management objectives.

Management Prescriptions

1. Require reclamation of all mineral extraction operations according to approved reclamation plans or upon completion of the mining operation.

2. Close 520 acres to mineral material sales in the Los Cerritos de la Cruz area (see map 5-3). Evaluate all mineral sale proposals on a case by case basis in the remainder of the Special Management Area. Wildlife values would be of primary importance in establishing mitigating measures for all mining operations.

3. BLM will work with the Carson National Forest to institute a seasonal closure of Forest Road 1016. A right-of-way for Forest Road 1016 across BLM was granted to Carson National Forest for unrestricted access in 1992.

4. Existing OHV restrictions will be maintained around San Antonio Mountain. Any new OHV restrictions would be identified in the Access Plan for the area.

5. Vegetation transects may be used to determine total available forage. Livestock grazing will be limited and managed to ensure enhancement of critical elk and pronghorn winter range.

6. Use limited fire suppression tactics whenever possible, and use minimum impact suppression tactics within the San Antonio Wilderness Study Area.

7. Complete and implement a management plan for the San Antonio Gorge and Winter Range ACECs which provides special protection for vegetative and wildlife values including monitoring studies and a grazing plan.

8. Oil and gas stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy will be implemented within the SMA (see Appendix A), except for the San Antonio WSA/ACEC, which is a no-lease area. In the Winter Range ACEC, stipulation I – Timing Limitation will apply (no surface use between December 1 and June 15).

9. No surface occupancy or any material sales will be allowed within 500 yards of developed wildlife waters in the entire SMA.

10. Acquire state and private lands within the SMA through purchase or exchange.

11. Intensively manage and monitor all fuel wood sales to improve habitat. All forestry activities will be conducted in a manner to improve and expand thermal cover conditions.

12. No increase in the existing grazing preference will be permitted.

13. Wildlife habitat improvement projects will continue to be planned and implemented throughout the SMA.

14. San Antonio Creek will be offered the same protection provided in the Riparian/Aquatic SMA.

15. VRM considerations will be given second priority behind wildlife values in evaluating all proposed actions within the SMA.

16. Revise the San Antonio/Pot Mountain HMP to incorporate the above Management Prescriptions [this activity plan revision was completed 1992].

NATIONAL HISTORIC & SCENIC TRAILS — Rio Arriba & Santa Fe Counties

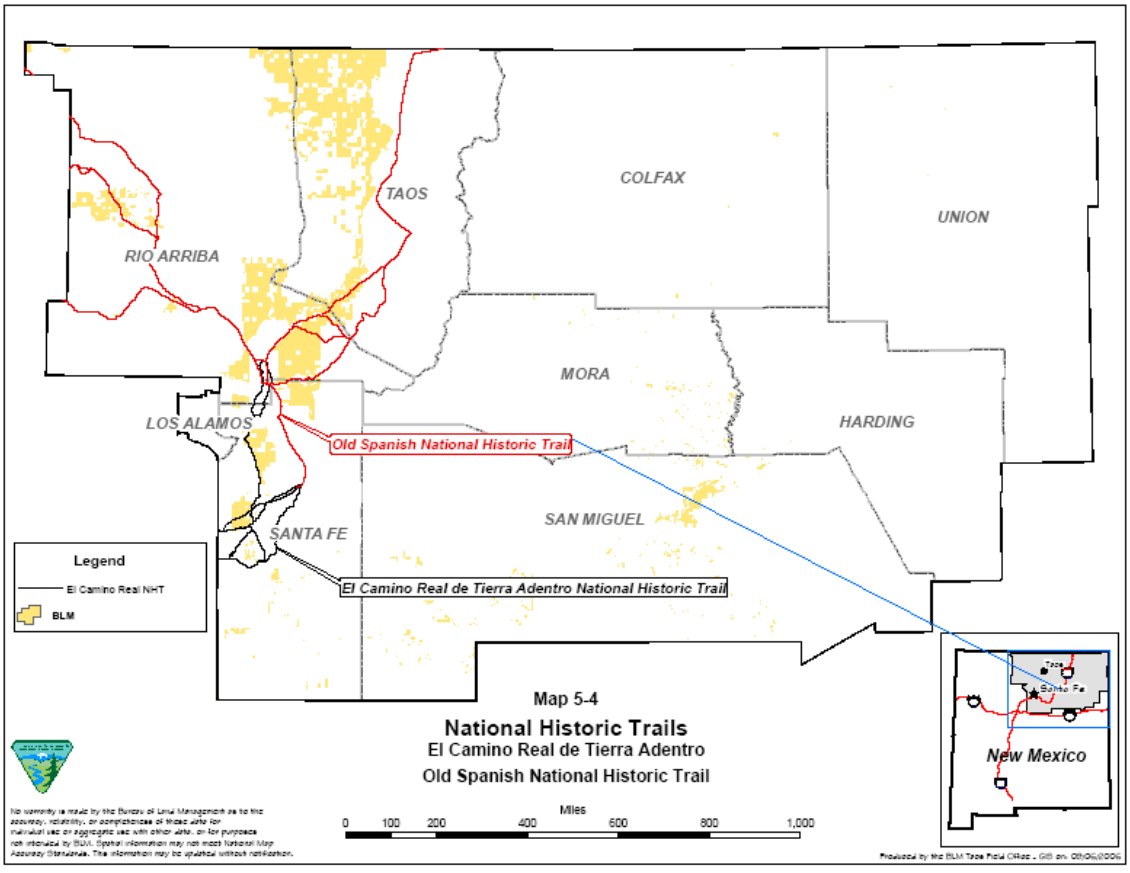
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL
EL CAMINO REAL DE TIERRA ADENTRO NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL
OLD SPANISH NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL
SANTA FE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Four National Scenic or Historic Trails cross portions of the planning area (routes of the Historic Trails are shown on map 5-4). One – the **Continental Divide Trail** designated in 1978 – has not had a formal route designated in Rio Arriba County. If any BLM lands would be used for a portion of this trail, BLM would manage the adjacent lands to protect the scenic quality of the landscape through which the trail would pass.

Between 1821 and 1880, the **Santa Fe Trail** was primarily a commercial highway connecting Missouri and Santa Fe, New Mexico. From 1821 until 1846, it was an international commercial highway used by Mexican and American traders. In 1846, the Mexican-American War began. The Army of the West followed the Santa Fe Trail to invade New Mexico. When the Treaty of Guadalupe ended the war in 1848, the Santa Fe Trail became a national road connecting the United States to the new southwest territories. The route was designated a National Historic Trail by Congress in 1987.

Added to the National Trails System in 2000, **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro** (Royal Road of the Interior) recognizes the primary route between the colonial Spanish capital of Mexico City and the Spanish provincial capitals at San Juan de los Caballeros (1598-1600), San Gabriel (1600-1609), and Santa Fe (1610-1821). The trail, as designated, extends 404 miles from El Paso, Texas to Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo), New Mexico. Map 5-4 shows the portion of this historic trail located in the planning area. A comprehensive management plan was completed in 2004, amending the Taos Resource Management Plan by designating adjacent BLM-managed lands as visual resource management class II to protect the scenic quality of the route (see pages 2-35/36).

The **Old Spanish Trail** was a pack mule trail linking land-locked New Mexico with coastal California between 1829 and 1848. Over this trail moved people, goods, and ideas. Recognizing the national significance of this historic long distance trade route, Congress designated it the Old Spanish National Historic Trail in 2002. A management plan was begun in 2006; the Taos Resource Management Plan Revision will incorporate management guidelines that would apply to BLM land.



BLACK MESA — Rio Arriba County

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

General Description

The Black Mesa ACEC contains approximately 5,460 acres and is located along the north rim of Black Mesa, running west to the Ojo Caliente River (see map 5-5). The mesa slopes are very steep and are composed of basalt boulders embedded in sandy soils. Vegetation on the slopes includes piñon, juniper, sagebrush, rabbit brush, apache plume, snakeweed, mountain mahogany, blue grama, galletta, sand-drop seed, and a variety of other species. The rolling uplands below the mesa slopes are primarily a blue grama/juniper community.

This area was nominated by the Nature Conservancy for special management because several species of rare and endemic plants occur in these habitats, including *Astragalus cyaneus*, *Astragalus puniceus var. gertrudis*, *Aletes spp*., and *Pediocactus papyracanthus.*

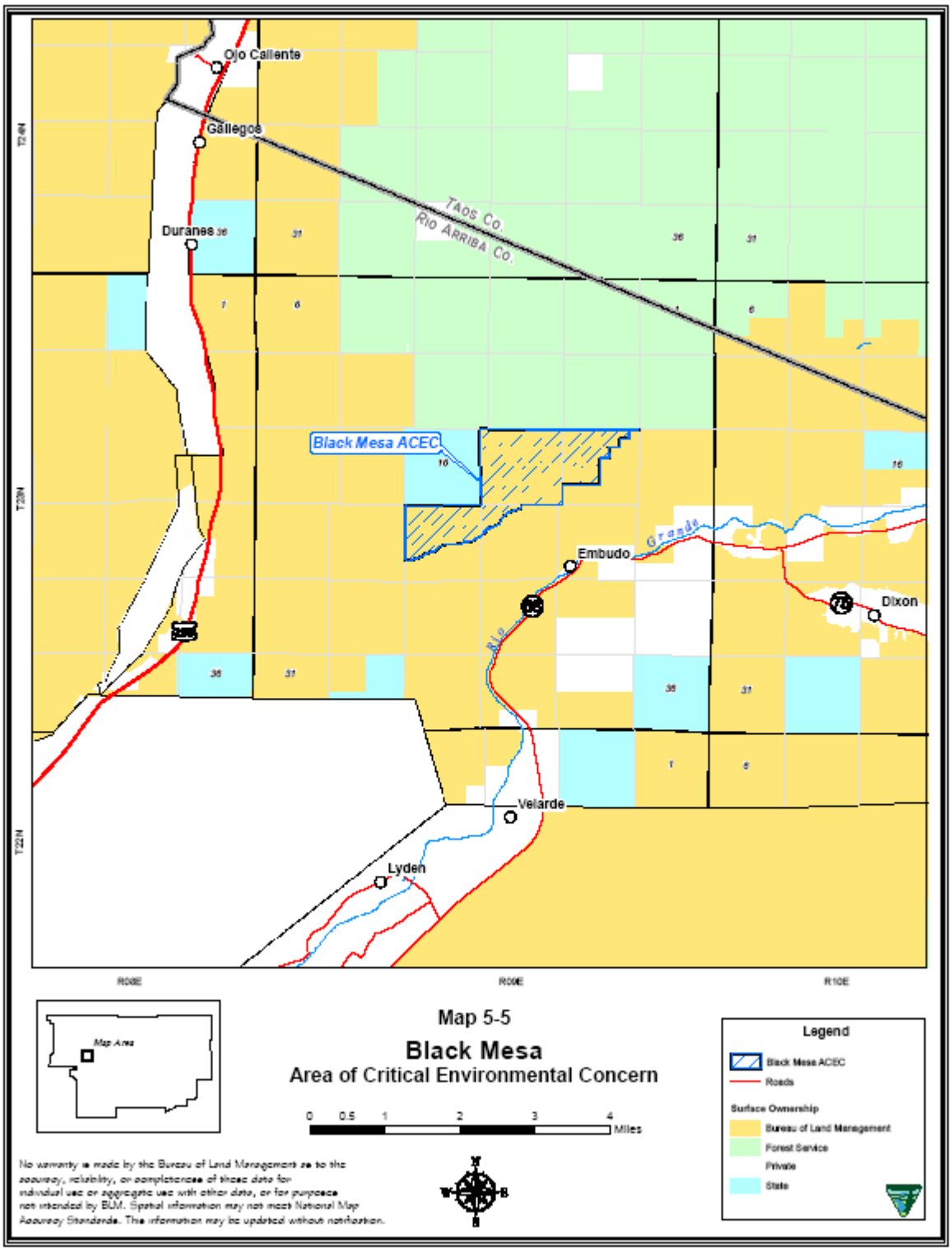
The Black Mesa ACEC is important because of its unique plant community. Several species of rare and endemic plants occur within this area. Two of the four species that occur in this area have the type locality descriptions based on populations occurring within this ACEC. Management of this area would be aimed at maintaining these species.

Management Objectives

Management of this area would be aimed at maintaining or improving the stability of vegetative populations. Monitoring studies will be established to determine direction of trend. The area will also be made available for reintroduction of species so as to avoid their possible listing.

Management Prescriptions

1. Complete a management plan for the ACEC.
2. Construct grazing exclosures to monitor the effects of grazing and determine trends.
3. Adjust stocking rates and/or season of use to improve habitat conditions based on monitoring studies.
4. Fire suppression strategies will be determined on a case-by-case basis.


Ojo Caliente
Gallegos
Duranes
TAOS CO.
RIO ARRIBA CO.
Black Mesa ACEC
Embudo
Rio Grande
Dixon
Velarde
Lyden
T23N
T22N
R08E
R09E
R10E
Map Area
Map 5-5
Black Mesa
Area of Critical Environmental Concern
0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Miles
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Legend
Black Mesa ACEC
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State

FUN VALLEY
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

Rio Arriba County

General Description

The Fun Valley Special Management Area, covering 19,200 acres, is located two miles northeast of Espanola, New Mexico, in Rio Arriba County (see map 5-6). The area is characterized by flat, wide arroyos and rolling foothills. Some of the areas in the northwestern corner of the Special Management Area are very steep escarpments with high, sharp, highly eroded ridges. The area is largely desert and few water sources exist other than ephemeral drainages in the arroyos. Elevation ranges from 5,748 feet in the southwest corner to 7,400 feet on the east boundary.

Vegetation in the area consists mainly of piñon-juniper, sagebrush, and native shortgrass. The major wildlife species are coyote, jackrabbit, badger, skunk, fox, and kangaroo rat. Bird species include dove, quail, horned lark, sparrow, finch, crow, red-tailed hawk, and vulture.

The area is used extensively by off road vehicles and has an approved Environmental Assessment which allowed an enduro and desert motorcycle race track. It is easy access from NM Highway 68 and its short distance from population centers and residential areas make it an ideal location for OHV use and events.

Management Objectives

One of the primary uses in the Fun Valley Special Management Area will be off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Individual's OHV use and organized race events will be directed to this area. As a result, special consideration will be given to the paleontological, cultural, and vegetative resources in the area. Secondary uses will be grazing and mineral material sales.

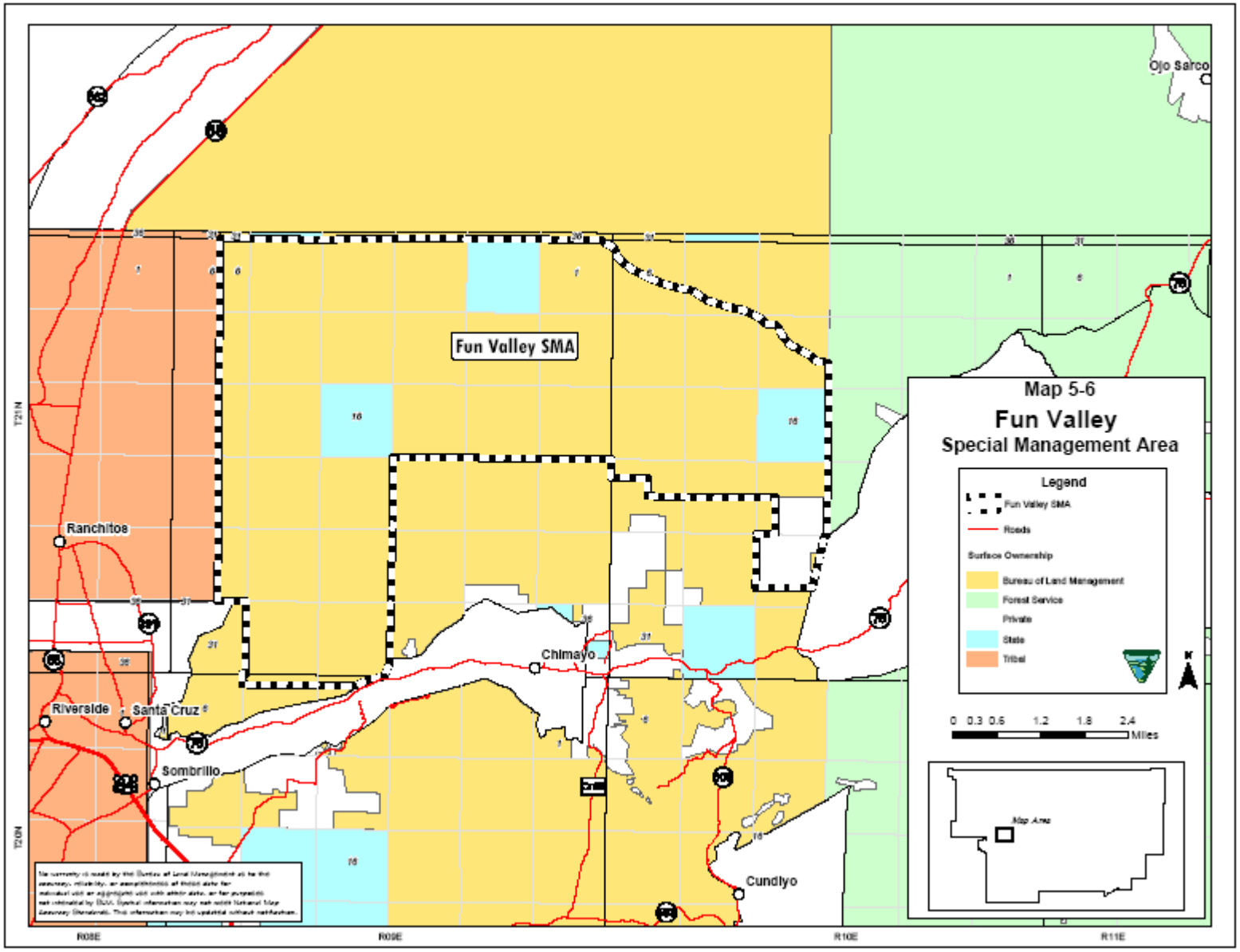
Management Prescriptions

1. An OHV Implementation Plan will be developed for the area.

2. Trails that impact paleontological or cultural resources will be closed.

3. Any fires in the Special Management Area will be fully suppressed using limited suppression strategies to protect cultural and paleontological resources

4. A Class III Cultural and Threatened & Endangered species inventory in the "open" OHV areas will be completed


Fun Valley SMA
Ojo Sarco
Ranchitos
Chimayo
Riverside
Santa Cruz
Sombrillo
Cundiyo
Map 5-6
Fun Valley
Special Management Area
Legend
Fun Valley SMA
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State
Tribal
0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles
Map Area
T21N
T20N
R09E
R09E
R10E
R11E

KU PUEBLO — Rio Arriba County

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

General Description

The Ku Pueblo Special Management Area occupies the southwestern portion of an isolated mesa that borders the Chama Valley near the community of Chili (see map 5-1). It is a large, multistoried adobe and cobble pueblo. It has an enclosed plaza with 2 kiva depressions and 2 isolated kivas or shrines located east of the pueblo. On the basis of the ceramic assemblage, Ku would appear to date from approximately AD 1375-AD1500, or perhaps a little later (Smiley, Stubbs, and Bannister, 1953: Breternitz, 1966), and is, therefore, a classic Bisquitware site. The Ku Pueblo SMA covers 65 acres.

The site of Ku (Ku-Uinge, "Stone Pueblo Ruin" Harrington, 1916) was first reported by J. A. Jeancon (1911), who speculated that the ruin got its name from an isolated column of light colored tuff which stands in the low lands near the mesa on which the ruin is located.

In addition to the work done by Jeancon and Harrington, Ku was also visited and surveyed by Mera (1934) and Hibben (1937). More recently, in 1975, the site was visited and recorded by archaeologists from the New Mexico Laboratory of Anthropology. Excavations in the Chama Valley have been undertaken by Hibben (1937) at Riana Ruin; Wendorf (1953) at Te'ewi: Luebben (1953) at leaf Water Ruin; Peckham (1974) at the Palisade Ruin; and Florence Ellis at Sapawe (unpublished).

Management Objective

The management objective for Ku Pueblo will be to protect cultural resource values.

Management Prescriptions

1. Inventory and record the Special Management Area in detail.
2. Nominate the site to the National Register of Historic Places.
3. Withdraw the site from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal.
4. Exclude grazing from the site.
5. Limit OHV use of the site.
6. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No surface occupancy (see Appendix A).
7. Backfill the vandalized areas.
8. Implement a patrol and surveillance program.
9. Develop and implement a Cultural Resource Management Plan.
10. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.
11. Acquire access easement to site.

OJO CALENTE — Rio Arriba County

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Management Objective

The management objective for the Ojo Caliente ACEC will be to preserve cultural and interpretive values.

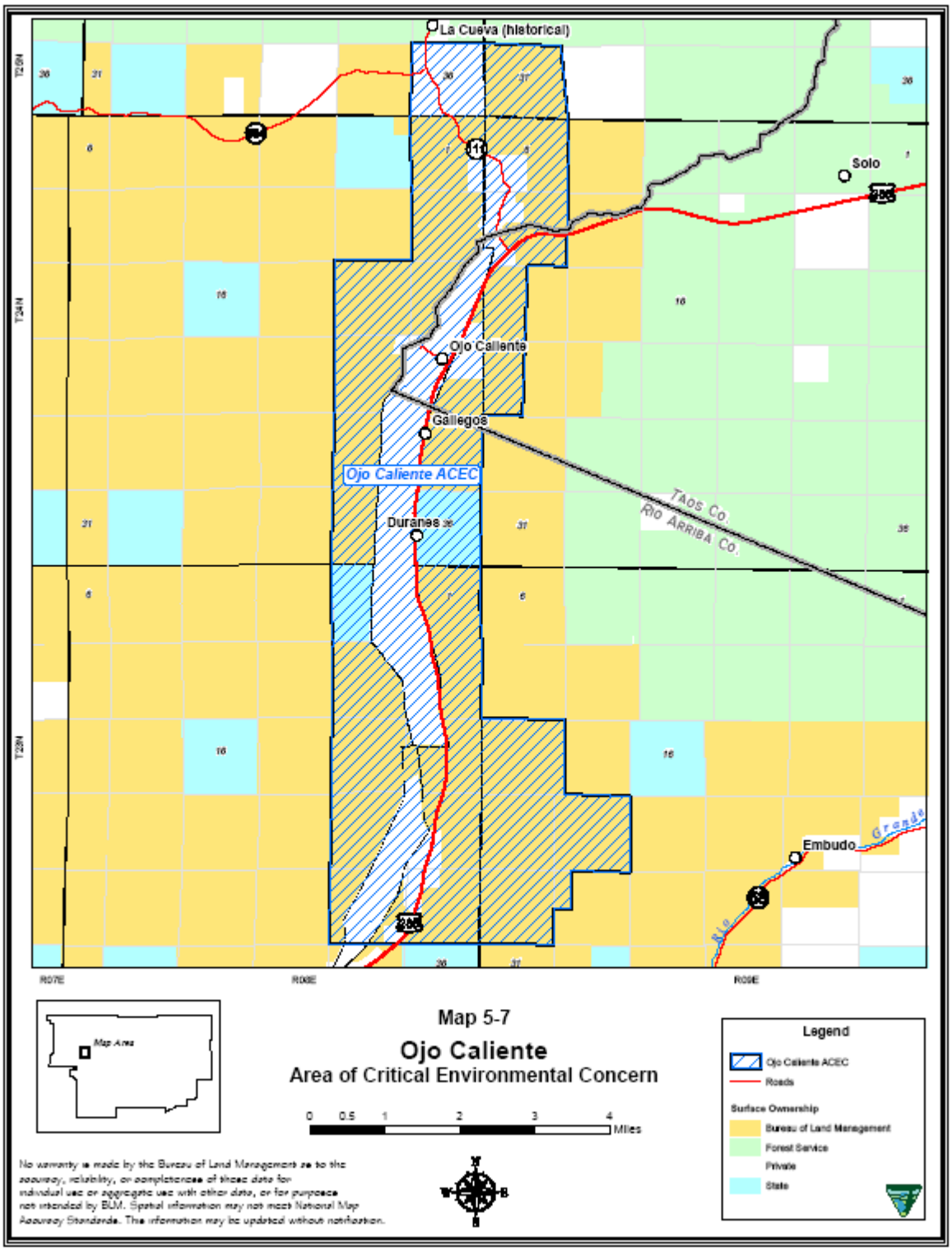
General Description

The Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern (map 5-7) contains approximately 17,700 acres. The Ojo Caliente River is a major tributary of the Chama River. The river drains the Tusas Mountains, as well as a broad area west of the Rio Grande. The flood plain averages about one quarter of a mile wide and is bordered by steep terraces. The Ojo Caliente Valley has a long history of human occupation. It is probable that the valley was used by Paleo-Indian (BC 9500-BC 5000) and Archaic (BC 5500-AD 400) hunters who obtained chert from the quarries of Cerro Pedernal. There is also some evidence of hunting and plant gathering by early sedentary peoples (AD 400- AD 900) in the region.

Whether indigenous populations prospered and eventually evolved into the large Pueblo culture inhabiting the Valley during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries or whether there was a migration of Tewa-speaking villagers from the mesa Verde region in the late 1200s is unknown at this time. However they first arrived, a Pueblo community did exist in the Ojo Caliente Valley by the 1200s. At least five pueblos were built along the Valley during the 1300s, and the population may have reached 2,000 to 5,000 people by the end of the fifteenth century.

Apparently the Ojo Caliente Valley had been abandoned by the time of the Spanish exploration of northern New Mexico, between 1540 and 1600. Spanish interest and activities in the valley are not documented until 1735 when the first land grant was given. Forty six families occupied the valley by 1744. They fled in 1748 because of repeated attacks by the Apaches. The Valley was visited by Apache, Comanche, Ute, and Navajo groups who alternately raided and traded with the Spanish residents there throughout the 1700s and 1800s. From 1753 to 1793, settlers including “genizaros” who were granted Spanish lands in such frontier communities returned to the Valley from time to time. With the arrival of fifty three new families from the Bernalillo area in 1793 the Valley’s population continued to grow. After the American occupation of New Mexico in 1846, a few non-Hispanic families settled in the Valley. The hot springs near the plaza of Ojo Caliente became a tourist resort in 1880 and continued in popularity until after the turn of the century.

In terms of material remains in the area the most abundant, fragile, and visually striking of the cultural resources are the large Pueblo ruins and their associated agricultural features, Occupation of the five village sites fall within the period of Biscuitware manufacture (AD 1350- AD 1550). These ruins each contain 200 to 500 rooms, leading to the estimated total population of 2,000 to 5,000 inhabitants by the end of the fifteenth century. The Tewa names for the sites, Posi, Hupobi, Howiri, Nute, and Ponsipa-Akeri, were collected by Harrington (1916), who surveyed the Valley with the help of guides from the Pueblo of San Juan. Several of the sites are mentioned in Tewa legends (Bandolier, 1892; Ortiz, 1969). Numerous shrines, some of which are currently used by the modern Tewa villages, are located in the area. It is estimated that agricultural features over in excess of 200 acres, primarily along the east side of the Valley.


La Cueva (historical)
Solo
Ojo Caliente
Gallegos
Ojo Caliente ACEC
Duranes
TAOS CO.
RIO ARRIBA CO.
Embudo
Rio Grande
T25N
T24N
T23N
R07E
R08E
R09E
Map Area
Map 5-7
Ojo Caliente
Area of Critical Environmental Concern
0 0.5 1 2 3 4
Miles
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. The information may be updated without notification.
Legend
Ojo Caliente ACEC
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State

Management Prescriptions

1. Complete a Cultural Resources Management Plan for the ACEC which will encourage scientific research, including excavation [completed 1990].

2. Complete nominations for sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

3. Complete a Class III cultural resource inventory.

4. Exclude grazing from pueblo ruins, and other areas where serious conflicts with cultural resources are apparent.

5. Implement an OHV plan limiting pueblos to authorized users and limiting the remainder of the ACEC to designated roads and trails.

6. Withdraw the pueblos from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal [NOTE: the 1988 RMP identified 40 acres to be withdrawn; the Management Plan proposed 252 acres, and 291 were subsequently withdrawn].

7. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation II – Controlled Surface Use (see Appendix A).

8. Acquire private lands, through purchase or exchange, on which the pueblos of Nute, Howiri, and portions of Posi are located.

9. Acquire state lands within the ACEC through purchase or exchange.

10. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.

11. Backfill all vandalized areas of the pueblo.

12. Acquire easements as necessary to ensure legal access to the major sites.

OJO DEL ZORRO PUEBLO
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

Rio Arriba County

General Description

The Ojo del Zorro Pueblo Special Management Area (map 5-1) occupies the top of an outlying butte of the badlands directly north of the Santa Cruz Valley near Chimayo, New Mexico. The site is named after a small spring located nearby, which was known historically by the same name. Mera (1934) was probably the first archaeologist to identify the site during his survey of the Bisquitware area in northern New Mexico. The Ojo del Zorro Pueblo SMA consists of 24 acres.

The site is a small pueblo ruin consisting of 10 to 20 rooms. A small portion of the site has been exposed by illegal excavations which resulted in uncovering the adobe walls of two rooms. Ongoing erosion of the badlands is rapidly destroying the site.

Based on pottery collected from the surface of the site, the pueblo dates to the fourteenth century. The pueblo's unique attribute is its location on an isolated butte in the badlands, a good distance from arable land. This is also the reason it is considered to be a defensive site.

Management Objective

The management objective for Ojo del Zorro Pueblo will be to protect the cultural resources.

Management Prescriptions

1. A detailed recordation and mapping of the site will be completed.
2. The ruin will be excavated to salvage scientific information.
3. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.
4. Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy will be implemented (see Appendix A).
5. Withdraw from mineral entry and close to mineral material sales.

PUEBLO QUEMADO
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

Rio Arriba County

General Description

The Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area (map 5-1) is a large ruin located on the top of a flat ridge along the Rio Quemado in the broken foothills west of Chimayo, New Mexico. The site consists of three large room blocks defined by high, vegetated mounds. The Pueblo Quemado SMA is approximately 159 acres in size.

One of the room blocks is on public land while the other two are on the Nuestra Senora del Rosario San Fernando y Santiago Grant. The portion on public lands is in very good condition with no evidence of illegal excavation.

One of the room blocks on private land has been extensively disturbed due to the longtime use of the site by local people for removal of the adobe dirt for landfill and construction. And the use of the area as a garbage dump.

Mera, in his "Survey of the Biscuit Ware Area in Northern New Mexico" (1934), refers to the site as "Wiyo". It is possible; therefore, that Pueblo Quemado may be the type site for the Wiyo Black-on-White pottery type. The pueblo can be dated ceramically to the Classic Period, which began in the early fourteenth century.

Even though Pueblo Quemado is a major Classic Period site in close Proximity to the populated areas of Chimayo, it has not been studied in any systematic way. The site has tremendous research and interpretive potential and needs to be managed in the future.

Management Objectives

The management objectives for Pueblo Quemado SMA will be to protect cultural resource values, and to develop recreation potential.

Management Prescriptions

1. Complete an inventory and detailed recordation of the SMA.
2. Complete a Cultural Resources Management Plan.
3. Nominate the site to the National Register of Historic Places.
4. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy (see Appendix A).
5. Withdraw the site from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal.
6. OHV use will be limited to authorized users.
7. Exclude the ruins from grazing.
8. Acquire through purchase or exchange all portions of the pueblo that are located on private lands.
9. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.

RIO CHAMA — Rio Arriba County

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA
WILD & SCENIC RIVER
WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

General Description

The Rio Chama Special Management Area (6,588 acres, map 5-8)) is associated with the BLM section of the scenic Rio Chama Canyon, which is adjacent to the USFS Rio Chama Wilderness. A Wild and Scenic River Corridor of 1,690 acres is also contained in this SMA. Designated in 1989, the 31-mile long Wild and Scenic River is jointly managed by BLM, the US Forest Service, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The river and its associated canyon environment attract hundreds of river-running enthusiasts each spring and summer, on two and three day float trips. It also provides opportunities for fishing and hiking.

The Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area overlaps the SMA and Wild & Scenic River, covering a larger area of 11,146 acres. The portion recommended by BLM as suitable for wilderness designation is 5,918 acres.

The landscape is characterized by a 200 to 800 foot deep canyon cut into various layers of shale and sandstone, which provides striking contrasts in both color and topography. The vegetation varies from mixed piñon-juniper to ponderosa pine forest, riparian habitat, and northern desert grassland.

Wildlife inhabiting the canyon area includes a variety of game and non-game species. Birds of prey and cavity nesting birds occupy the cliffs. Big game known to frequent the canyon floor include elk, deer, bear, mountain lion, and turkey. Waterfowl which visit the riparian zone include ducks, mergansers, and geese. Riparian mammals include beavers and raccoons. The aquatic habitat contains brown and rainbow trout, as well as populations of native minnows and suckers. The upper reaches of this section of the Rio Chama have the potential to become an excellent trophy trout fishery.

Known cultural resources within the SMA include Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Pueblo Period sites. Several historic homesteads dating from the mid-1800 to the 1940's have been located.

Management Objectives

Management of the Rio Chama will focus on the wilderness qualities of the canyon, existing wildlife and aquatic habitat, and the education of visitors in boating safety and low impact camping.

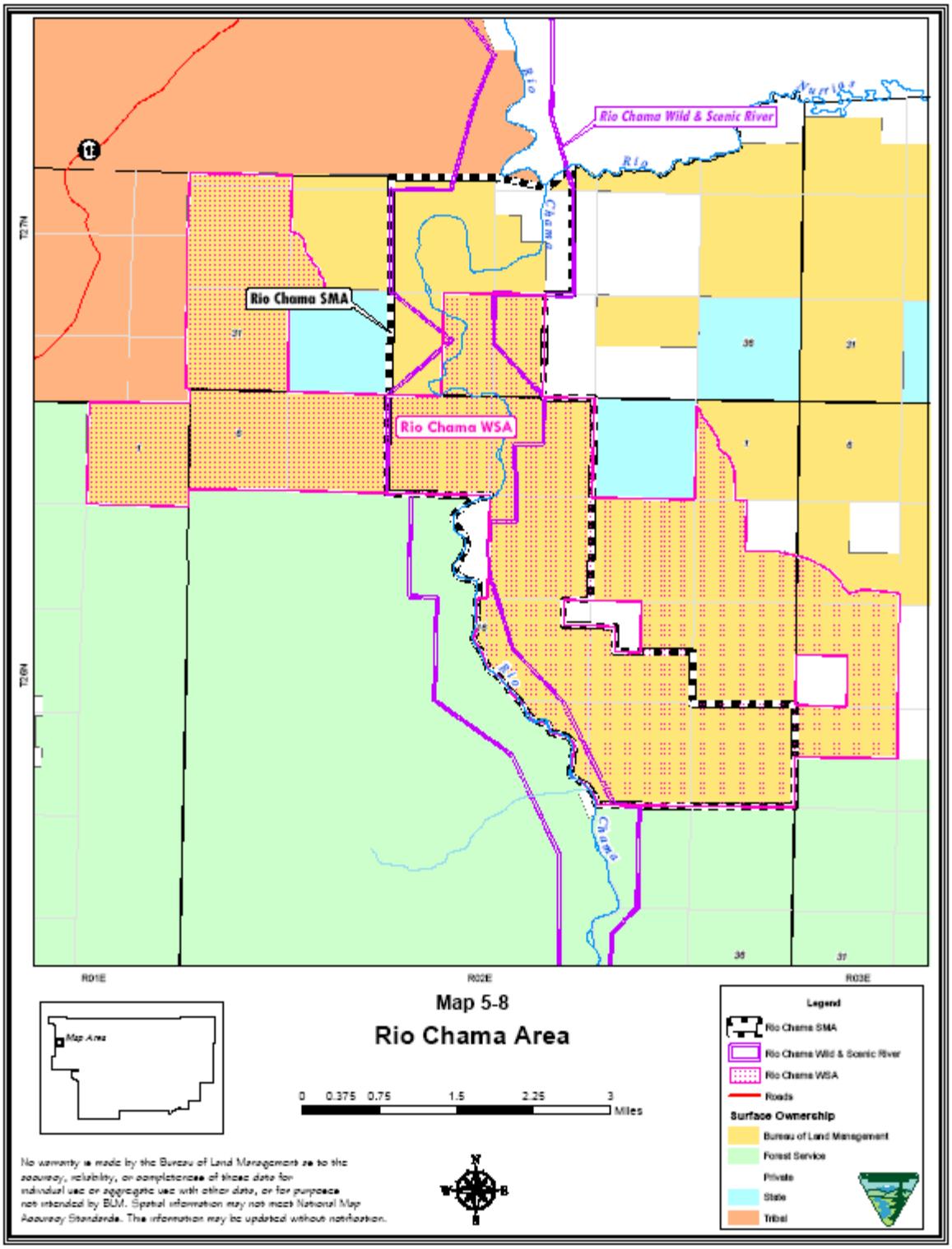
The area will be managed for Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) semi-private non-motorized use (within the canyon) and semi-private motorized use (on the rim).

The Wild and Scenic River corridor will be managed as a Class I Visual Resource Management (VRM) area. The remainder of the SMA is VRM Class II, where changes caused by management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape. Any area designated as Wilderness would be managed as a VRM Class I area.

Management Prescriptions

Rio Chama Special Management Area

1. No surface disturbance will be allowed.
2. The SMA will be maintained as a right-of-way exclusion area.
3. An interagency cooperative management plan for aquatic habitat and recreation will be developed.
4. Grazing will be restricted in the Wild and Scenic River Corridor by exclusion or the season of use will be changed.
5. The entire SMA, Wild & Scenic River corridor and the Wilderness Study Area will be No Lease Areas (Oil and Gas Stipulation IV - see Appendix A).
6. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to protect wilderness and wild and scenic river values.
7. Acquire private lands within the SMA by purchase or exchange.
8. The entire SMA will be closed to OHV use.
9. Manage woodland and forest resources to enhance wildlife values.
10. Withdraw from mineral entry and close to mineral material sales.
11. A Management Plan will be completed [finished in 1991 for the Wild and Scenic River portion].


Rio Chama Wild & Scenic River
Rio Chama SMA
Rio Chama WSA
Rio Chama
T27N
T26N
R01E
R02E
R03E
Map 5-8
Rio Chama Area
Map Area
0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3
Miles
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.
Legend
Rio Chama SMA
Rio Chama Wild & Scenic River
Rio Chama WSA
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State
Tribal

SAHIU PUEBLO — Rio Arriba County

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

General Description

Sahiu Pueblo Special Management Area (map 5-1) is a large Classic Period (ca. AD 1325-AD 1600) pueblo ruin situated along the Rio Grande near Velarde, New Mexico. It consists of mounds on a low terrace beside the river. Erosion at the terrace edge has destroyed some of the rooms and most of the plaza has been eroded. Small areas have been vandalized and a country road goes through a portion of the site.

Sahiu Pueblo was first identified to Harrington (1916) as an ancestral Tewa village by his Ohkay Owingeh informants. It was also discussed by Mera (1934) in his survey of Bisquitware sites in Northern New Mexico.

It cannot be determined precisely who owns the pueblo until a cadastral survey has been completed.

Management Objective

The management objective for Sahiu Pueblo will be to preserve cultural and interpretive values.

Management Prescriptions

1. A cadastral survey of the area will be completed.
2. Excavation of the site will be encouraged.

Pending full excavation of the site, the following measures will be implemented:

1. Complete a detailed archaeological mapping and recordation of the site.
2. Nominate sites to the National Register of Historic Places.
3. Limit the area to authorized OHV users.
4. Prepare a Cultural Resources Management Plan.
5. Implement limited physical protection of the site, as needed.
6. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.
7. Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy will be implemented (see Appendix A).
8. Withdraw from mineral entry and close to mineral sales.

SOMBRILLO — Rio Arriba County

Area of Critical Environmental Concern

General Description

The Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern (map 5-9) is a paleontological area located south of the Santa Cruz River, and west of County Road 98 and State Road 503, totaling 8,865 acres of public land. Also within this area are two state sections. This area is bounded generally on the west by Pojoaque Bluffs, on the east by Santa Cruz River, on the east by Santa Cruz Dam, and on the south by the Nambe Pueblo Grant.

Within this ACEC are extensive exposures of the 3 most fossiliferous subdivisions of the Tesuque Formation, and the Nambe, the Skull Ridge, and the Pojoaque, all part of the Santa Fe group. Fossils found here are almost entirely mammalian. They include a mixture of essentially modern forms, primitive representatives of some modern groups, and unfamiliar mammals which are now extinct. Fossils of some reptiles, plants, and birds are also present. Camels are the most abundant mammals, ranging from animals the size of gazelles to some that were close to the size and proportion of giraffes. Primitive deer, deer like animals, and antelopes were also abundant. The horses of the Santa Fe group were similar to modern horses but smaller, possessing three toes on each foot.

Fossils of carnivorous mammals are not as abundant as the large herbivores, but are highly diverse. Some forms were similar to modern dogs, foxes, cats, raccoons, badgers, skunks, and weasels, but groups now extinct were present as well (Kues, 1982).

This fossil record and the strata in which it is found is important because it allows us to visualize with great accuracy the environment these animals lived in. In addition, the type sections (or original references) for the Skull Ridge and Nambe Members are located in this ACEC. Although Santa Fe deposits are typically restricted to the Santa Fe-Espanola-Abiquiu area, they are best represented in this ACEC.

The concentrated collecting effort within the past 60 years in the Santa Fe group is unique in the history of New Mexico paleontology, and has established this area as having one of the most abundant, diverse, and continuously sampled late Tertiary faunas in the world.

Other resources within this ACEC include livestock grazing, wildlife, archaeology, and recreation. There are three active grazing allotments with seasonal use. The ACEC also includes an area identified as potential habitat for a candidate Endangered plant species, *Pediocactus papyracanthus*. There are also many cultural sites dating from prehistoric to historic times, some of which are potential candidates for the National Register of Historic Places.

Management Objective

This ACEC is relatively undeveloped as far as surface disturbing activities are concerned. Because the area is scientifically important it will be managed to protect and preserve paleontological resources.

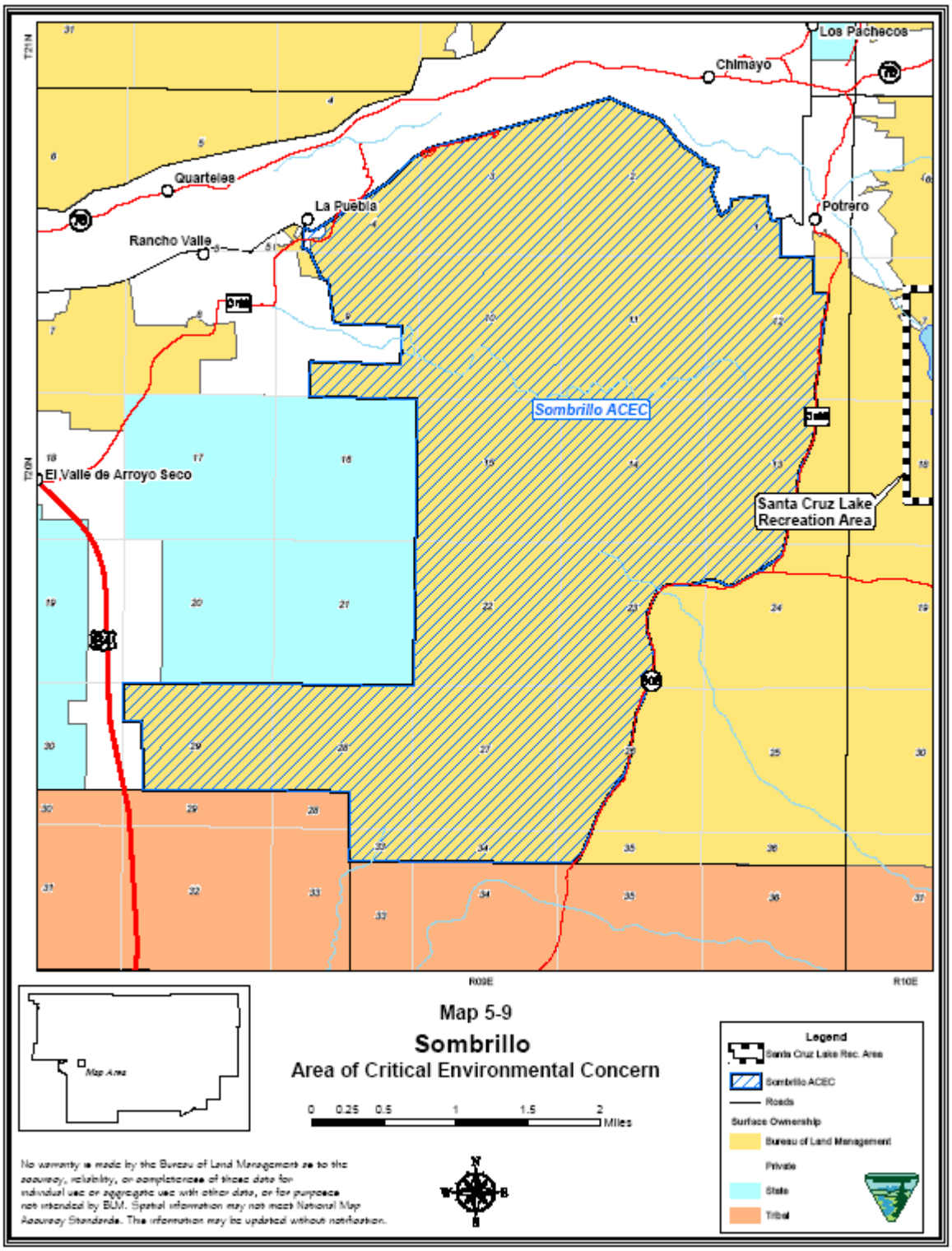
Management Prescriptions

1. Recreational OHV use will be limited to designated roads and trails. [Designations in 1992 limited OHV use to permitted users only].

2. Complete a management plan for the Sombrillo ACEC [completed 1992].

3. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of paleontological resources.

4. Oil and Gas Stipulation II – Controlled Surface Use will be implemented to protect paleontological and cultural resources (see Appendix A).


Los Pachecos
Chimayo
Quartelas
La Puebla
Potrero
Rancho Valle
Sombrillo ACEC
El Valle de Arroyo Seco
Santa Cruz Lake
Recreation Area
T21N
T20N
R03E
R10E
Map 5-9
Sombrillo
Area of Critical Environmental Concern
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2
Miles
Legend
Santa Cruz Lake Rec. Area
Sombrillo ACEC
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Private
State
Tribal
Map Area
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SABINOSO — San Miguel County

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA
WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

General Description

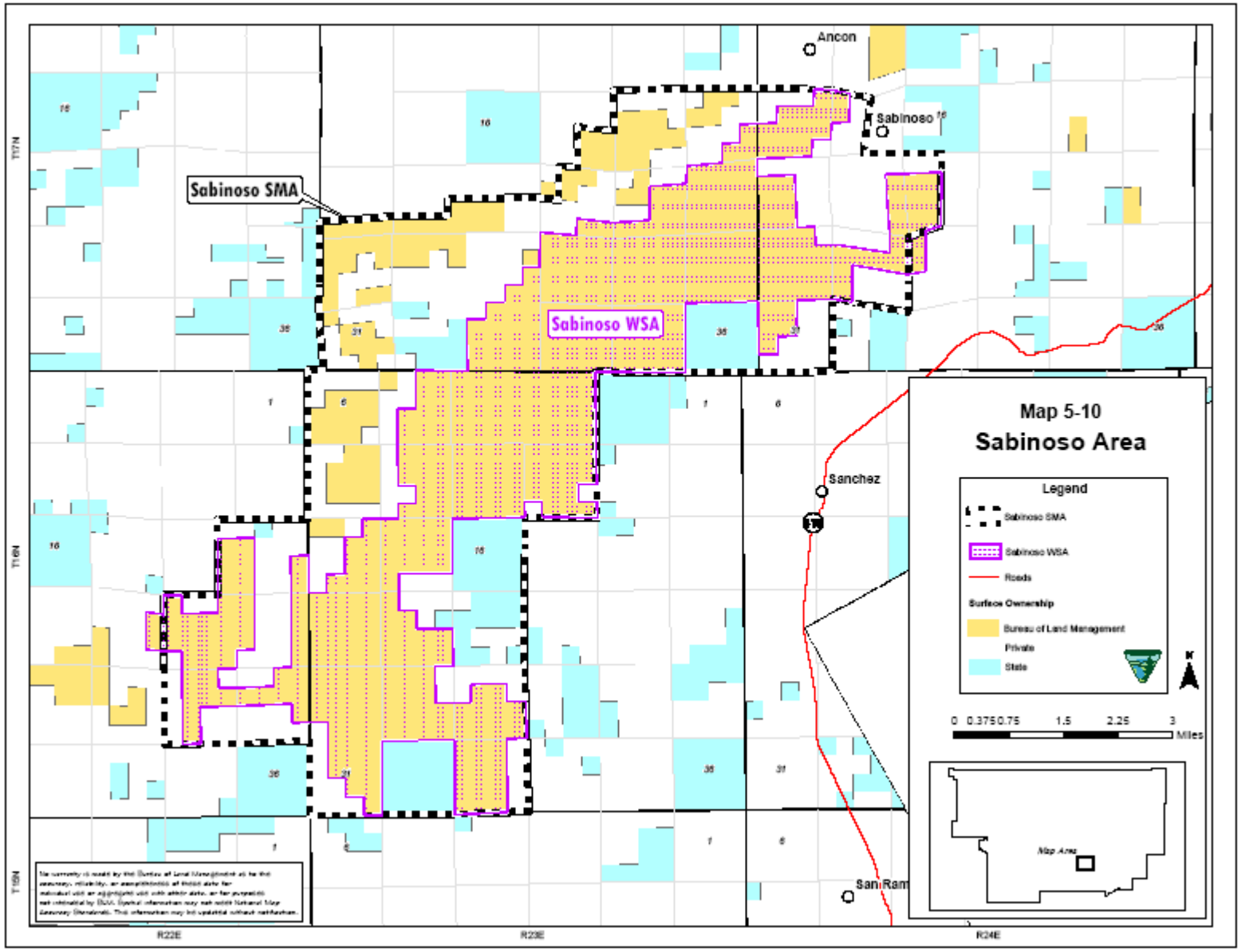
This extremely rugged country encompasses 32,000 acres of which 15,760 acres are a Wilderness Study Area (see map 5-10). The habitat is primarily a piñon-juniper/mixed-shrub community with considerable and sometimes unique plant diversity. The riparian bottoms are primarily privately owned and in most cases are overgrazed, while the steep slopes are usually under utilized by cattle. The riparian zones are typically characterized by cottonwoods, while the open blue gramma. Wildlife in the area is quite diverse, corresponding to the vegetative and land form diversity. Two exotic species, Barbary sheep and Siberian ibex, occur in the area but in low population numbers. Native game species include mule deer and turkey, but are also below population potential. The land ownership pattern in this SMA is very complex and as a result there is no legal access to public lands.

Management Objectives

Management objectives will vary, depending on the outcome of the possible wilderness designation. The primary objectives will be to improve wildlife habitat and improve recreation and hunting opportunities.

Management Prescriptions

1. Limit vegetative manipulation to those actions that would improve wildlife habitat.
2. Limit grazing in riparian zones.
3. Acquire legal access to the area.
4. A fire use plan will be developed for this area, and limited fire suppression tactics will be used when necessary to protect wilderness values.
5. Gather basic inventory data on the area such as wildlife, vegetation, and geology, and encourage research on the natural resources.


Ancon
Sabinoso
Sabinoso SMA
Sabinoso WSA
Sanchez
San Ram
T17N
T16N
T15N
R22E
R23E
R24E
Map 5-10
Sabinoso Area
Legend
Sabinoso SMA
Sabinoso WSA
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Private
State
N
0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3
Miles
Map Area

LA CIENEGA
AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Santa Fe County

General Description

La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern (map 5-11), totaling 3,556 acres, contains nationally significant cultural resources as well as riparian, wildlife and scenic values. The area has pithouses, a pueblo, and a Spanish hacienda. The major pueblo is located on the eastern edge of the mesa top and consists of 50 to 75 adobe rooms with at least three kivas. Two smaller pueblos of six and fifteen rooms each, both of which include a depression (pithouse or kiva), are located on the western part of the mesa. N.C. Nelson, excavated parts of nine room blocks in 1915, clearing 44 rooms during an excavation sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History. Analysis of pottery collected from the site indicates that the pueblo dates primarily to the Coalition Period (AD 1200-1325).

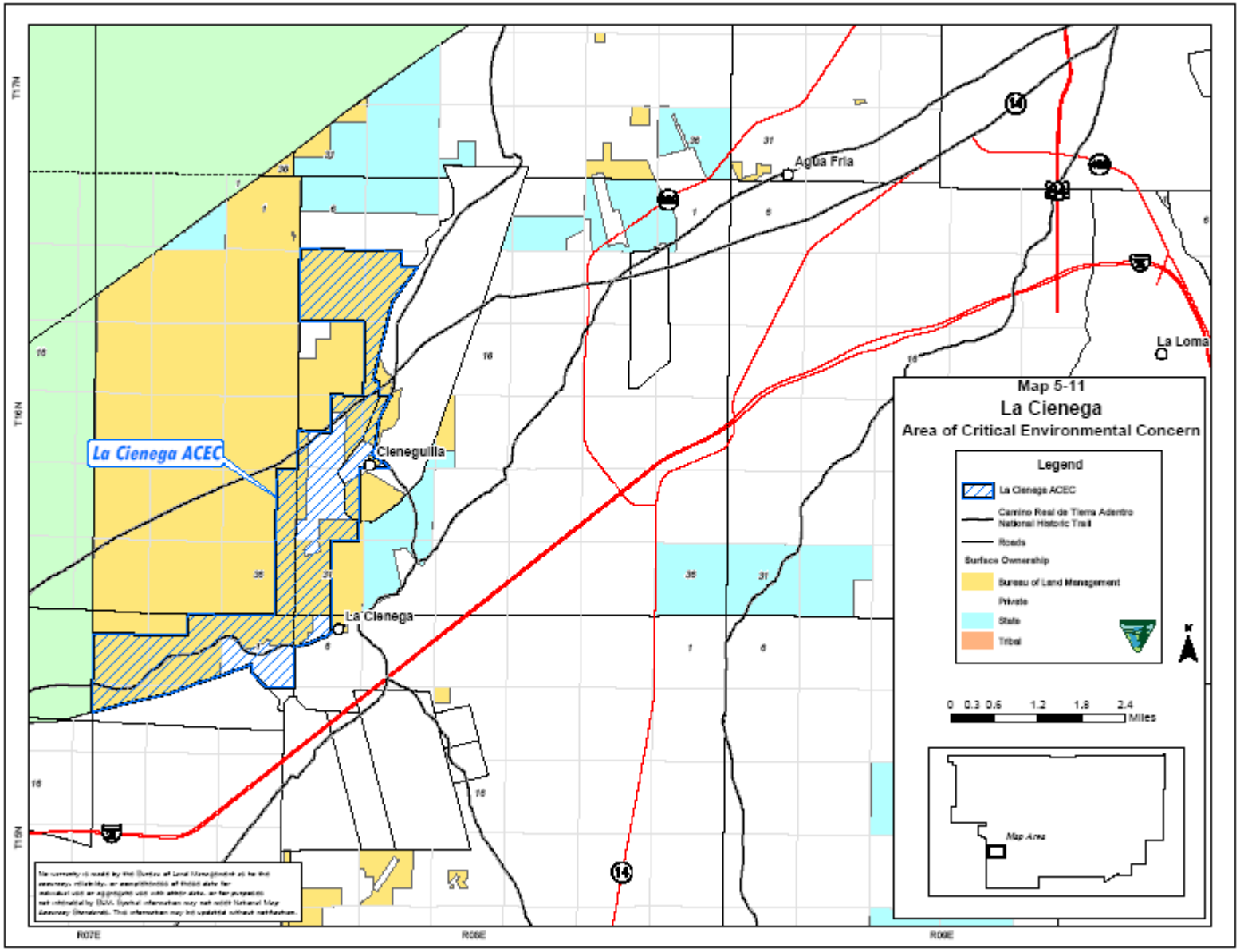
Abundant petroglyphs of birds, frogs, snakes, horned snakes, geometric figures, and human figures have been carved on the cliffs and boulders. Evidence indicates that the art is of Rio Grande style and probably is associated with the large pueblos on the mesa. A portion of the rock art was recorded by the Archaeological Society of New Mexico, Rock Art Field School in 1974 under the direction of Colonel James G. Bain (Bain, 1974).

Management Objectives

The management objective of La Cienega ACEC will be to protect cultural and interpretive values.

Management Prescriptions

1. Complete a class III inventory of the site and record archaeological data.
2. Prepare a Cultural Resource Management Plan (completed in 1995).
3. Nominate sites to the National Register of Historic Places.
4. Withdraw the Santa Fe River Canyon and La Cienega Mesa (953 acres total) from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal.
5. All OHV travel within the ACEC will be restricted to designated roads and trails.
6. Exclude La Cienega Mesa from grazing.
7. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation 3 (see Appendix A).
8. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of resource values.
9. From willing sellers, acquire private land on which significant cultural and natural resources are located.
10. Acquire an easement (or purchase a small parcel of land) to provide access to La Cieneguilla Petroglyph site from CR 56.


Map 5-11
La Cienega
Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Legend
La Cienega ACEC
Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Private
State
Tribal
0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
Miles
Map Area
La Cienega ACEC
Cieneguilla
La Cienega
Agua Fria
La Loma
T17N
T16N
T15N
R07E
R08E
R09E

GALISTEO BASIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — Santa Fe County
SAN LAZARO SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

General Description

The Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites Protection Act of 2004 identified 24 protection sites containing pueblos, rock art sites, and Spanish colonial settlements. The legislations provides for the addition of sites, or their removal if the landowner so wishes. BLM, designated as the lead Federal agency, is working in partnership with the landowners, the National Park Service, the New Mexico State Land Office, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Santa Fe County, School of American Research, the Archaeological Conservancy, Native Americans and local communities to develop a plan to implement the Act.

Of the 24 sites referred to in the Act (see map 5-12), nine have portions on public lands managed by BLM, and five (shown in bold) are included in two Special Management Areas – La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern (6-9) and San Lazaro Special Management Area (22):

1	Arroyo Hondo Pueblo	21 acres
2	Burnt Corn Pueblo	110 acres
3	Chamisa Locita Pueblo	16 acres
4	Comanche Gap Petroglyphs	764 acres
5	Espinoso Ridge Site	160 acres
6	**La Cienega Pueblo & Petroglyphs**	**126 acres**
7	**La Cienega Pithouse Village**	**179 acres**
8	**La Cieneguilla Petroglyphs**	**531 acres**
9	**La Cieneguilla Pueblo**	**11 acres**
10	Lamy Pueblo	30 acres
11	Lamy Junction Site	80 acres
12	Las Huertas	44 acres
13	Pa'ako Pueblo	29 acres
14	Petroglyph Hill	130 acres
15	Pueblo Blanco	878 acres
16	Pueblo Colorado	120 acres
17	Pueblo Galisteo/Las Madres	133 acres
18	Pueblo Largo	60 acres
19	Pueblo She	120 acres
20	Rote Chert Quarry	5 acres
21	San Cristobal Pueblo	520 acres
22	**San Lazaro Pueblo SMA**	**360 acres**
23	San Marcos Pueblo	152 acres
24	Upper Arroyo Hondo Pueblo	12 acres

One outcome of the management plan underway for the Galisteo Basin sites will be a recommendation for land ownership changes, special designations for the public land sites, and other protective measures. Once approved, these will be incorporated into the Taos Resource Management Plan.

San Lazaro Special Management Area, totaling 77 acres, is one of the largest pueblo ruins in the Galisteo Basin. This village, estimated to contain 1,950 rooms, is divided into two parts by Arroyo del Chorro, an intermittent stream which flows north to Galisteo Arroyo about two miles distant. The western portion is primarily prehistoric while the eastern portion was occupied historically. The site occupies low and rolling open terrain, surrounded by scattered juniper.

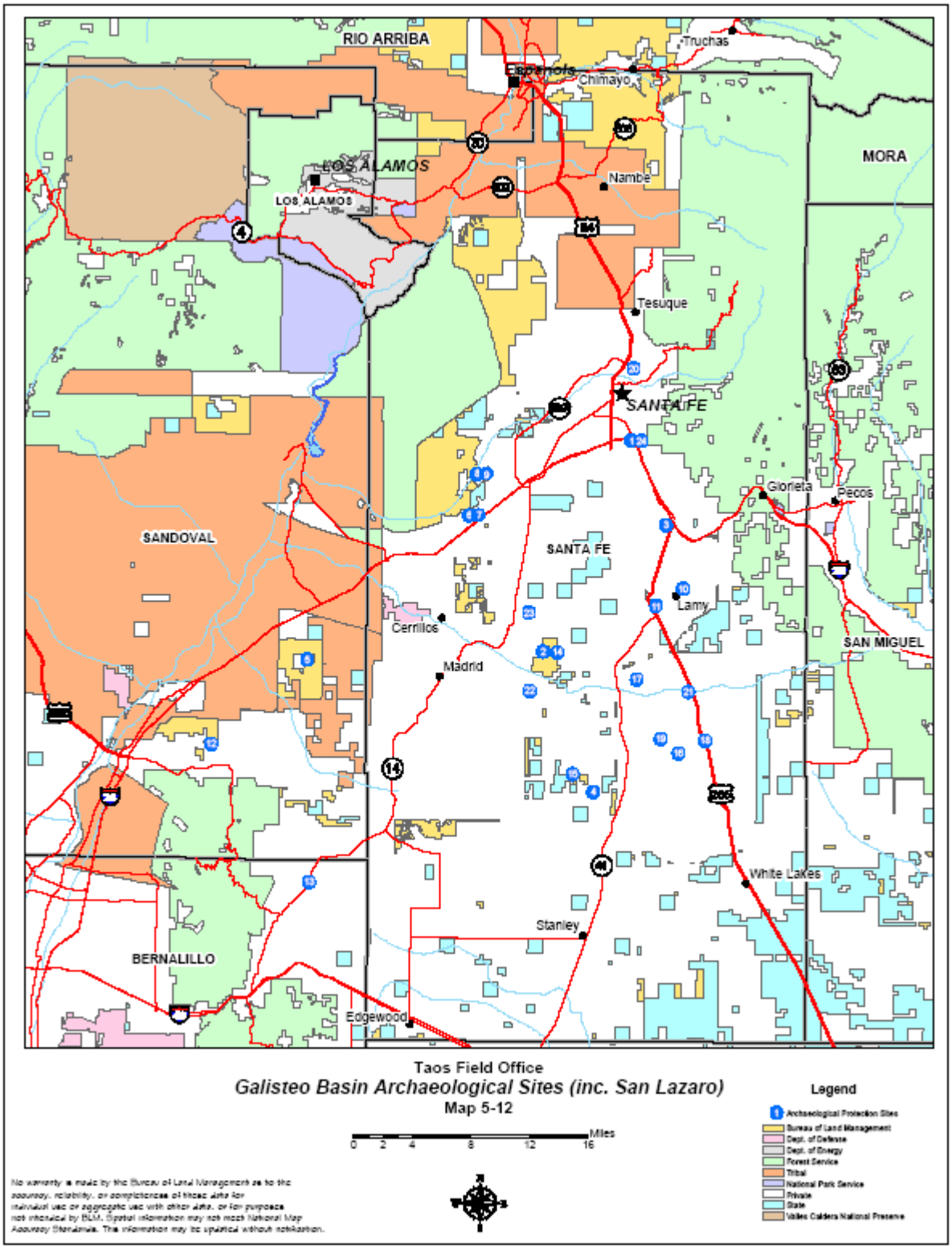
The prehistoric ruin on the west side of Arroyo del Chorro is composed of 14 separate or semi-contiguous masonry room blocks. Of these, 2 are located on a low promontory several hundred feet south of the main concentration of rooms. Five refuse mounds are located at scattered points around the site. No kiva depressions are evident, according to N.C. Nelson (1914) who conducted test excavations at the site in 1912.

The main portion of the historic pueblo surrounds a single plaza. A kiva depression is located near the southwestern corner of the plaza and 2 large refuse mounds are located adjacent to the outer south walls of the room block. The remains of a small church are located about 50 feet east of the main room block. Modern use of the area is visible in the form of the ruins of a lime kiln, several small houses, and a series of walls. A reservoir, possibly of aboriginal construction, is located about 700 feet northeast of the historic ruin. Other cavities eroded in the sandstone bedrock were used to collect run-off by means of a series of channels pecked into the rock.

Pottery collections from the 2 parts of the pueblo indicate that the site underwent periods of localized abandonment. It would appear that the prehistoric portions of the east ruin were vacant from about AD 1475 to AD 1600, while the west ruin continued to be occupied during this period. Subsequently, during the seventeenth century the west ruin was abandoned and the east ruin was reoccupied. Thus, at least part of the Pueblo San Lazaro was continuously occupied over a period of almost five hundred years.

According to the interpretations of some historians and archaeologists, Pueblo San Lazaro was in ruins when Coronado passed through the area in 1540. The early Spanish documents, however, present a confused picture of the route taken by Coronado, and it is possible that he did not see the village, since it is located away from the valley of Galisteo Creek.

Pueblo San Lazaro was reoccupied, or at least experienced, a population increase, at the time of introduction of permanent missions in the area, probably in the late 1500s. A chapel was constructed at San


RIO ARRIBA
Truchas
Chimayo
MORA
LOS ALAMOS
LOS ALAMOS
Nambe
Tesuque
SANTA FE
Glorieta
Pecos
SANDOVAL
SANTA FE
Lamy
Cerrillos
SAN MIGUEL
Madrid
White Lakes
Stanley
BERNALILLO
Edgewood
Taos Field Office
Galisteo Basin Archaeological Sites (inc. San Lazaro)
Map 5-12
0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles
Legend
Archaeological Protection Sites
Bureau of Land Management
Dept. of Defense
Dept. of Energy
Forest Service
Tribal
National Park Service
Private
State
Valles Caldera National Preserve

Lazaro, but the village remained a “vista” of the mission at Pueblo San Marcos.

The inhabitants of Pueblo San Lazaro participated in the Pueblo Rebellion 0f 1680 and, sometime prior to 1692 when Don Diego de Vargas found them, they abandoned the village and moved to a new location near present day Santa Cruz. A short time later they fled west to the Hopi villages in Arizona and founded the still existing pueblo of Hano.

Pueblo San Lazaro is already listed as a National Landmark. As such, it is also included on the National Register of Historic Sites. Most of the historic portion of the site is located on public lands while the largest portion of the prehistoric ruin is on private land.

Management Objective

The management objective for San Lazaro will be to protect cultural resource values.

Management Prescriptions

1. Inventory the Special Management Area and record the sites.
2. Complete a Cultural Resources Management Plan.
3. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy (see Appendix A).
4. Withdraw the sites from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal.
5. Limit the site to authorized OHV users.
6. Exclude the Special Management Area from grazing.
7. Acquire the entire pueblo, or dispose of the public portion to another agency, to improve overall management of the area.
8. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.
9. Acquire legal access to the Special Management Area.

PUEBLO SARCO — Santa Fe County

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

General Description

The Pueblo Sarco Special Management Area (map 5-1) is a medium-sized pueblo ruin, approximately 10 acres in size, located on a small, flat ridge top adjacent to the Rio Sarco. The pueblo, located between Cundiyo and Nambe, New Mexico, is situated within the high, broken foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The area is heavily vegetated with piñon, juniper, and other species of the woodland ecological zone.

The site was first mentioned by Harrington as a nameless pueblo ruin which he claimed was "one of the homes of the ancestors of the Nambe people" (1916:380). Mera described the site in connection with his survey of the Biscuitware area of northern New Mexico in 1930. He refers to the ruin as a "nameless, defensive village located on the Rito Sarco" (1934:5).

Florence Hawley Ellis (1964) studies Nambe Pueblo in 1962, compiling data to be used in the tribe's land claim. Ellis referred to Pueblo Sarco as "K'ate Ouinge," and dated it to the Biscuit A Phase (AD 1350- AD 1425) of the Classic Pueblo Period. According to Ellis, K'ate Ouinge was one of three villages inhabited by the Nambe people in defensive locations in the high piñon-covered foothills above the Sarco and Frijoles Rivers between AD 1350 and AD 1425 (1964:39). Ellis further stated that "according to tradition, the defensive situations of the Nambe Pueblos of this period (except Nambe itself) resulted from fear of raiders, but modern informants cannot say who the raiders were' (1964:41). During the Biscuit B Phase (AD 1425-AD 1550), these defensive sites were abandoned and the Nambe people merged together at Nambe Pueblo.

Management Objective

The management objective for the Pueblo Sarco SMA will be protection of cultural values.

Management Prescriptions

1. Complete the inventory and recordation of archaeological data within the SMA.
2. Prepare a Cultural Resources Management Plan.
3. Nominate the site to the National Register of Historic Places.
4. Withdraw the site from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal.
5. Limit the site to authorized OHV users.
6. Exclude the SMA from grazing.
7. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy (see Appendix A).
8. Implement limited fire suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural resources.

SANTA CRUZ LAKE — Santa Fe County

SANTA CRUZ LAKE RECREATION AREA
LA CAJA PUEBLO SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

General Description

The Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area covers 640 acres and is located 30 miles north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in Santa Fe County (see map 5-13).

The Santa Cruz Dam, built in 1928, is 535 feet long. The lake covers 121 surface acres and is 90 feet deep at the dam. It is located in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and was formed by the creation of the dam which flooded the deep arroyos fed by the Rio del Medio and Rio Frijoles. The local terrain is comprised of rugged, rolling foothills, with mesas and steep canyons. The elevation at the lake is 6,285 feet and rises to 6,660 feet at the Overlook Campground.

The vegetation at the Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area is primarily Piñon-Juniper woodland, with an understory of blue grama, western and crested wheat grasses. Sagebrush and varieties of cacti are also interspersed throughout the area. Cottonwoods and willows grow along the shoreline of the lake. Shrubs include mountain mahogany, oakbrush, and broom snakeweed.

Wildlife within the Recreation Area is fairly limited, due to lack of vegetation and the human impacts of intensive recreational use. Wildlife species inhabiting the lake and surrounding areas include mule deer, bobcat, coyote, cottontail, jackrabbit, squirrel, chipmunk, skunk, beaver, raccoon, and small rodents. Bird species include duck, goose, turkey vulture, Cooper's hawk, marsh hawk, sparrow hawk, blue heron, mourning dove, roadrunner, great horned owl, magpie, raven, dipper, red-tailed hawk' Swanson's hawk, an numerous smaller bird species. Reptiles include the collard and tree lizards, garter snake, bull snake, and western rattlesnake. The principal fish species include rainbow and brown trout both of which are stocked by the NM Department of Game and Fish. Fishing is the main attraction at the lake, which receives heavy pressure from April 1 through October 31. The fishing from both the shoreline and from boats is rated fair-to-excellent. The State Game Commission extended the fishing season to year-round.

The Rio Medio, which feeds Santa Cruz Lake, is one of the better cold water trout fisheries in the planning area. Lake and stream improvements have been installed to provide in stream habitat diversity. Existing banks are generally stable and in good condition. Riparian stream cover is adequate to control water temperatures and dissolved oxygen. The slopes on either side of the riparian zone are covered with piñon-juniper.

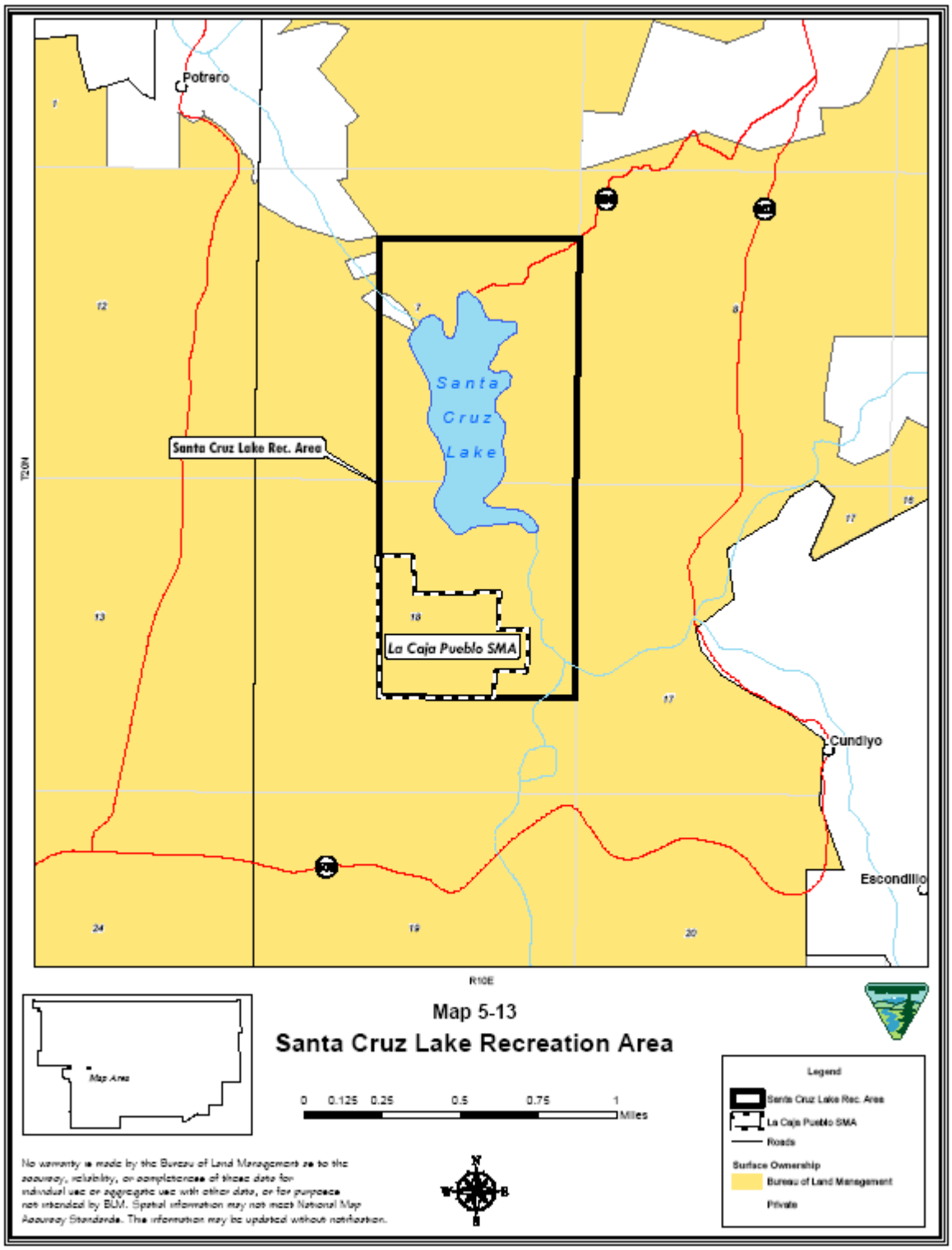
The recreation facilities at the lake include forty shelter camping sites, water and toilet facilities, boat launching, and mooring areas, and 6 miles of developed trails. These trails were officially designated as part of the National Recreational Trails System in 1981.

La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area is a large pueblo ruin located next to Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area's Overlook Campground, west of Cundiyo, New Mexico. The pueblo is situated on the edge of a flat ridge top, overlooking La Caja box canyon, between the confluence of the Rio Medio and Rio Frijoles, and Santa Cruz Lake. The site is in the high vegetated mounded category, denoting a series of room blocks, which partially surround two plazas. The size of the mounds indicates the possibility that the pueblo originally had two stories. No kiva depressions are evident although it is possible that one or more are located within the plaza areas. Analysis of ceramics collected from the site suggests that the pueblo dates to the early fourteenth century. La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area covers 85 acres, all within Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area.

La Caja Pueblo was overlooked by early archaeological surveys in the area. The first record of the site is a survey report filled out by archeologists from the Museum of New Mexico in 1973.

Considering its close proximity to Santa Cruz Lake, the pueblo ruin is in exceptional condition. Recreation potential exists for its future excavation and public interpretation, since it is located within an existing recreation area.

This Special Management Area includes both La Caja Pueblo and the flat ridge top on which it is located. This ridge top was likely dry farmed during the period of occupation of the pueblo and should yield evidence of prehistoric farming technologies, as well as other activities associated with the pueblo.


Potrero
Santa Cruz Lake Rec. Area
Santa Cruz Lake
La Caja Pueblo SMA
Cundiyo
Escondillo
T20N
R10E
Map 5-13
Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area
Map Area
0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles
Legend
Santa Cruz Lake Rec. Area
La Caja Pueblo SMA
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Private
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. The information may be updated without notification.

Management Objectives

Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area
Primary use will emphasize recreation (developed and underdeveloped), cultural resources and riparian and aquatic habitat management. The Recreation Area will be managed as an intensive recreation site, and will be proposed as a National Recreation Area. A management plan will be developed for the Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area.

Secondary use will include livestock grazing. Prohibited uses would include ORV use, mineral development and commercial timber sales.

La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area
The management objectives for La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area will be to protect cultural resource and interpretive values.

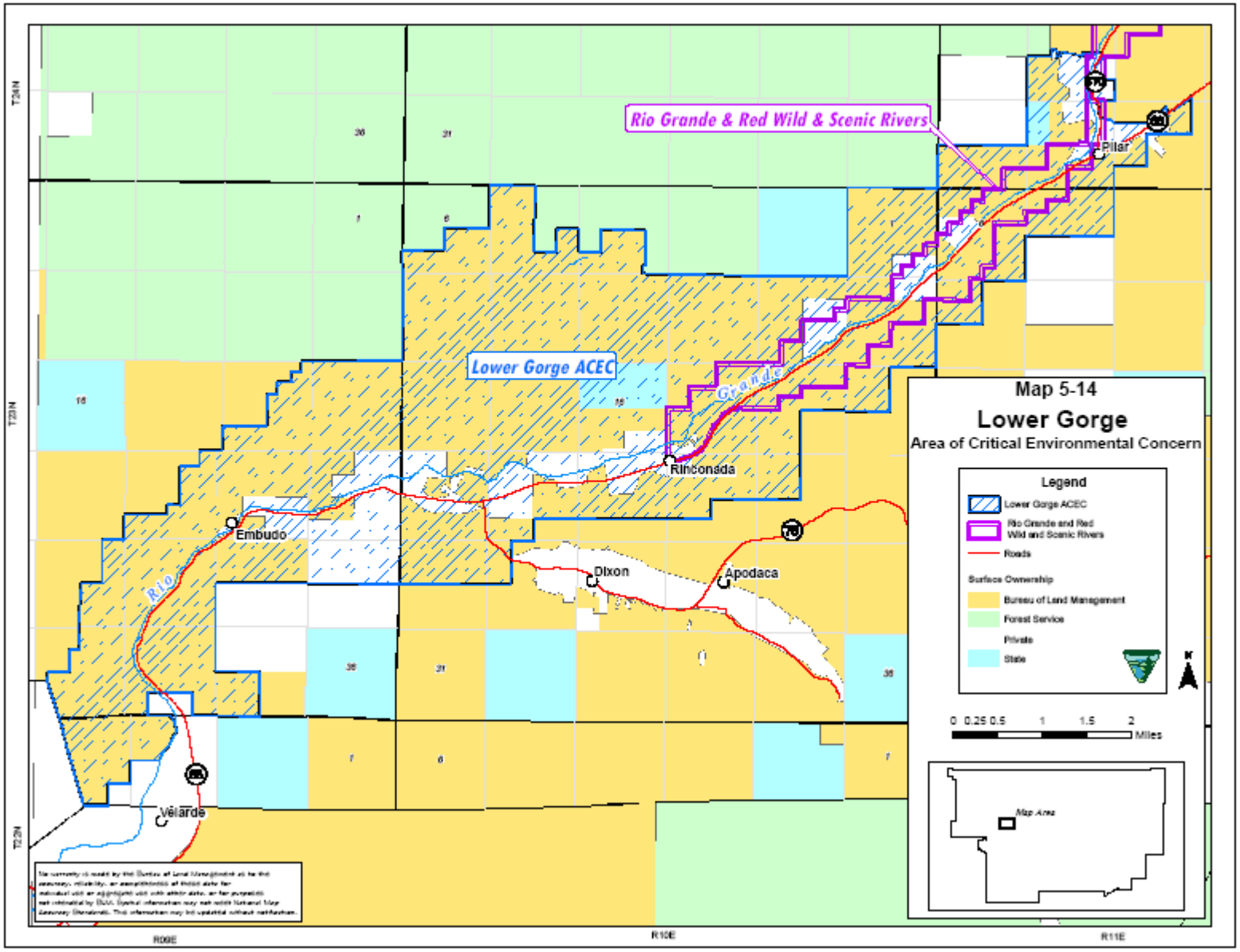
Management Prescriptions

Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area

1. Exclude grazing in developed sites in the recreation area.
2. Limit OHV use to designated roads; no OHV use will be allowed on hiking trails.
3. No significant surface disturbance will be permitted.
4. Designate the area as a right-of-way exclusion area.
5. Develop an interpretive program, in conjunction with La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area.
6. Develop a management plan for the Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area [completed in 1989].
7. Fires in this area will have limited suppression.
8. Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy will be implemented within the Recreation Area (see Appendix A).
9. The Recreation Area will be closed to mineral entry and all mineral material sales.
10. Complete a lake shoreline inventory to determine possible improvements to the aquatic shoreline habitats.

La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area

1. Complete an inventory and recordation of site data.
2. Nominate the site to national Register of Historic Places.
3. Prepare a Cultural Resources Management Plan.
4. Withdraw the site from mineral entry and close to mineral material disposal.
5. Limit the site to authorized OHV users.
6. Implement Oil and Gas Stipulation III – No Surface Occupancy (see Appendix A).
7. Exclude the Special Management Area from grazing.
8. Implement limited suppression strategies to assist in the protection of cultural and paleontological resources, and piñon-juniper woodland resources.


Rio Grande & Red Wild & Scenic Rivers
Lower Gorge ACEC
Rio Grande
Pilar
Rinconada
Embudo
Dixon
Apodaca
Velarde
T24N
T23N
T22N
R09E
R10E
R11E
Map 5-14
Lower Gorge
Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Legend
Lower Gorge ACEC
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2
Miles
Map Area

RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR — Taos County

LOWER GORGE AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

General Description

This Area of Critical Environmental Concern (map 5-14) covers 16,351 acres of public land along a 14-mile-long stretch of the Rio Grande from the village of Pilar to the Velarde Diversion Dam, and includes important riparian habitat along both sides of the river. The designation recognizes the area's value for recreation, wildlife habitat, and riparian vegetation. The majority of the lands within the 12-mile-long segment of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River designated in 1994 are within the ACEC. This new ACEC encompasses the former Racecourse ACEC (1,355 acres) and 663 acres of the Black Mesa ACEC. Its boundary also encloses 5,127 acres of private and state lands which BLM will try to acquire from willing sellers. The boundary of the Black Mesa ACEC has been adjusted to exclude the portion transferred to the new ACEC.

Management Prescriptions

Access
Vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails which are shown on Map 6-e (back pocket of the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan). BLM will work with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department to identify safe pullouts for sightseeing and parking along NM 68 and 570. Road improvements will be recommended to increase safety, such as marked driveway entrances, turning lanes, or road work to increase line of sight distances at dangerous hills or turns.

Land Ownership and Realty Actions
Acquire selected private lands within the ACEC boundaries, if landowners are willing to sell.

Allow disposal of about ½ acre in T 23 N, R 10 E, Section 19 to address community needs and approximately five acres in T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 33 in Pilar for community purposes and a trash transfer site. Otherwise, the remainder of the ACEC will be withdrawn from the public land laws.

New rights-of-way will be excluded unless needed to administer recreation sites or to provide access or utility service to private or state lands where it was otherwise not possible. Utilities will be underground only and will be co-located with roads.

Livestock Management
Grazing will be managed under guidelines described in Table 3-4 for Allotments 503, 514, 516, 517 and 636 (see Map 7 in back pocket of the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan for locations). No grazing will be permitted within the ACEC's riparian and wetland areas.

Minerals
Withdraw the ACEC from mineral entry and close it to mineral material disposal. The ACEC is closed to mineral leasing.

Public Education
Pilar North Parking Area: Provide river ranger patrols and limited informational signing.

Quartzite Recreation Site: Develop interpretive signs describing key resources and river characteristics, and increase river ranger presence.

Racecourse Parking Sites: Provide interpretive signs at larger sites receiving the heaviest visitor use, and focus on Wild and Scenic River management, watchable wildlife, and natural and cultural features of interest.
County Line/Rinconada Overlook: Provide signing focusing on riparian area protection.

Lover's Lane: Increase patrol of the site.

Embudo Station: Provide some patrol and interpretive signing on river use, local history, and good neighbor guidelines in cooperation with landowners.

Recreation
Boating: Outfitted and private boaters will be regulated by the guidelines described in Chapter 4.

Camping and Picnicking: Close the Quartzite Recreation Site to camping. No camping will be allowed within 100 feet of the river between the County Line Recreation Site and the Velarde Diversion Dam, including the County Line and Lover's Lane sites. Additional sites could be closed if monitoring indicates that resource damage is occurring that can not be mitigated in other ways. Provide day-use facilities at the south end of the County Line Recreation Site to accommodate fishing and picnicking and, if use warrants, install a universally accessible restroom.

Fishing: Provide universal fishing access at the Quartzite and/or County Line Recreation Sites (away from the launch/takeout areas), and at Lover's Lane. Improve trails to the river from parking areas along NM 68 to provide safer access.

Trails: BLM will conduct a feasibility study in cooperation with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department for a pedestrian underpass or overpass between the Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center and the Quartzite Recreation Site.

Continue to improve foot trails from the NM 68 parking areas to river sites. Where terrain allows, BLM will provide a trail between parking sites to facilitate access.

Develop or improve the Rinconada Hill Trail, following old roads from the County Line Recreation Site northeast to the Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center.

Riparian Resources
BLM's goal of improving riparian conditions will be achieved by closing several sites to vehicles, including the public lands at the confluence of the Rio Grande and Rio Embudo, an east shore vehicle pullout located ½ mile south of Embudo Station, and the pullout located just upstream from the Velarde Diversion Dam. The riparian area at Lovers' Lane will be closed to vehicles, and adjacent private lands, if acquired.

Scenic Quality
Continue application of Visual Resource Management Class II guidelines on all public lands in the ACEC, except at recreation sites (four acres) which will be managed under VRM Class III guidelines.

To protect the visual quality of the ACEC, rights-of-way in the ACEC will be strictly limited and the area withdrawn from public land and mining laws. BLM will redesign and landscape the Pilar North Parking Area and developed recreation sites, revegetate closed roads, and rehabilitate the old mining site near the Taos Junction Campground. BLM will develop partnerships with the New Mexico Department of Transportation and Public Service Company of New Mexico to improve the appearance of the NM 68 and 570 rights-of-way and the gas line parallel to NM 68.

Watershed
Shrub grasslands will be burned to improve watershed health. Noxious weeds will be suppressed with methods deemed most effective. Herbicides will be used only as a last resort. Any unplanned fires will be extinguished within the full-suppression zone around the village of Pilar. In the rest of the ACEC, fire prescriptions and burn plans will be developed to meet vegetation management objectives.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat
Protect southwestern willow flycatcher territories through implementation of the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher Management Plan, 1998.*

General Description

Orilla Verde Recreation Area (map 5-15) provides access for a variety of activities including camping, fishing, swimming, boating, bird-watching, hiking, and general sightseeing along part of NM 570.

Camping is allowed within the recreation area only at designated sites. The west side of the river throughout the recreation area is undeveloped except for the campground at Taos Junction Bridge and two designated primitive camp sites. Four campgrounds are on the east side of the river at Petaca, Arroyo Hondo, Rio Bravo, and Pilar. Each site has picnic and overnight camping facilities, restrooms, and (except at Arroyo Hondo) drinking water. Public pay telephones are available at the Taos Junction and Rio Bravo campgrounds, as are group shelters that accommodate up to 50 people.

Boating access is provided at four locations—the Taos Junction, Orilla Verde, and Arroyo Hondo campgrounds, and at the Lone Juniper Recreation Site, which is designated for primitive camping.

Management Prescriptions

Access
Vehicle access is limited to designated routes of travel (see Map 6-d and Table 3-1 in the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan).

Shoreline access at will be restricted at selected locations in Orilla Verde Recreation Area to protect bird habitat. Restrictions will be passive (e.g., by closing off adjacent parking areas or obliterating signs of trails).

Land Ownership and Realty Actions
BLM will attempt to acquire the following lands if landowners consent:

- Private land adjacent to the Taos Junction Bridge (within T 24 N, R 11 E; portions of eight protracted sections totaling approximately 2,510 acres – NOTE: completed in 2004);
- Private land within T 24 N, R 11 E, Sections 22, 23, 29, 32 (approximately 260 acres); and
- State land within T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 2 (approximately 271 acres).

The Recreation Area is closed to new rights-of-way, except for underground utilities and New Mexico Department of Transportation road-maintenance activities.

Livestock Management
Grazing will be managed under guidelines shown in the Rio Grande Corridor Plan, Table 3-4 for Allotments 517 and 626 (shown on Map 7 in the back pocket). No livestock use will be permitted within the Gorge.

Minerals
Continue closure of the Recreation Area to locatable mineral entry. The Recreation Area is closed to mineral leasing. Except for recreational gold panning and a building stone site at Arroyo Hondo (T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 24), the removal or collection of rocks or mineral material will not be allowed.

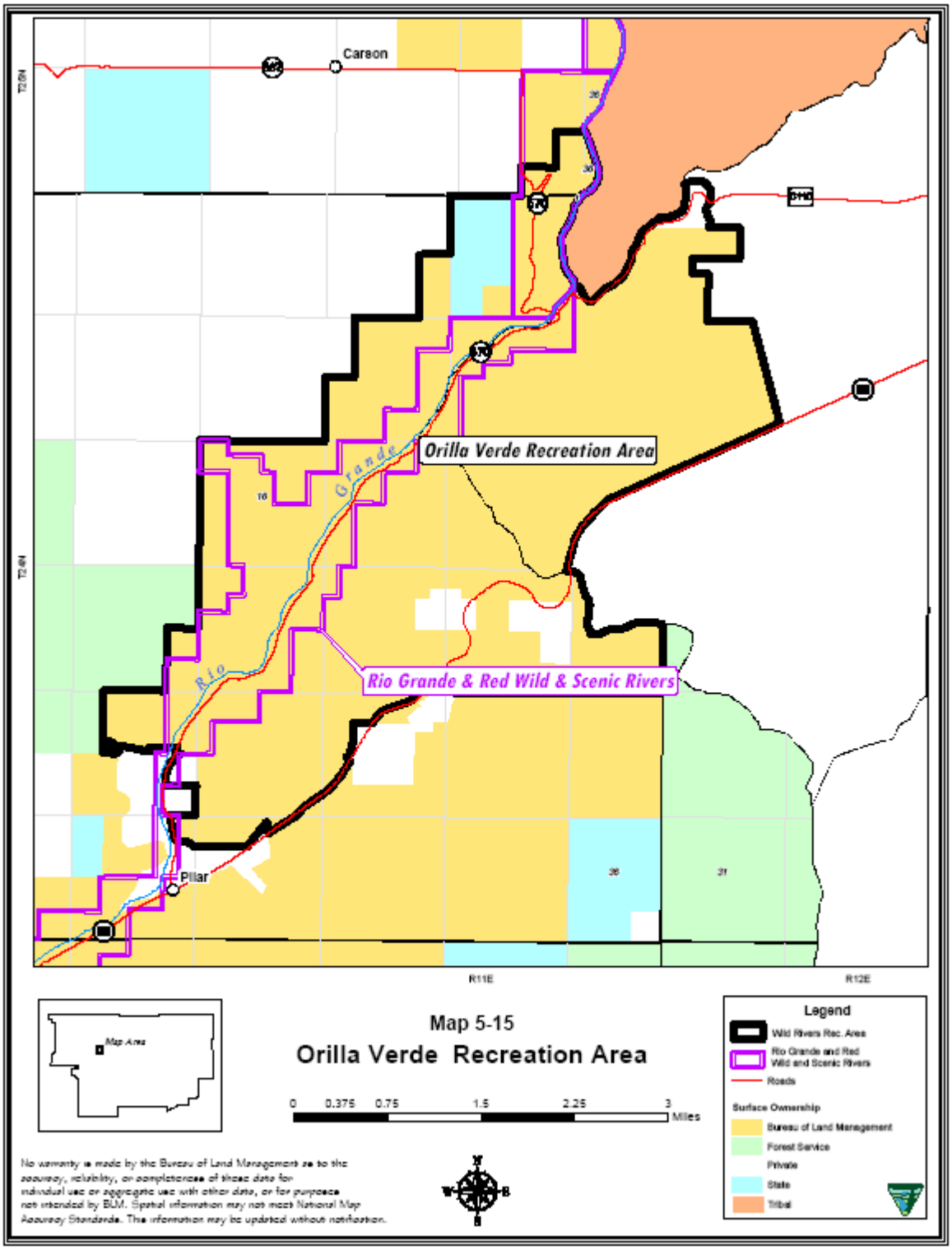
Prehistoric and Historic Resources
Complete an inventory of cultural resources and provide interpretation where feasible. The highest priority for inventory will be areas of intensive recreation use.

Public Education
The Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center and selected sites throughout the Recreation Area will be used to provide visitor information and environmental education on the Rio Grande Gorge, its history, resources and uses.

Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center: Provide displays, including interactive videos, about the Rio Grande Gorge's recreation opportunities, history and resources. Promote visitor etiquette toward resources and education about local custom and culture. The visitor center will serve as a hub for environmental education with local and visiting school groups, and formal presentations will be given on a variety of topics of interest to visitors and local residents.

Taos Junction Bridge: Acquire land or make a land use agreement and put interpretive signing in place to describe the site's history, river ethics, and leave no trace practices. Provide BLM ranger presence, including guided hikes.
La Vista Verde Trail: Install a sign at the trailhead about hiker safety, cultural resources protection and vegetation.

Orilla Verde Campground: Replace the current contact station with an unstaffed facility to provide exhibits describing the area's recreation opportunities, sites of interest, riparian ecosystem, cultural resources, safety, wildlife, geology, and native plants. A nearby volunteer host site will allow for personal visitor contacts in summer.


Carson
Orilla Verde Recreation Area
Rio Grande & Red Wild & Scenic Rivers
Rio Grande
Pilar
T26N
T25N
R11E
R12E
Map 5-15
Orilla Verde Recreation Area
Map Area
0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles
Legend
Wild Rivers Rec. Area
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State
Tribal
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Recreation
Boating: Enforce the supplemental rule that prohibits motorized travel on the river by prohibiting hovercraft or motorized boat launching on public lands. Outfitted and private boaters will be managed under guidelines described in Chapter 4.

Casual Uses: Continue the closure to hunting, trapping, and the discharge of firearms within the recreation area, in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Fishing: Provide universal fishing access at one or two locations in the Recreation Area, and improve trails to the river from parking areas along NM 570 to provide safer access.

Camping and Picnicking: Camping in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area will be allowed only at developed campgrounds, and at designated primitive sites at Lone Juniper and selected sites on the west side of the river.

All campgrounds will be rebuilt to improve accessibility, provide additional sites where space allows, and provide additional services such as more group sites, RV hook-ups, dish washing stations, and restrooms with showers. Each campground will have a host/information facility with full hookups. Host facilities may be provided at major river access sites if use warrants.

A fully developed campground with 9 to 13 sites including at least one group site will be constructed near the historic stagecoach stop northeast of the bridge, if the private land adjacent to the Taos Junction Bridge is acquired.

Trails: BLM will design and construct La Cieneguilla Trail from Pilar campground to the Taos Junction Bridge Area, and continue to maintain La Vista Verde Trail. Short trails used to access the shoreline will be maintained to the minimum extent necessary to assure safety.

Scenic Quality
The rim area bounded by New Mexico Highway 68 (NM 68), the north rim of Arroyo Hondo, and the rim of the Rio Grande Gorge (if acquired) will be managed under Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines; campgrounds and developed day-use areas along the river under Class III guidelines; and the remainder of the area under Class II guidelines.

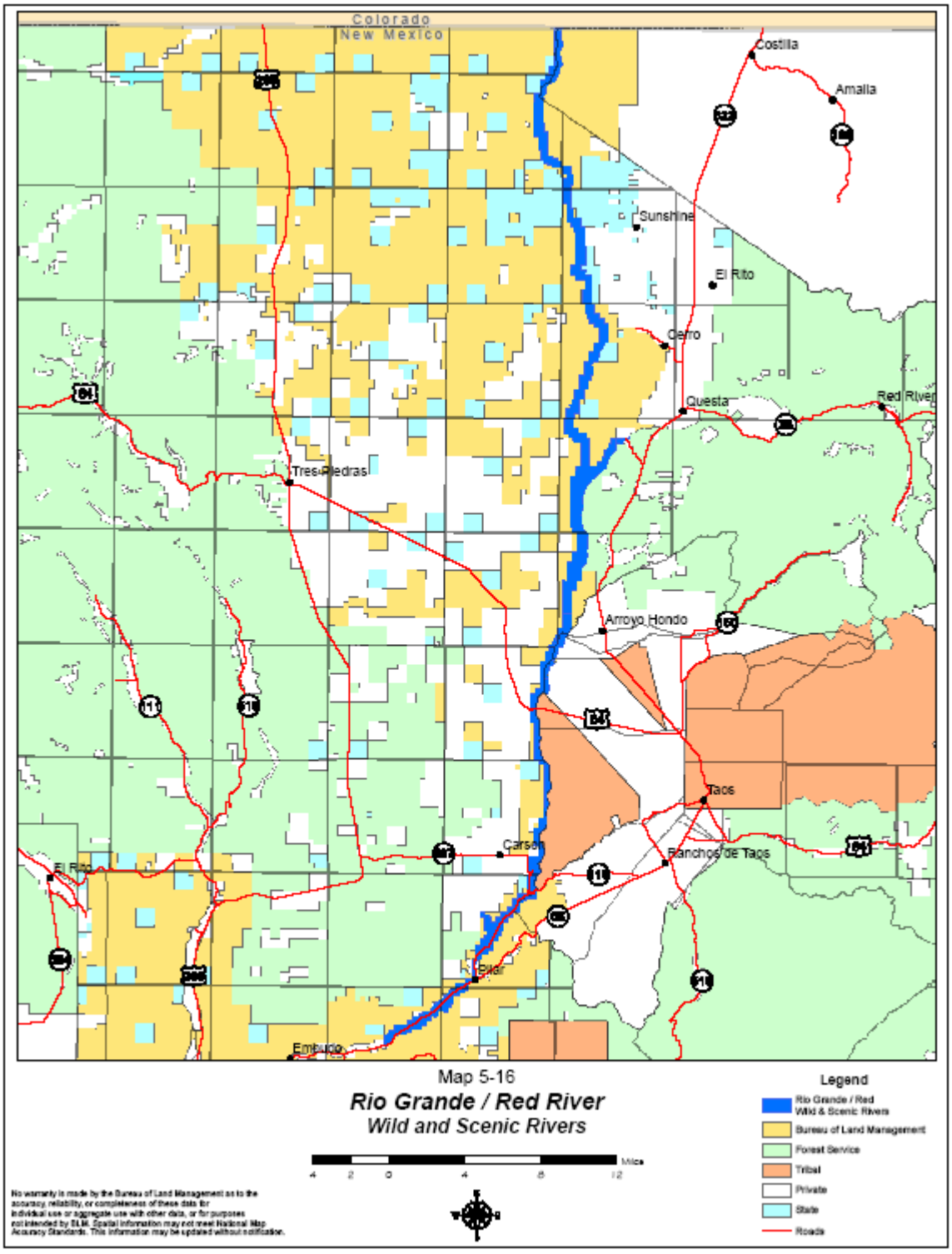
Watershed
All wildfires will be fully suppressed within Orilla Verde Recreation Area. A strategy will be developed to control tamarisk and noxious weeds and reestablish native vegetation to improve biodiversity within the Recreation Area.

Water rights for springs in Arroyo Hondo Canyon, east of NM 68 near the Horseshoe Curve, will be acquired if owners are willing to sell.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat
Restrict shoreline access in designated areas, and close selected side channels to boating use to protect bird habitat.

Human use on public land in the big-game migratory corridor within Arroyo Hondo Canyon (near Horseshoe Curve) will not be encouraged.

Protect southwestern willow flycatcher territories through implementation of the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher Management Plan, 1998.*


Colorado
New Mexico
Costilla
Amalia
Sunshine
El Rito
Cerro
Questa
Red River
Tres Piedras
Arroyo Hondo
Taos
Ranchos de Taos
Carson
El Rito
Ojo Caliente
Embudo
Map 5-16
Rio Grande / Red River
Wild and Scenic Rivers
Miles
4 2 0 4 8 12
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.
Legend
Rio Grande / Red Wild & Scenic Rivers
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Tribal
Private
State
Roads

RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR — Taos County

RIO GRANDE AND RED WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

General Description

The Rio Grande and Red River in New Mexico were among the original eight rivers to be designated by Congress in 1968 to initiate the National Wild and Scenic River System. From the Colorado state line to the Taos Junction Bridge, 50 miles of the Rio Grande are

classified as wild, and 2.2 miles near the John Dunn and Taos Junction Bridges are classified as recreational. The lower 3.2 miles of the Red River also are classified as wild, and the .75 mile below the Red River Fish Hatchery is recreational. The designation applies to 17,286 acres of federal land.

In 1994, Congress amended the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to include as a scenic segment the 12-mile-long stretch of the Rio Grande from the Taos Junction Bridge to the west section line of Section 15, T 23 N, R 10 E, which is just past the County Line Recreation Site. This document constitutes the management plan and proposes boundaries for the 12-mile-long scenic segment and will be forwarded to Congress at the end of the planning process.

Congress also asked the BLM to study the eight-mile-long Bosque Segment (actual mileage is 7.6) from Rinconada to the Velarde Diversion Dam and report within three years on its suitability for Wild and Scenic River designation. A report on the Bosque Segment is included in this document and will be submitted to Congress (see Appendix 3).

Many of the BLM's actions being undertaken to manage these Wild and Scenic Rivers are described under the following Special Management Areas in this chapter: Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recreation Areas, and the Lower Gorge ACEC. The actions below affect lands that fall outside these other designated areas.

Management Prescriptions

Access
Vehicle use is limited to the designated roads shown on Maps 6-b, c, and d of the 2000 Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan. Hiking trails provide the majority of access opportunities along the segments classified as wild - see the Recreation section below.

Land Ownership and Realty Actions
BLM will attempt to acquire all state lands through exchange, and will work with willing private landowners to acquire properties with a priority on undeveloped lands and/or those with high-value resources (see Section 6).

Livestock Management
No livestock grazing is permitted within the designated river corridors.

Minerals
The designated portions of the Rio Grande and Red River have been withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry and leasing.

Public Education
John Dunn Bridge: Post directional signs. Continue weekend river ranger patrols to permit boating use, provide information, and direct traffic. Place signing to support parking and use restrictions/controls at the bridge and springs.

Manby Springs: Post interpretive signing to encourage protection of cultural resources. Acquire public access to the trailhead at Manby Springs.

Rio Grande Gorge Bridge: Develop, in partnership with New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, interpretive signing on the bridge and parking areas which provide information about the bridge, how the Rio Grande Gorge has affected transportation in north-central New Mexico, the region's geology, watchable wildlife in the area, and a brief history of the Nation's Wild and Scenic River system.

Other public education actions will be implemented in the Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recreation Areas and the Lower Gorge ACEC.

Recreation
Prohibit commercially guided fishing along the Rio Grande from Chiflo Trail to Big Arsenic Trail

The West Rim Trail will be extended north from the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge to Chiflo in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area. The segment between John Dunn Bridge and Cerro Chiflo will be closed from May 1 to July 31 to protect big game species.

Improve the Ute Mountain, East Rim, Lee, Chiflo, Sheeps Crossing, Miners, Red River, and Manby Springs Trails, the river trail between the John Dunn Bridge and Manby Springs, and the Powerline Trail. Sign at trailheads only.

Coordinate with Taos Pueblo in locating an East Rim Trail between the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge and the Taos Junction Bridge.

No parking or overnight use (including camping) will be allowed within 300 feet of existing trailheads or trail descent points to protect wildlife migration corridors and access routes to water. The BLM will install appropriate signs to inform users of the restriction. Restrictions on overnight use will not apply to the Raven or Powerline trailheads or to the trailheads on the east rim of the gorge within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area.

Close the John Dunn Bridge Recreation Site to camping. Additional sites could be closed if monitoring indicates that resource damage is occurring that could not be mitigated in other ways.

BLM will coordinate with Taos County and the Hondo Mesa Neighborhood Association to determine a management strategy for the Manby Springs easement area.

Riparian Areas
BLM will manage the Wild and Scenic River corridors to conserve or enhance riparian vegetation through controls on vehicle use, plantings, and removal of noxious weeds or invasive, non-native plants.

(year-round) to protect fisheries resources, and on the Ute Mountain Segment (from April 1 to May 31) to protect sensitive wildlife breeding areas.

Scenic Quality
The public lands within the wild segments of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers will be managed following Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I guidelines. The developed recreation sites, including the BLM Visitor Centers, campgrounds, river access sites, and day use sites are VRM Class III. VRM Class II applies to the remaining portions of the Wild and Scenic River corridor (see Table 2-6 for definitions).

To preserve scenic quality, the BLM will acquire state and private land in the Corridor (both surface and subsurface) when owners are willing to sell (refer to Table 3-2 for a list of these parcels). BLM will maintain the right-of-way corridor near the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge and prohibit new right-of-way crossings elsewhere.

Watershed
Fire suppression will be limited to those methods least disturbing to soils and vegetation. Fuelwood and timber sales will not be allowed unless such action would enhance watershed resources. Recreation sites will be designed or rebuilt to control erosion, particularly at sites used for river access.

Wildlife
Construct cable grates on the mine entry at Black Rock Springs and at the El Poso Cave entrance to protect bats from human contact. The agency will allow scientific studies only - the caves will be closed to the general public.

Protect southwestern willow flycatcher territories through implementation of the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher Management Plan, 1998.*

Introduce a reproducing population of river otter into the Upper Gorge in coordination with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and Colorado Department of Wildlife.

General Description

The expanded Wild Rivers Recreation Area (map 5-17) is the most intensively used area in the Upper Gorge. It includes portions of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers (3,209 acres), the original Wild Rivers Recreation Area (12,060), the former Guadalupe Mountain ACEC (1,363 acres) and adjacent public lands (2,034 acres). Private and state land adjacent to or enclosed by the new boundary also will be included if they are acquired (1,565 acres), bringing the area's total potential public land acreage to 20,231.

About 90% of the area is in a natural condition with the remaining 10% developed for intensive recreation use. The Wild Rivers Recreation Area was first developed for visitor use in 1962, with the construction of roads, trails and facilities under the temporary management of the New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission. BLM reassumed management responsibility of the area in 1969. Recreational activities include hiking, fishing, camping, picnicking, biking, sightseeing, kayaking, floatboating, roller blading, wildlife viewing, and nature study.

A 13-mile-long paved road, nationally designated as the Wild Rivers Back Country Byway, provides the main access to the recreation area. Paved road access is also available through the Red River Fish Hatchery, and access to trails is available via Forest Road 9 on Cebolla Mesa and other primitive roads on the west side of the Rio Grande Gorge.

The Wild Rivers Visitor Center is staffed daily from May through September, and on weekends during the low-use season. Twenty-two developed campsites are located along the rim of the Rio Grande and Red River at four campgrounds and the La Junta Point Overlook. These sites provide sheltered picnic tables, cooking grills, water, pit toilets, and trail access to the river canyons. Five overlook sites have been developed, including La Junta Point; two of these also serve as overflow campgrounds. Nineteen primitive campsites are located within the river canyons and are accessible only by trail. Camping in the canyons is limited to these designated sites, which are equipped with sheltered picnic tables, cooking grills, and pit toilets.

Within the Recreation Area, 26.5 miles of maintained trails are available, including six trails that provide access to the river canyons, two multi-use rim trails, and two interpretive rim trails. One trail climbs Guadalupe Mountain to an area designated for primitive camping. Fourteen miles of rim trail are open to mountain biking, five miles of canyon trail are open to equestrian use, and 11 miles of rim trail are open to cross-country skiing. Wheelchair access is available to the La Junta Point Overlook.

Two sections of land within the recreation area are owned by the State of New Mexico. One section contains BLM recreational facilities allowed by the State under a cooperative agreement. Both sections are leased for grazing and contain minimal grazing developments. One parcel of private land lies along the western boundary of the recreation area; it is used for grazing and occasional hunting.

Management Prescriptions

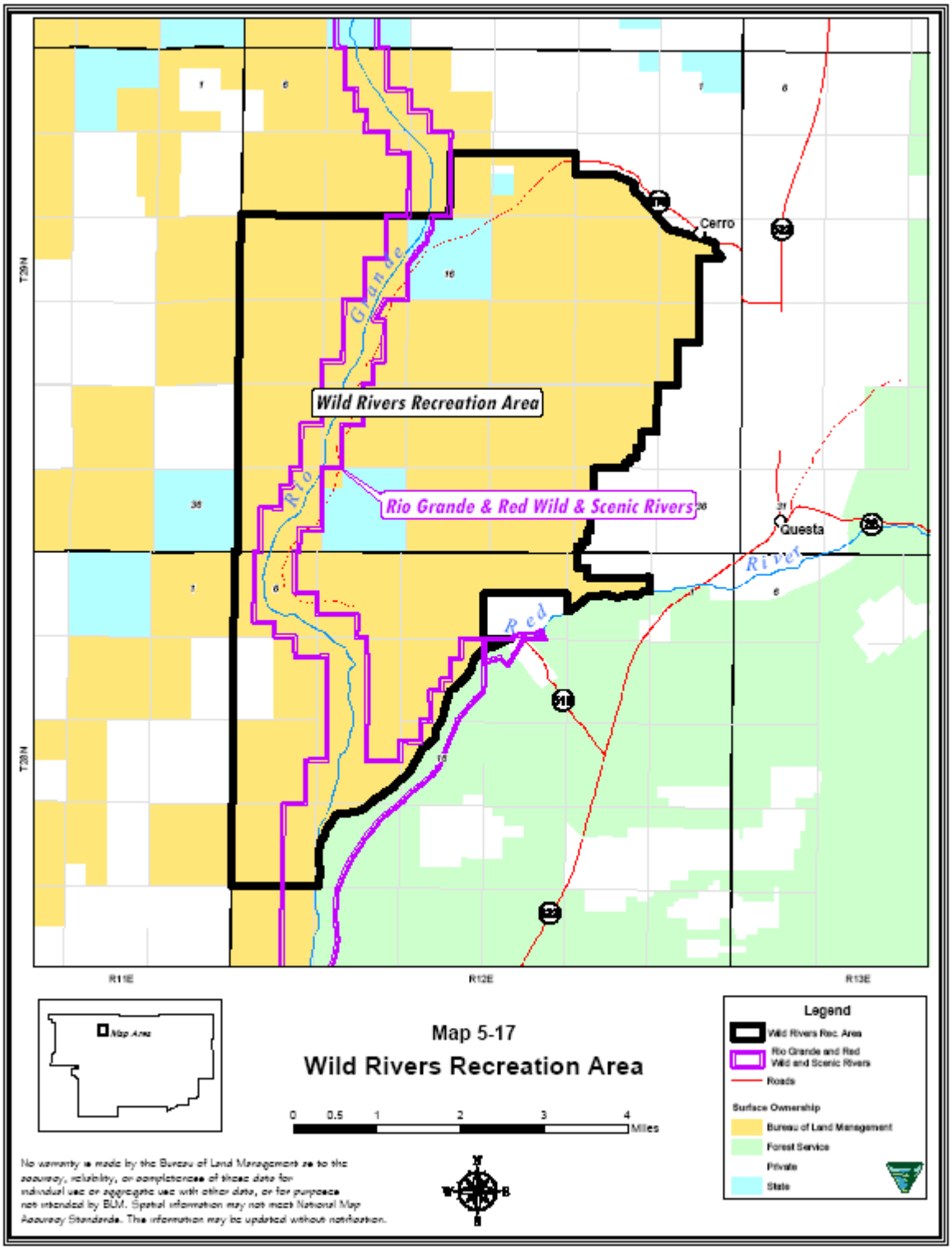
Access
Vehicle use is limited to roads and trails designated open in 1994, as shown on Map 6-c (back pocket of the Rio Grande Corridor Plan) and listed in Table 3-1 (Rio Grande Corridor Plan).

To provide and maintain a safe and efficient road network, the loop drive was upgraded for recreational vehicle use. All paved roads will be resurfaced in 2001. Secondary roads providing access to campgrounds and trailheads will be graded to provide crowns, ditches, and gravel surfaces (on-going); parking areas will be defined to discourage random parking; and annual maintenance will be provided.

Land Ownership and Realty Actions
Private and state lands within the Recreation Area will be acquired through easement, exchange or purchase if there are willing sellers (see Section 6). BLM will exclude new rights-of-way unless needed for administering recreation sites.

Livestock Management
Manage livestock grazing on Allotments 603, 606, 608, 640 and 641 as described in the Allotment Management Plans in Table 3-4 (Rio Grande Corridor Plan). Grazing will be eliminated in the Loop Road area of Allotment 606 once vegetative treatments (partially completed) have restored grasslands to the southwest of Guadalupe Mountain.

Minerals
Maintain withdrawal from locatable mineral entry and mineral material disposal. Maintain the closure to oil and gas leasing on 5,000 acres (the developed rim areas); in the remainder of the Recreation Area, oil and gas


Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Rio Grande & Red Wild & Scenic Rivers
Rio Grande
Red River
Cerro
Questa
T29N
T28N
R11E
R12E
R13E
Map Area
Map 5-17
Wild Rivers Recreation Area
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles
Legend
Wild Rivers Rec. Area
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers
Roads
Surface Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service
Private
State
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

leases would be issued with a No Surface Occupancy stipulation.

Prehistoric and Historic Resources
Protect and interpret select prehistoric and historic sites within the recreation area by conducting a 100% class III inventory, excavating/interpreting select sites for visitors, and taking active steps to protect sites. Appropriate sites will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Public Education
Environmental education will be the primary method of developing user awareness and a sense of stewardship that will contribute to preserving the qualities of the recreation area.

Sufficient visitor information and regulatory signing will be provided to meet current and future needs while protecting scenic quality. Sign needs will be reviewed each year and new signing installed as required.

Displays at the Wild Rivers Visitor Center will be updated to describe geology, human settlement, wildlife and habitats, and resource management issues such as human manipulation of vegetation and use of fire as a management tool.

BLM will increase ranger patrols at La Junta Point to provide more contact with visitors, maintain self-guided nature trails, and install interpretive signing to orient the visitor and provide information on the rivers, watchable wildlife and habitats.

An entry sign will be installed at the main entrance to the Recreation Area to orient the visitor to the area's opportunities. As use increases, BLM will consider developing a small entry station to provide enhanced visitor services and collect fees.

An amphitheater was completed in 1988 near the visitor center to provide for an outdoor lecture area for quality programs for visitors and area residents.

Recreation
Supervision, maintenance and visitor services necessary to operate an efficient, safe and enjoyable Recreation Area will be provided throughout the year. A variety of hosted workers such as volunteers will continue to be used to supplement the work of paid staff.

Boating Management: Outfitted and private boater use will be managed under guidelines described in Chapter 4.

Casual Uses: All but the Guadalupe Mountain area will remain closed to hunting, trapping, and the discharge of firearms, in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Fishing: Commercial fishing access will be closed in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area on the Rio Grande from Chiflo downstream to Big Arsenic Trail. Fishing access will be enhanced along the Red River by upgrading the trail from the Red River Fish Hatchery downstream to the confluence with the Rio Grande. It will only be maintained to primitive standards, with construction limited to the use of hand tools and the minimum work necessary to define the trail. The trail system along the rivers will be maintained to provide access to the river and to disperse use.

Camping/Picnicking: All camping will take place in developed or designated sites or areas. BLM will meet user demand with the minimum number of well-designed campgrounds and campsites needed to accommodate motorized and non-motorized access. All facilities on the rim will be fully accessible. Existing campgrounds will be redesigned and expanded, although priority will be on maintenance of existing facilities over new construction. When redesign is called for, sites which block public access to the rim area or to trails will be relocated. Large RVs will be accommodated at El Aguaje campground. An overflow camping area will be designated, and additional campsites added when the expanded campgrounds reach 80% of their capacity during the high-use months of July and August (this threshold was reached in 1994 and 1995). No more than 15 additional sites will be added on the rim. The group campsite at El Aguaje campground will be expanded to accommodate 50 people. Three restrooms will be developed with showers if water rights are obtained.

Conflicts between day and overnight users will be addressed by clearly marking areas for day or overnight use. La Junta, Chawalauna and the visitor center are the primary day use areas. As needed, parking areas will be designated or constructed to separate day uses such as hiking from the developed campsites. Each campground will be kept to three acres or less, with capacity limits established to preserve opportunities for privacy. Additional picnic tables will be provided at Sheeps Crossing and Chiflo when they reach capacity at least half the time during the high use period of July and August.
In the river canyons, adequate camping opportunities will be provided without compromising the area's solitude. Campsites in the canyon will not exceed two per acre, no new shelters will be constructed, and shelters visible from rim viewpoints will be removed as they deteriorate, or repaired and relocated. A reservation system will be considered when use warrants.

Public water supplies, including springs, will be monitored in accordance with State water quality standards. Personnel will be certified to meet State water system operator requirements.

Trails: Hiking opportunities will be provided for those who do not wish to descend into the canyon, and

maintain the loop trail connecting the visitor center and all campgrounds/day-use sites.

Pack stock will only be allowed on Little Arsenic Trail and short portions of the River Trail as needed to access the Rio Grande.

Mountain bike trails have and will be developed where not in conflict with other trail uses. Signing, fencing and barriers will be installed/maintained as needed to control vehicle use. In 1992 the Rinconada Trail was constructed with funds provided by the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, and was widened in 1999 with additional funds from the same source.

BLM will construct the Pescado Trail from the Wild Rivers Visitor Center to the Red River Fish Hatchery, if trespass concerns of hatchery personnel can be mitigated.

The Ute Mountain, East Rim, Lee, Chiflo, Sheeps Crossing, Miners, Red River, and Manby Springs Trails, the river trail between the John Dunn Bridge and Manby Springs, and the Powerline Trail will be improved. Signs will be installed at all trailheads.

Scenic Quality
The wild segments of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers will be managed under Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines. VRM Class III will apply to the developed recreation sites (21 acres), and VRM Class II will apply to the remaining public lands in the Recreation Area (see page 2-xx for definitions).

To protect scenic quality, restrictions on use have been established, such as right-of-way exclusions and protective withdrawals (described above under Land Ownership). Scenic quality will be a primary consideration in facility design. There will be no new developments in the "loop area". Specifications for proposed structures will consider size, shape, materials, color and basic harmony with the existing landscape. Existing structures, such as the Federal Aviation Administration garage, will be repainted or relocated to meet visual requirements.

Watershed
Woodlands and shrub grasslands will be treated to promote forest and watershed health. Fire suppression and mechanical thinning will be limited to the methods least disturbing to soils and vegetation. Noxious weeds will be suppressed using methods deemed most effective for the particular species, but herbicides would be used only as a last resort.

Wildlife
Emphasize wildlife viewing as a principle use in the recreation area by promoting habitat improvement projects that will enhance the abundance and variety of wildlife in the area. Opportunities for the public to observe wildlife will be enhanced by controlling facility development, installing bird baths and nesting boxes in high use areas, and improving habitat for the reintroduction of selected species such as pronghorn and sage grouse. Such re-introductions will be in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. Fencing and creation of a wetland environment are the types of actions required to meet this objective.
Other wildlife-related actions to be taken include implementing the San Antonio-Pot Mountain habitat management plan; locating trails and other facilities to optimize wildlife viewing opportunities; avoiding development in sensitive wildlife habitats; expanding the no-hunting zone to include all but the west rim area; and limiting fuelwood and timber sales to those that will enhance wildlife habitat.

In the river canyons, BLM will manage the aquatic habitat to achieve the rivers' full potential for fisheries by conducting studies on minimal and optimum flows.

Parking or overnight use (including camping) will not be allowed within 300 feet of existing trailheads or trail descent points, as appropriate, to protect wildlife migration corridors and access routes to water. The BLM will install appropriate signs to inform users of the restriction. Restrictions on overnight use will not apply to the Raven or Powerline trailheads or to those on the east rim of the gorge within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area.

SECTION 6
LAND OWNERSHIP, ADJUSTMENTS & EASEMENT AQUISITIONS

This section lists proposed land ownership adjustment actions and easements needed to facilitate management of Bureau programs in the planning area. The actions are organized as follows: (A) state lands identified for acquisition, (B) private lands identified for acquisition, (C) BLM land identified for disposal (shown on maps 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 and 6-4), (D) a list of withdrawn public lands whose withdrawn statues has been reviewed 1983-1988, and (E) easements identified for acquisition where they are necessary.

A. State Lands Identified for Acquisition by Exchange

1. San Antonio Special Management Area

T29N, R8E	Sec. 2	
T29N, R9E	Sec. 36	
T29N, R10E	Secs. 16, 22(part), 32	
T29N, R11E	Sec. 16	
T30N, R8E	Sec. 36	
T30N, R9E	Secs. 16, 32(part), 36	
T30N, R11E	Sec. 32 (part)	
T31N, R8E	Sec. 2	
T31N, R9E	Sec. 16 (part)	
T32N, R8E	Sec. 36	
T32N, R9E	Sec. 32	

2. Wild Rivers Recreation Area

T29N, R12E	Secs. 16 (part), 32 (part)	
	Sec. 10	NW¼SW¼, Lot 5

3. Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern

T23N, R8E	Sec. 2	
T24N, R8E	Sec. 36	

4. Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern

T23N, R10E	Sec. 36	(part)
T23N, R11E	Sec. 2	N½
	Secs. 16, 32	
T24N, R11E	Sec. 36	

5. Orilla Verde Recreation Area

T24N, R11E	Sec. 2	NW¼, W½SW¼, NE¼SW¼
	Sec. 32	W½NW¼

6. Lower Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern

T23N, R10E	Sec 16	N½

7. Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

T31N, R11E	Sec. 2	W½SE¼
T30N, R12E	Sec. 7	E½SE¼
	Sec. 29	SW¼NW¼, W½W½SE¼
	Sec. 32	SW¼, S½NW¼, W½W½SE¼, W½W½NE¼

B. Private Lands Identified for Acquisition

1. San Antonio Special Management Area

T29N, R8E	Secs. 1, 11, 12 All	
T29N, R9E	Secs. 5, 6, 7 All	
	Sec. 8	W½ , S½SW¼, NW¼SE¼
	Sec. 12	W½, S½SE¼
	Sec. 13	W½
	Sec. 22	All
	Sec. 23	(part)
T29N, R10E	Sec. 17	S ½
	Secs. 18, 19, 21 All	
	Sec. 22	SW ¼
	Sec. 28	S½, W½NE¼, NW¼SE¼
	Sec. 30	All
	Sec. 32	S ½, W½NE¼, W½NW¼

2. Wild Rivers Recreation Area

T28N, R12E	Sec. 7	W ½
T29N, R12E	Sec. 18	NW¼SW¼
	Sec. 19	S½
	Sec. 30	NE¼, NE¼NW¼, SE¼NW¼, NW¼NW¼

3. Rio Chama Special Management Area

T26N, R2E	Sec. 9	Lots 1-4
T27N, R2E	Sec. 27	W½E½, N½NW¼ SE¼NW¼, SW¼
	Sec. 28	S½NW¼, SW¼, SE¼
	Sec. 33	W½

4. Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern

None listed

5. Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern

T23N, R11E	Sec. 17	All
	Secs. 17, 18, 19, 20	Patent #33276
	Sec. 20	that portion within Patent No. 33276
	Sec. 21	NW¼, SW¼, SE¼, N½NE¼
	Sec. 29	Patents #1018121 and #30820005

6. Lower Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern

T23N, R9E	Sec. 24	E½, SE¼NW¼, S½SW¼, Tr. A
	Sec. 23	Tr. A, SE¼, NE¼SW¼
	Sec. 34	SW¼SE¼, SE¼SW¼
T23N, R10E	Sec. 1	Lots 5, 6, SW¼SE¼
	Sec. 11	Lots 1, 2, 10, S½NE¼
	Sec. 12	Lots 1, 2
	Sec. 15	SW¼, SHC 4472 tr. 1 SHC 1109, SHC 4098 SHC 489 (149276) SHC 489 (149278) SHC 488 tr. 1, 2, SHC 488, SHC 2143
	Sec. 16	Lots 1, 2; SHC 966 tr. 6 SHC 2143, SHC 1536
	Sec. 19	Lots 3, 4, 13, 30, 31, 32, 34, 38 SHC 3266, SHC 388 SHC 969 SHC 561 tr. 1, 2, 3 SHC 559 tr. 1, 3 SHC 556 tr. 1, 2 SHC 560 tr. 1, 2, 3, 4 SHC 792 tr. 2 SHC 792 (182952) SHC 792 (181956) SHC 966, SHC 380 tr. 3 SHC 386, SHC 389 SHC 382 tr. 1, 2, 3 SHC 383, SHC 494 tr. 1 SHC 968 tr. 1, 2
	Sec. 20	Lots 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 SHC 1111 tr. 3 SHC 1120, SHC 4472 SHC 1536 SHC 801 tr. 1, 2, 3 SHC 1000 (181959) SHC 798 Boltou tr. SHC 798 Romero tr. SHC 1121 Borrego tr. SHC 1121 Archuleta tr. SHC 561 tr. 4 SHC 1121 Roybal tr. SHC 560 tr. 4 SHC 968 tr. 2 SHC 556 tr. 3 SHC 559 tr. 2
	Sec. 21	SHC 1536, SHC 4 SHC 1111 tr. 3 SHC 1120 (1128028) SHC 966 tr. 1, 2 SHC 349 (446), SHC 355 (457) SHC 402 (444), SHC 403 (443) SHC 488 (447), SHC 487 tr. 1 SHC 490 Romero tr. (450, 776673) SHC 487 Romero tr.(448) SHC 487 Ortega tr. SHC 2143 (181957)
T23N, R10E	Sec. 22	SHC 4098 (449) SHC 489 Sanchez tr. SHC 489 Romero tr. SHC 488 tr. 2 SHC 488 (181954) SHC 2143 Lot 1
T23N, R11E	Sec. 5	S½
	Sec. 6	tr. 4
	Sec. 8	N½
T24N, R22E	Sec. 32	SHC 5394 (477467) SHC 5298 tr. 3 SHC 5394 (477458) SHC 5292 tr. 2 SHC 5287 SHC 5345 tr. 1, 2, 3 SHC 5253 tr. 1, 2 SHC 5296 SHC 5299 tr. 1, 2 SHC 5347 tr. 4, 6 SHC 5286 tr. 2 SHC 5288 tr. 2 SHC 5346 SHC 5349 tr. 3 SHC 5291 tr. 2, 3 SHC 5348 tr. 2 SHC 5285 tr. 3, 4 SHC 5297 SHC 5293 tr. 1, 2, 3, 4

7. Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area

T21N, R10E	Sec. 33	(unsurveyed portion adjacent to pueblo)

8. Adjacent to Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

T25N, R11E	Sec. 23	N½NE¼, NW¼SE¼, SW¼NE¼
	Sec. 26	SE¼
T27N, R12E	Secs 30, 31 protracted (portion within Arroyo Hondo Grant from north rim to south rim & 100' setbacks)	

9. Orilla Verde Recreation Area

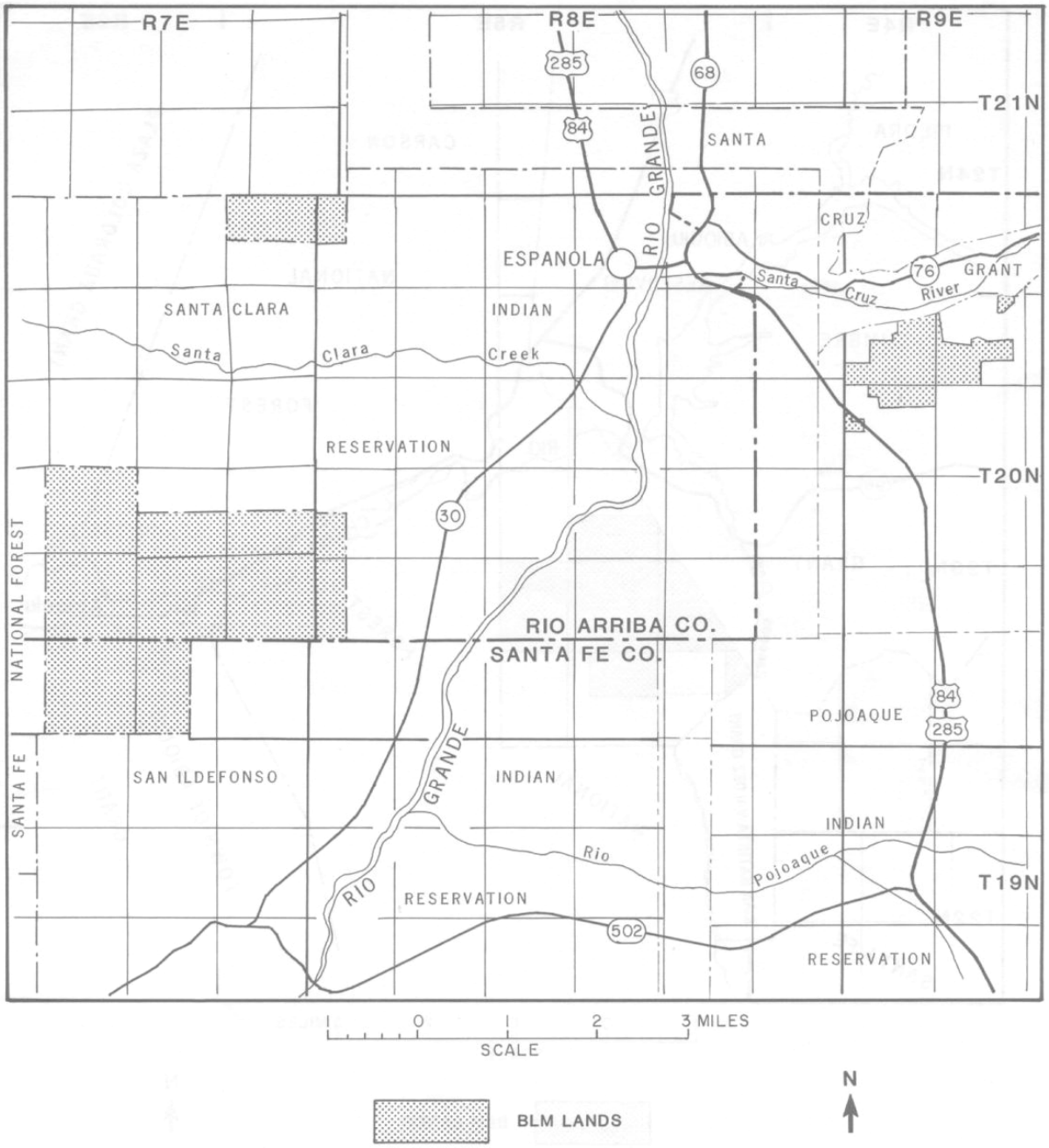
T24N, R 11E	Secs. 22, 23, 29 (parts) Secs. 1, 2, 10-15 (parts)

C. List of Public Withdrawals Reviewed 1983-1988

Withdrawal No.	Acres Reviewed	Agency	Acres Recommended for Revocation
NM 23682	17		0
NM 0557750	640	Corps of Engineers	300
NM 035384	560	Corps of Engineers	180
Note: This plan fully addresses the issues of land tenure adjustment in sufficient detail to adjust existing classifications and withdrawals and take other administrative action related to land-use allowances and restrictions. Land classification completed under the Classification & Multiple Use Act of 1964 will be modified, continued, or terminated to be consistent with the Plan as authorized by Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Withdrawals will be reviewed in accordance with the requirements of Section 204 of FLPMA and adjustments shall be made consistent with the needs of the withdrawing agency and within the guidelines of this Plan.			

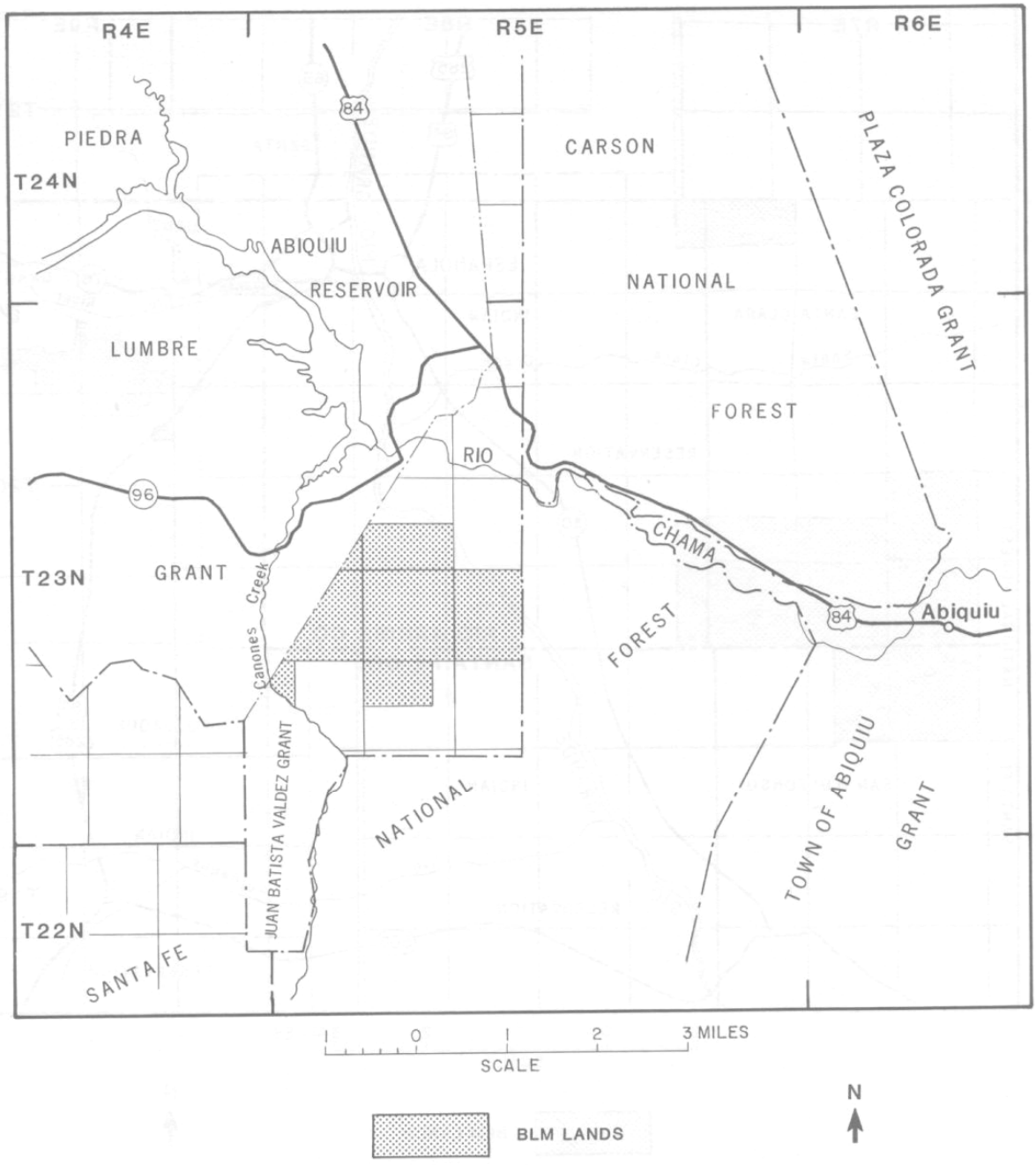
D. Easements Identified for Acquisition

La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern
Ku Pueblo Special Management Area
Sabinoso Special Management Area
San Lazaro Special Management Area



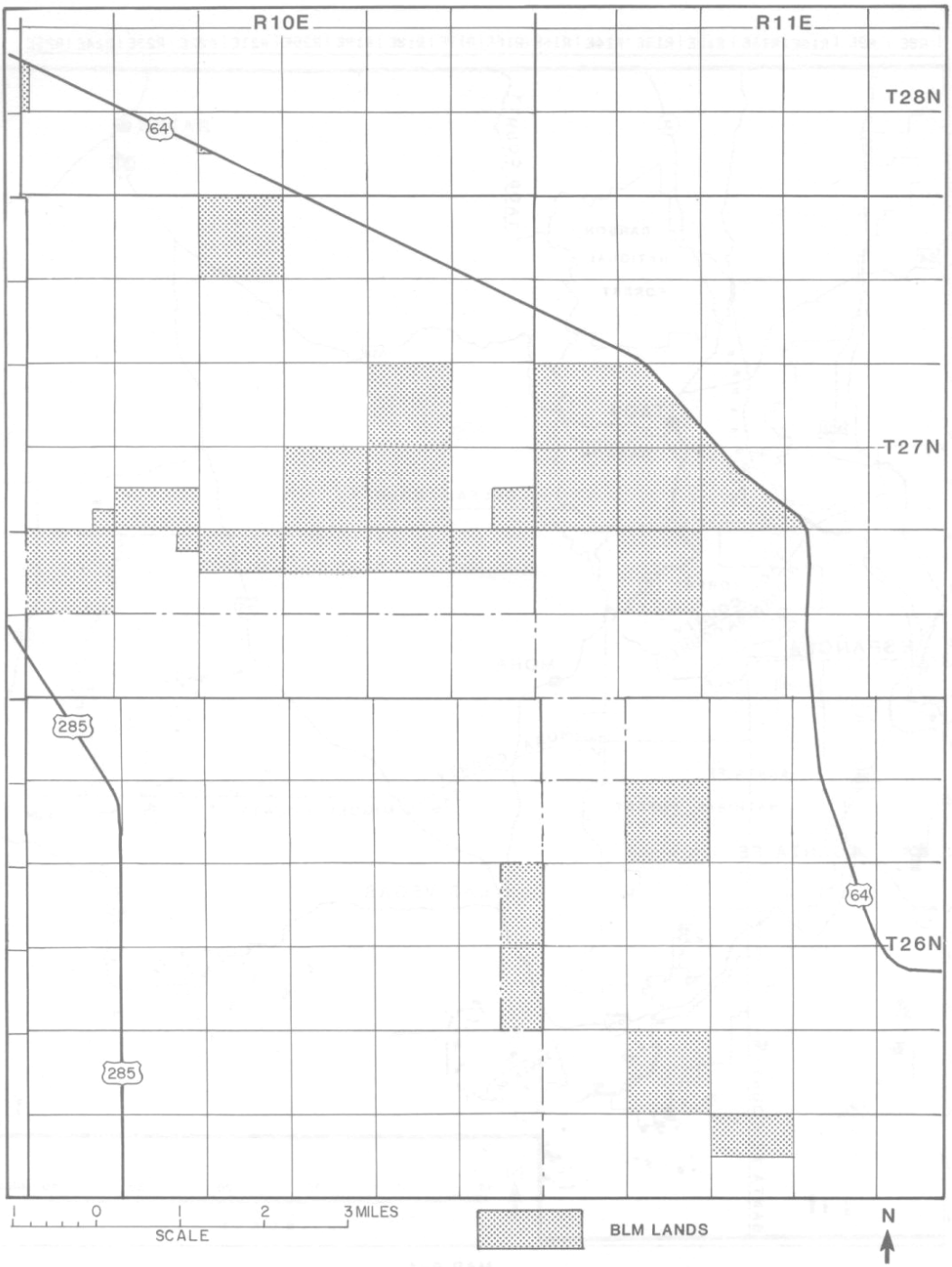
MAP 6-1

LANDS IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL

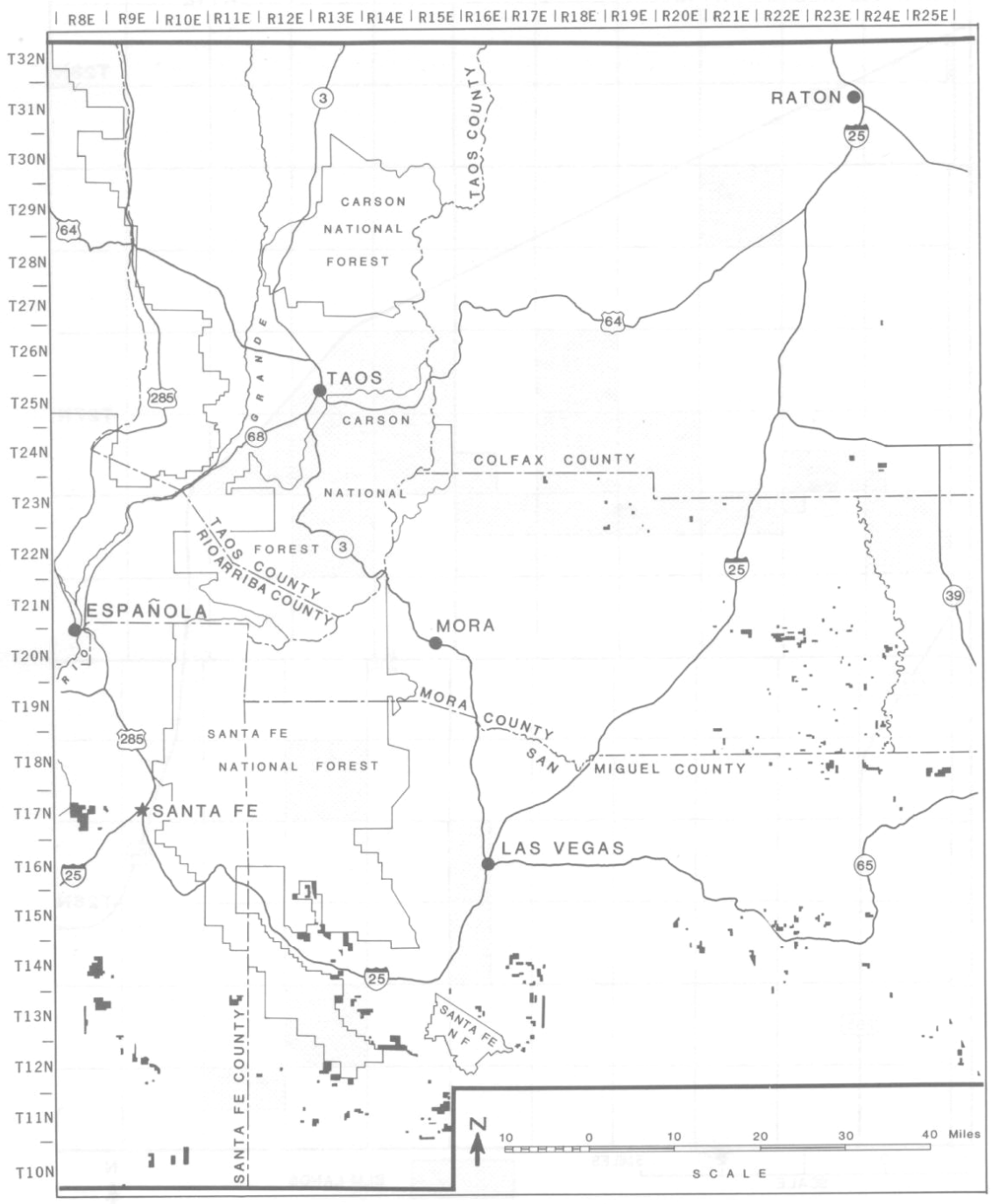


MAP 6-2

LANDS IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL



MAP 6-3
LANDS IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL



MAP 6-4

LANDS IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL

APPENDIX A
OIL & GAS STIPULATIONS

The Taos Resource Management Plan was amended in 1991 by the *Albuquerque District Resource Management Plan Amendment – Oil & Gas Leasing and Development.*

The following Uniform Format for Oil and Gas Stipulations was implemented by the Amendment in an effort to achieve standardization and uniformity.

I. Timing Limitation Stipulation

No surface use is allowed during the following time period (s). This stipulation does not apply to operation and maintenance of production facilities. Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes.

San Antonio Winter Range Area of Critical Environmental Concern: Protection of elk, deer, and pronghorn antelope winter ranges (December 1 – June 15).

II. Controlled Surface Use

Surface occupancy or use is subject to special constraints to protect the resources or values listed for each area, and would be developed when an Application for Permit to Drill is received.

A. San Antonio Special Management Area: Protection of wildlife habitat areas and scenic values.

B. Fun Valley Special Management Area: Protection of recreational, paleontological, and cultural resource values.

C. Sabinoso SMA: Protection of wildlife, riparian, and scenic values.

D. Black Mesa Special Management Area: Protection of threatened/endangered plant species.

E. Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Areas: Protection of riparian and associated watershed areas.

F. Ojo Caliente Area of Critical Environmental Concern: Protection of prehistoric and historic cultural sites.

G. Sombrillo Area of Critical Environmental Concern: Protection of paleontological and cultural values.

III. No Surface Occupancy

No Surface Occupancy or use is allowed on the lands described below (legal subdivision or other description), for the purpose of [as described below for each area]. Any change to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes.

A. The following SMAs/ACECs will have a No Surface Occupancy stipulation attached to leases issued within them for the protection of cultural, wildlife, and recreational values and uses.

1. Wild Rivers Recreation Area: Protection of recreation area adjacent to the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.
2. Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Area: Protection of recreation, cultural, and riparian and aquatic values.
3. San Antonio Special Management Area: Protection of wildlife, natural, and scenic values.

B. The following SMAs/ACECs will have a No Surface Occupancy Stipulation attached to leases issued within them for the protection of cultural values:

1. Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern – Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone
2. Sahiu Pueblo Special Management Area
3. Ku Pueblo Special Management Area
4. Ojo Del Zorro Pueblo Special Management Area
5. Pueblo Quemado Special Management Area
6. La Caja Pueblo Special Management Area
7. Pueblo Sarco Special Management Area
8. La Cienega Area of Critical Environmental Concern
9. San Lazaro Special Management Area

IV. No-Lease Areas

No mineral leasing will be allowed in the areas described below. This section lists discretionary and non-discretionary closures within the planning area.

1. Wild Rivers Recreation Area (5,000 acres in the developed rim area also withdrawn from mineral entry)

2. Orilla Verde Recreation Area

3. Lower Gorge Area of Critical Environmental Concern

4. San Antonio Wilderness Study Area

5. Rio Chama Special Management Area

6. Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River

7. Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area

8. Sabinoso Wilderness Study Area

9. Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River

10. Copper Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern (Agua Caliente and Rio Embudo Protection Zones)

APPENDIX B
RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM

Introduction

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS; BLM Manual 8320) provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation opportunity environments. As conceived, the ROS has application to *all* lands, regardless of ownership or jurisdiction.

Recreation opportunities, according to this system, can be expressed in terms of three principal components: the activity, the setting, and the experience. Possible mixes of activities, settings, and recreation experiences have been arranged along a spectrum, or continuum, ranging from 'primitive' to 'urban'.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Management Objectives

Primitive Zone
The primitive zone is managed to be essentially free from evidence of people, and from human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized vehicle use within the area is not permitted. The area is managed to maintain an extremely high probability of 'experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of others' (not more than 3-6 group encounters per day), as well as independence, closeness to nature, self-reliance through the application of backcountry skills, an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk.

Backcountry use levels and management of renewable resources are dependent on maintaining natural ecosystems and primitive experience levels. The consumption of renewable resources is subject to the protection of backcountry recreational values. Grazing is allowed, subject to restrictions placed on the uses of motorized vehicles. Recreational activities occurring in this zone include backpacking, hiking, camping, swimming, horseback riding, and nature study.

The frequency of BLM employees' contact with recreationists in this zone is very low.

Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized
These areas are managed to be largely free from the evidence of people, and human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized vehicle use is prohibited. Limited facilities for the administration of livestock and visitor use are allowed, but off-site administration is encouraged. Project designs should stress protection of natural resources. Areas are managed to maintain a good probability of experiencing minimum contact with others, self-reliance through the application of backcountry skills, and an environment that offers a degree of risk and challenge.

Backcountry use levels and management of renewable resources are dependent on maintaining ecosystems comparable to naturally-occurring ecosystems. The consumption of renewable resources is subject to the protection of backcountry recreational values. Grazing is allowed, subject to restrictions placed on the use of motorized vehicles. Facilities associated with grazing are limited to those necessary for maintaining existing numbers, adequate distribution, and seasons of use, consistent with Allotment Management Plans. Recreational activities occurring in this zone include climbing, backpacking, hiking, picnicking, viewing scenery, camping, horseback riding, and nature study.

The frequency of BLM employee contact with recreationists is low.

Semi-Primitive Motorized
Semi-primitive motorized areas are managed to provide a predominantly natural or naturally-appearing environment. Evidence of people and human restrictions and controls are present, but subtle. Motorized vehicle use is permitted. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. On-site interpretive facilities, low-standard roads and trails, trailheads, and singing should stress the natural environment in their design and should be the minimum necessary to achieve objectives.

The consumption of natural resources is allowed. In the review of mineral plans of operation, utility corridors, rights-of-way, and other surface-disturbing projects, effort is taken to reduce their impacts on the natural environment. Recreational activities occurring in this zone include car camping, OHV touring, backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, nature study, and viewing scenery.

The frequency of BLM employee contact with visitors is low- to-moderate on trails and primitive roads.

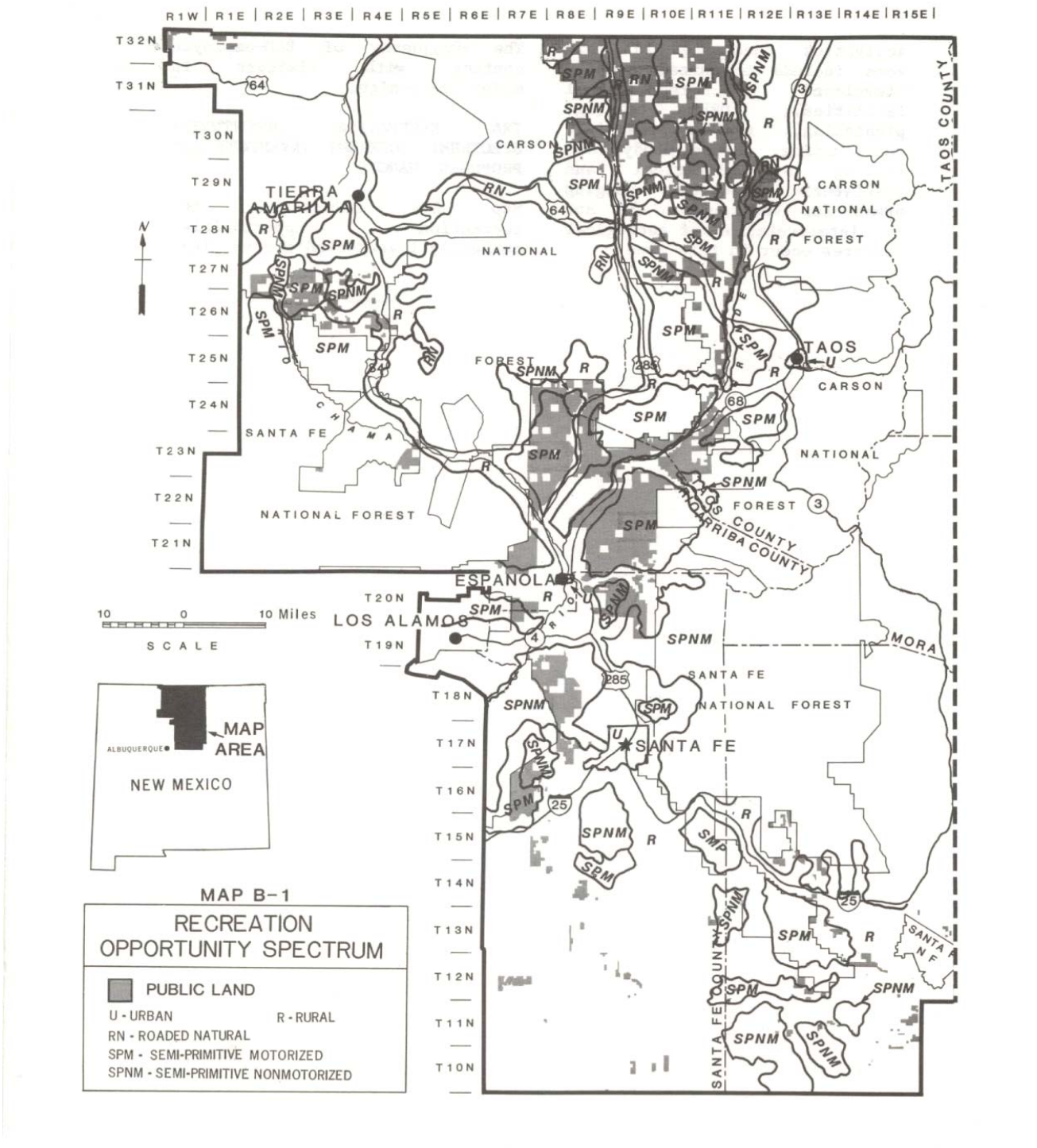
Roaded Natural
Roaded natural areas are managed to provide a naturally-appearing environment with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of people. Motorized use is permitted.

Concentration of users is moderate, with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and use practices are evident, but are in harmony with the natural environment. Development of facilities for motorized use is provided for in any proposed construction standards and design of facilities.

Placement of rights-of-way, utility corridors, management facilities, and other surface-disturbing activities would be favored in this zone over placement in primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized zones when applicable. The consumption of natural resources is allowed, except at any proposed or developed trailheads, developed recreation areas, and geological features interpreted as major themes. Recreational activities occurring in this zone include organized camping (developed recreational facilities), OHV touring, picnicking, trailer camping, rockhounding, nature study, and viewing of historic prehistoric resources. Staging areas for backcountry use and for interpretation of geological features occur in this zone.

The frequency of BLM employee contact with visitors is moderate to high.

Map B-1
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum



APPENDIX C
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Introduction

A total of 22 Access Tracts were identified in the inventory phase. During the initial interdisciplinary team evaluation, additional access was identified as a high priority need in five tracts, moderate need in seven tracts, and a low priority in ten tracts. These were consolidated into ten tracts, as shown on map C-1. Table C-1 shows the priority ranking for the tracts, with Tract 1 having the highest priority and Tract 10 the lowest.

Detailed transportation plans will be developed and implemented for each access tract based on the priority of the tract; those tracts with a high priority rating will be completed first.

Road Standards and Implementation Procedures

Hundreds of miles of roads located on public lands within the planning area are subject to BLM jurisdiction. As a general rule, these road systems are adequately designed and are maintained to serve their intended purpose. However, there are many roads which have been improperly constructed and maintained, and which thereby contribute to erosion.

Road standards and implementation procedures will be in accordance with BLM engineering standards. Although most recent road construction and/or improvement activity in the planning area relates to private land development, these road standards were developed to apply to all resource development, management, and protection related activities.

Implementation of road standards will involve the following steps for *existing roads*:

1. Inventory including identification of roads that do not meet Bureau Manual 9113 standards;

2. Functional classification of existing roads that would comprise a logical transportation network for public land management;

3. Contact with resource users to determine which roads are needed;

4. Assign road maintenance or rehabilitation responsibility to BLM or other parties, where appropriate;

5. Initiate appropriate action to begin bringing substandard roads to Bureau standards and specification; and

6. Abandon and reclaim unneeded roads.

All new roads constructed in the planning area will be formally authorized, constructed and maintained in accordance with the BLM Manual 9113 and road standards described in this final policy.

New road development standards will be implemented as follows:

1. Applications for new construction must contain adequate information to enable BLM to determine proposed location and assign a functional classification;

2. Adjudication of the application will include an environmental assessment which will determine if the proposed road complies with Resource Management Plan decisions, and if a reroute is needed; and

3. Authorization, which includes standards and/or specifications for design and construction of the road(s), assignment of maintenance responsibility and future reclamation requirements that would apply when the road is abandoned; or denial of the application.

The following extract from BLM Manual 9113 explains the purpose of functional classification of road systems, which will be implemented by BLM in the planning area:

Functional Classification
The method and terminology recommended by the National Highway Functional Classification Study of 1968 provides guidelines for classifying Bureau roads. The Bureau has added resource roads as a category in addition to those identified in the 1968 study (as recommended by an interagency task group study on low-volume road standards, 1976-77). As Bureau roads are predominantly low-volume and are generally extensions of, or connectors to State or county systems, an 'arterial' category does not apply to Bureau roads.

Bureau roads are classified as follows:

1. Collector Roads These roads normally provide primary access to large blocks of land, and connect with or are extensions of a public road system. Collector roads accommodate mixed traffic and serve many uses. They generally receive the highest volume of traffic of all the roads in the Bureau road system. User costs, safety, comfort, and travel time are primary road

management considerations. Collector roads usually require application of the highest standards used by the Bureau. As a result, they have the potential for creating substantial environmental impacts and often require complex mitigation procedures.

2. Local Roads These roads normally serve a smaller area than collectors, and connect to collectors or public road systems. Local roads receive lower volumes, carry fewer traffic types, and generally serve fewer uses. User cost, comfort, and travel time are secondary to construction and maintenance cost considerations. Low volume local roads in mountainous areas, where operating speed is reduced by terrain, may be single lane roads with turnouts. Environmental impacts are reduced as steeper grades, sharper curves and lower design speeds than would be permissible on collector roads are allowable.

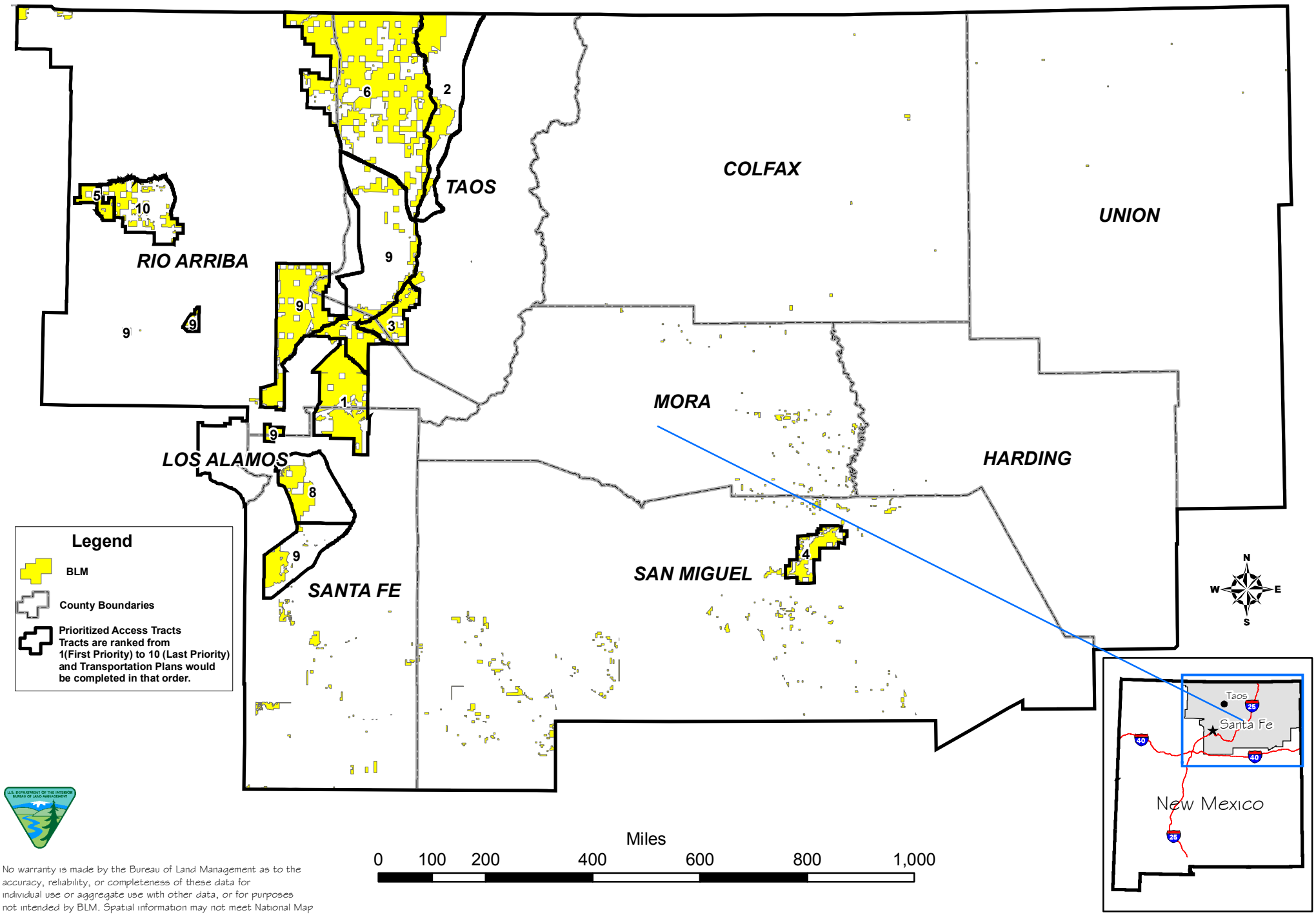
3. Resource Roads These roads normally are spur roads that provide point access and connect to local or collector roads. They carry very low volume and accommodate only one or two types of use. Use restrictions are applied to prevent conflicts between users needing the road and users attracted to the road. The location and design of these roads are governed by environmental compatibility and minimizing Bureau costs, with minimal consideration for user costs, comfort, or travel time.

BLM road policy in BLM Manual 9113 states that road standards may be modified to meet local situations. The major modifications which have been incorporated in these local standards are: 1) design by a professional engineer will only be required for high standard (collector) roads or construction in mountainous or steep terrain; 2) establishment of local policies regarding temporary and primitive subclass roads within the 'resource' functional classification; and 3) the Field Manager may authorize vehicles to drive across country without blading or use primitive roads in dry weather. In some cases there may be minor blading of brush required with the blade three to four inches above natural ground line. This is a temporary type road with intermittent or one-time access. If it is closed after use, water bars and other drainage will be constructed. Primitive roads are existing two-track roads that are created by vehicle traffic and for which there are not any engineering standards. In all cases, drainage control will be required to prevent erosion.

Table C-1
Access Tracts

Priority	Tract
1	Copper Hill, El Palacio
2	Wild Rivers
3	Pilar area
4	Sabinoso SMA
5	West of Rio Chama
6	North Unit (Taos Plateau)
7	Ojo Caliente
8	Buckman area
9	Scattered tracts: Carson area, La Cienega, Espanola area, Ojo Caliente
10	East of Rio Chama

Taos Field Office
Prioritized Access Tracts
Map D-1



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