

Chapter 2: Description of the Alternatives

This chapter presents the process used to formulate resource management alternatives, the alternatives considered in detail, the alternatives eliminated from detailed study, and a summary comparison of the alternatives and their impacts at Steinaker Reservoir. The three alternatives considered in detail are described, beginning with the No Action Alternative (expected future conditions based on current and historical resource management). The two action alternatives were designed to provide a broad spectrum of management options. One action alternative would emphasize conservation of resources; the other would emphasize recreational development. The names of the alternatives reflect the emphasis they represent.

Process Used to Formulate Alternatives

Alternatives for the Steinaker Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP) Environmental Assessment (EA) were formulated through a systematic process using public input, technical information, interdisciplinary discussions, and professional judgment. The process began with consideration of the RMP Issue Statements and the RMP Goals and Objectives (Chapter 1 and Appendix A), in addition to recommendations and comments from public scoping activities.

In February and April 2012, the Steinaker Reservoir Resource Management Planning Work Group (PWG) and the Steinaker Reservoir RMP/EA Interdisciplinary Project Team (Project Team) convened to formulate the RMP alternatives. The Project Team developed two RMP alternatives, ranging from emphasizing conservation of resources to emphasizing recreational development, and presented these alternatives to the PWG. The alternatives were then presented to the public at a Public Workshop held in Vernal, Utah, in April 2012 and in a project newsletter (RMP Newsletter Volume 2). The public was asked to comment on the range of preliminary alternatives as part of the EA process. Based on public and participating agency input, the Project Team made appropriate revisions to the preliminary alternatives.

Land-Use Categories

To facilitate development of the RMP alternatives, several “land-use categories” were defined to help describe present and future management strategies for different portions of Steinaker Reservoir and its associated lands (Study Area). Land-use categories are used to facilitate understanding and consistency between land management agencies. These land-use categories are described in the following paragraphs.

Land-Use Category 1: Developed Overnight Recreation Area

Developed Overnight Recreation Areas may contain improved recreational campsites with some or all utilities (e.g., water and electricity). They may have paved or gravel road systems and recreational vehicle dump stations. Campsites may be designated, leveled, and have tables and grills. Restrooms may be developed with water or they may be vault- or chemical-type toilets. The Steinaker State Park Campground is an example of a Developed Overnight Recreation Area.

Land-Use Category 2: Developed Day Use Recreation Area

Developed Day Use Recreation Areas contain improved recreational picnic sites, and utilities (e.g., water and electricity) may be available. Access roads are either paved or have an improved gravel surface. Picnic sites with tables, grills, and shelters may be provided. Some areas contain restrooms with water; others have vault toilets. An example of a Developed Day Use Recreation Area is the Steinaker State Park beach area.

Land-Use Category 3: Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area

Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Areas contain improved recreational camp and picnic sites designed to accommodate a large recreational group. Designated sites are paved and contain picnic tables, grills, shelters, water, and restrooms with water or vault toilets. An example of a Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area is the Steinaker State Park group use reservation area.

Land-Use Category 4: Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area

Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Areas consist of unimproved day-use recreational areas that may or may not have vault toilets and are accessible either by road or by boat. Activities in these areas may include picnicking, fishing, hiking, beach combing, etc. An example of an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area is the Eagle Ridge Trail at Steinaker Reservoir.

Land-Use Category 5: Administrative Area

Administrative Areas are set aside for management headquarters. Public access to Administrative Areas may be restricted. Administrative Areas include State Park offices, storage areas, and maintenance equipment. An example of an Administrative Area is the Steinaker Reservoir administrative offices and maintenance facilities area.

Land-Use Category 6: Primary Jurisdiction Area

The Primary Jurisdiction Area is set aside for dam operation and maintenance. For the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, public access to this area and recreational uses (including trail use) are not permitted unless approved by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Uintah Water Conservancy District (UWCD). Examples of a Primary Jurisdiction Area are the Steinaker dam and inflow facility areas.

Land-Use Category 7: Reservoir Inundation Area

The Reservoir Inundation Area delineates the extent of the reservoir at full pool. Permanent recreational facilities (with the exception of water-based facilities), administrative facilities, camping, and the use of motor vehicles are not permitted in this area. Recreational activities (e.g., dispersed day use) may be allowed during periods of low water levels.

Land-Use Category 8: Natural Area

Natural Areas contain important natural, historical, or cultural features (e.g., wildlife habitat, fossils, and archaeological sites) and/or are generally undeveloped areas in which public use is discouraged or limited to appropriate nonmotorized activities. In addition, access to these areas may be temporally restricted. These areas may include limited and appropriate facilities for low-impact recreation and interpretation of natural, historical, and cultural resources. There are currently no designated Natural Areas at Steinaker Reservoir.

Recreational Development Suitability

Development suitability within the Study Area was determined by the location of sensitive physical, natural, and cultural resource constraints that would limit future recreational facility developments and/or uses. These sensitive resource factors may constrain the ability to accommodate development in a particular area. As such, the recreational development suitability analysis for the Study Area also considered the resource constraints, facility capacities, and desired visitor experiences. For resource constraints, development suitability is influenced by the ability of the existing resources (i.e., physical, biological, and cultural resources) within the Study Area to accommodate different types of development and land uses.

Figure 2-1 illustrates areas considered both suitable and unsuitable for recreational development within the Study Area. As shown in the figure, factors used to determine these areas included:

- Slopes with greater than 20 percent steepness
- 50-foot stream channel buffers
- Important vegetation types (riparian and wetland vegetation communities)

All RMP alternatives include provisions for developing facilities only on lands determined to be suitable for such uses. In addition to consideration of these suitability factors, detailed site analysis would need to be conducted whenever specific development is proposed. Other suitability factors to be considered in site-specific analysis would include: cultural and archaeological sites, geologic hazards (e.g., rock fall areas), areas open for shotgun and archery hunting, and soil conditions that would be poor for building foundations or septic systems. Chapter 3 provides additional descriptions of each of these resource constraint factors.

Alternatives Considered in Detail

The three alternatives considered in detail are described below, beginning with the No Action Alternative, which provides a baseline for comparison. The two remaining “action” alternatives (i.e., Alternatives B and C, which prescribe a change in current resource management) have been developed and evaluated in detail and were designed to provide a broad spectrum of options.

Alternative B has a resource conservation emphasis and Alternative C has a recreational development emphasis.

Details of each alternative are divided into the five categories established by the Issue Statements and Goals and Objectives (see Chapter 1 and Appendix A). To facilitate evaluations of how the proposed changes would differ from the current management situation at the Study Area, each action alternative is presented for comparison with the No Action Alternative (Alternative A). Table 2-1 highlights the differences between alternatives in terms of acreages allocated to each of the eight land-use categories.

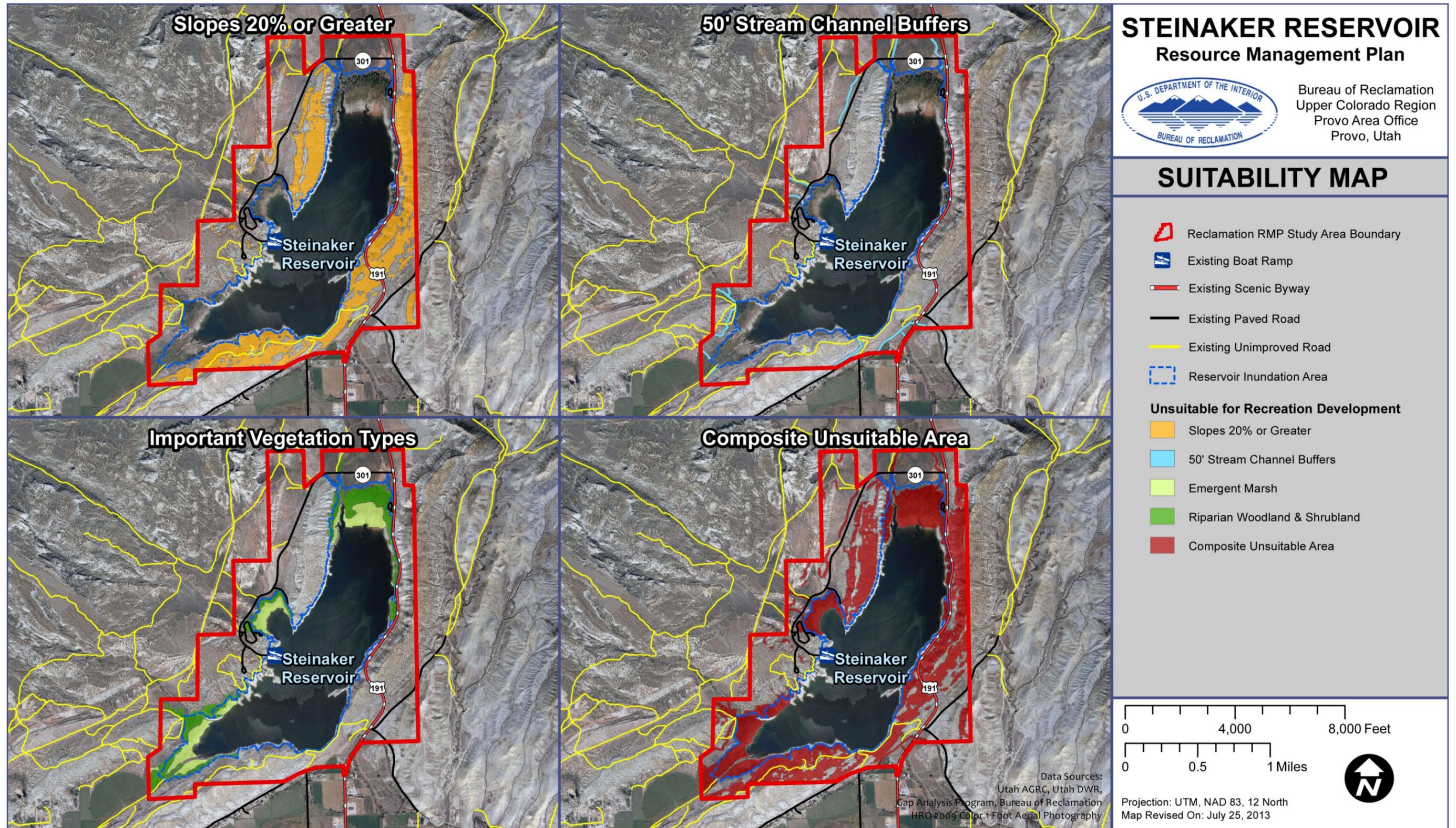


Figure 2-1. Recreation Development Suitability Map for the Steinaker Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Table 2-1. Acres of Study Area Lands in Land-Use Categories by Project Alternative.

LAND-USE CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
	NO ACTION	RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
Developed Day Use Recreation Area	10.4	10.4	27.1
Developed Overnight Recreation Area	13.9	13.9	18.7
Developed Day Use and Overnight Group Recreation Area	2.4	2.4	7.5
Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area	889.7	113.5	537.6
Natural Area	-	775.6	325.0
Administrative Area	4.9	4.9	4.9
Primary Jurisdiction Area	135.4	135.4	135.4
Reservoir Inundation Area	824.0	824.0	824.0
Total Acres^a	1,880.1	1,880.1	1,880.1

^a Acreages within categories may not add to total acres due to rounding.

Alternative A: No Action

The No Action Alternative (Figure 2-2) maintains existing recreation development areas without expansion beyond existing disturbances. No new recreational facility site development would occur, but facility upgrades and site redesign would be completed as needed and as funding becomes available. Public information programs and interpretive opportunities are included in this alternative. Activities that help to clarify management policy and minimize resource degradation are also included. Consistent with existing use, the majority of Study Area lands (889.7 acres) are designated as Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Areas (Table 2-1). These lands would be managed much as they are currently.

Alternative A: Area-Wide Management

Partnerships The various partnerships that exist between state and federal agencies through statutes, regulations, and agreements would continue under Alternative A. The Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation (State Parks) would continue to manage recreation activities and provide law enforcement at Steinaker Reservoir. When necessary, Uintah County would continue to provide additional law enforcement and fire protection support to State Parks. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) would continue to manage fish and wildlife resources within the Study Area. Reclamation would work to formalize and continue any existing partnerships that have not been formalized to establish roles and commitments of resources from respective management entities.

Water Resources Water operations, managed by UWCD, would continue as normal under the No Action Alternative. Maintaining water quality is important for meeting designated beneficial uses of water at Steinaker Reservoir. Under the No Action Alternative, water quality would continue to be monitored by the Utah Division of Water Quality (UDWQ). Reclamation and UWCD would continue to coordinate with UDWQ to monitor potential contaminants, bacteria, and viruses that would pose threats to aquatic life and human health. Any site redesign of

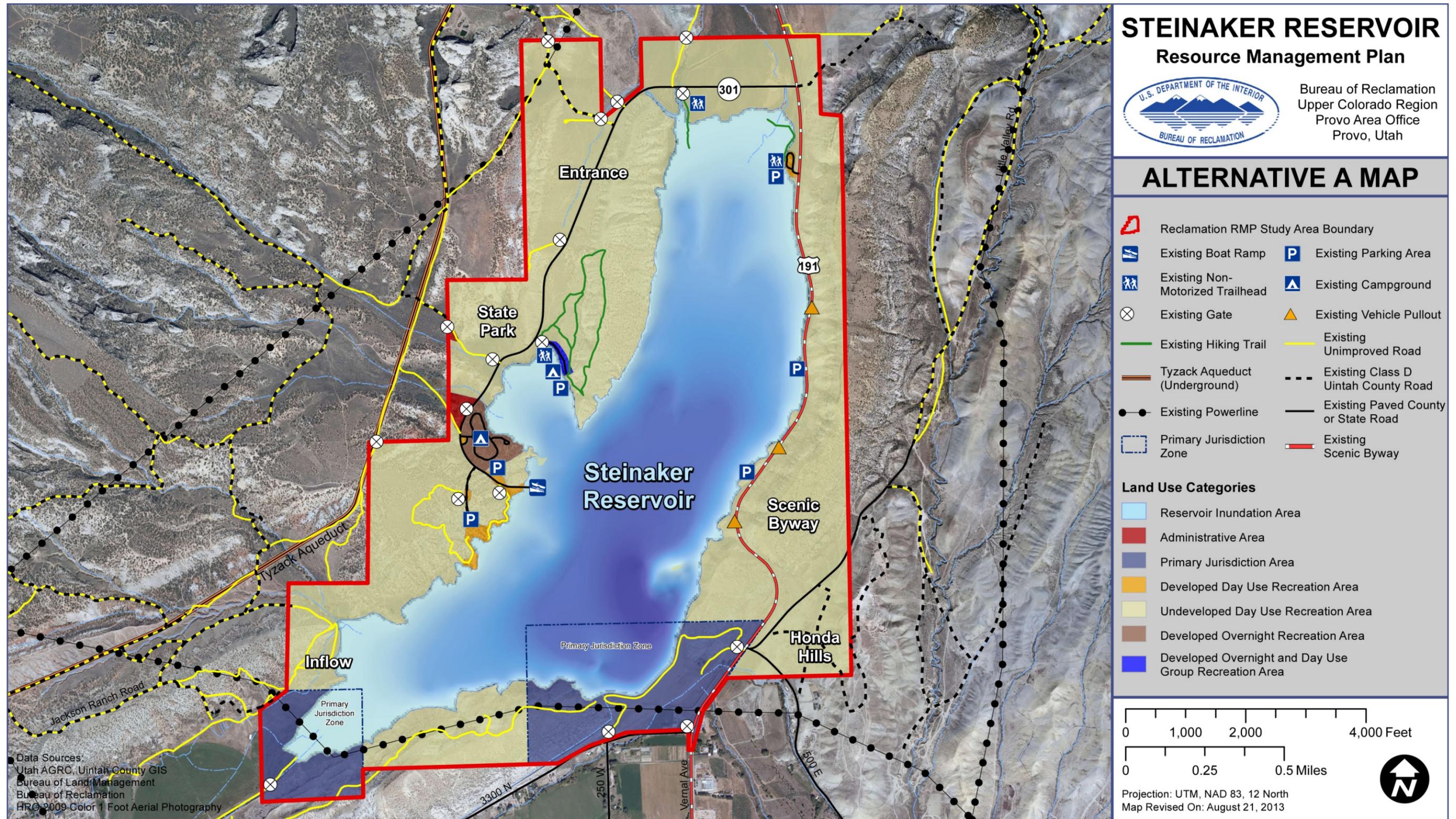


Figure 2-2. No Action Alternative A Map for the Steinaker Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP).

existing recreation facilities would need to incorporate adequate sanitation facilities to prevent water contamination in Steinaker Reservoir. Existing site redesign or facility rehabilitation would also incorporate improved stormwater control design elements.

Recreation and Visual Resources Under the No Action Alternative, existing Developed Day Use and Developed Overnight Recreation Areas would be maintained at their current sizes and locations. The number of developed campsites (31) would remain the same. Site redesign or rehabilitation of existing recreation facilities would be implemented, based on needs and available funding as determined by State Parks and Reclamation. However, no new recreation development sites would be proposed or developed under this alternative. Reclamation would evaluate consistency with visual quality management objectives in the renovation and redesign of existing recreation facilities.

State Parks would continue to be responsible for identifying and enforcing recreation capacities for both land- and water-based recreation, identifying appropriate recreational use areas for various activities, and managing user conflicts. Some programs would likely be implemented as funding becomes available; these would include interpretive displays and improved access for persons with disabilities.

By regulation 43 CFR § 420.2, Reclamation lands are closed to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, except where specifically designated as open and in accordance with a public process specified in § 420.21. Further, § 420.25 states that Reclamation lands managed by non-federal entities (such as State Parks) will be administered in a manner consistent with all applicable non-federal laws and regulations (including operation of OHVs).

State of Utah legal code also states that currently registered OHVs may be operated on public land, trails, streets, or highways that are posted by sign or designated by map or description as open to OHV use by the controlling federal, state, county, or municipal agency (Utah Code 41-22-10.1(1)). At the present time, State of Utah administrative rules (R651-411-2(2)) specify that OHVs may be used to access ice fishing areas at Steinaker Reservoir from the State Park boat ramp. Under Alternative A, Reclamation would officially designate that use under the federal regulation, but would not designate any other areas, roads, or trails open to public OHV use at Steinaker Reservoir.

Natural and Cultural Resources Currently, Reclamation and partner agencies provide erosion control, revegetation, and road and parking area maintenance throughout the Study Area, as necessary. Under the No-Action Alternative, necessary maintenance activities would continue to be performed; however, no comprehensive plans would be developed for habitat management or integrated pest management. Reclamation would rely upon UDWR to continue to manage the fishery and wildlife within the Study Area, and to monitor and prevent introduction of aquatic invasive species and pathogens. No special efforts would be implemented to enhance the fishery, fishing opportunities, or wildlife habitat.

Consistent with federal and state laws and regulations, cultural and paleontological sites would continue to be protected from the unauthorized collection and excavation of artifacts and all other ground-disturbing activities. The level of protection of cultural and paleontological sites

and scenic quality would be the same as at present; however, impacts to sites would likely increase as use of the Study Area increases. Under Alternative A, these conditions would continue.

Land Management Reclamation and its partners would continue to evaluate access and access controls and recommend improvements as needed. No new trails or trailhead facilities would be developed. Public access along U.S. Route 191 (US-191) would remain similar to the current conditions. Reclamation and State Parks would work with Uintah County to manage OHV use within the Study Area in accordance with State and County laws. For purposes of the RMP, an unimproved road is defined as a road that does not have a paved or gravel surface and is irregularly maintained or not maintained. At Steinaker Reservoir, there are currently a number of user-created unimproved roads that are not designated as county roads and that are not used for administrative access purposes. With Alternative A, none of the user-created unimproved roads would be actively decommissioned; however, boundary fencing, gates, and cattle guards would be installed, maintained, or upgraded as needed.

Reclamation would determine the appropriate uses for borrow pit areas, identify mineral rights for Reclamation lands, and coordinate with appropriate entities managing surrounding lands regarding any potential indirect effects to Reclamation lands and the reservoir.

Alternative A: Specific Area Management

The Study Area has been divided into seven management areas based upon natural resource features, land management, recreational activities, and existing facilities. The management areas are displayed on Figure 1-3 and are described below and shown on Figure 2-2.

State Park Area This area is designated as having Administrative, Developed Day Use Recreation, Developed Overnight Recreation, Developed Overnight and Day Use Group, and Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Areas. Under Alternative A, State Parks would continue to maintain this area as necessary. Facilities would be upgraded or redesigned as needed but not expanded beyond existing disturbance areas. Facility upgrades/additions that were being implemented at the initiation of the RMP planning process include a boat trailer parking expansion and an accessible fishing pier located near the existing boat ramp. These facilities are included with Alternative A.

Entrance Area Consistent with existing use, the Entrance Area would be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area under Alternative A. Existing parking, hiking, and OHV access trails would be maintained as necessary.

Scenic Byway Area Consistent with existing use, the Scenic Byway Area would be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use and Developed Day Use Recreation Area under Alternative A. Existing parking, restroom, and hiking trails would be maintained as necessary. No additional developed trails or improved parking areas would be proposed by Reclamation.

Honda Hills Area Consistent with existing use, the Honda Hills Area would be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area under Alternative A. At present, portions of the Honda Hills Area are informally used as an OHV riding area. Under Alternative A, areas currently used

for OHV riding could be designated as open to that use; however, no new facilities would be proposed by Reclamation.

Primary Jurisdiction Area Management of the Primary Jurisdiction Area would be the same under any RMP alternative. The Primary Jurisdiction Area is set aside for operation and maintenance of the dam and feeder canal facilities. It is not open to access for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Permitted access and use of this area would be determined by Reclamation and UWCD.

Inflow Area Consistent with existing use, the Inflow Area would be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area under Alternative A. No new facilities are proposed by Reclamation.

Reservoir Inundation Area Management of the Reservoir Inundation Area would be the same under any RMP Alternative. State Parks has determined that Steinaker Reservoir has a maximum boat-carrying capacity of 70 boats; however, existing parking areas can only accommodate approximately 40 boat trailers at a given time. A planned boat parking expansion would increase the parking capacity to a maximum of about 60 boat trailers (M. Murray 2012a, pers. comm.). State Parks would continue to maintain the current maximum boat-carrying capacity of 70 boats, reducing this number as necessary to compensate for reservoir water level fluctuations and available parking, and to promote public health and safety. Reclamation would allow the public to use OHVs to access ice fishing areas from the boat ramp as conditions permit and in accordance with existing State of Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2). State Parks would be responsible to manage this use.

Alternative B: Resource Conservation Emphasis

The emphasis of Alternative B is conservation, protection, and enhancement of natural and cultural resources. Some improvements to existing recreational facilities, such as utility upgrades and facility redesigns, are included. Additions to facilities would include improvements to existing managed and maintained roads and development of facilities that either improve environmental quality in the area or inform the public about regulations and expectations of resource protection. Coordination with surrounding property owners and jurisdictions would be explored in order to assure that surrounding land uses are compatible with and complementary to the conservation theme.

In terms of land use (Table 2-1), Alternative B would designate 775.6 acres as Natural Area. Locations of these land-use designations are illustrated in Figure 2-3. The amount of Study Area lands devoted to developed recreation, administrative, reservoir inundation, and primary jurisdiction under Alternative B would be the same as described for Alternative A. Consistent with the conservation emphasis of Alternative B, Natural Areas would be primarily managed for wildlife habitat and to preserve natural and cultural resource features. Day-use recreation consistent with these objectives would continue to occur in these areas.

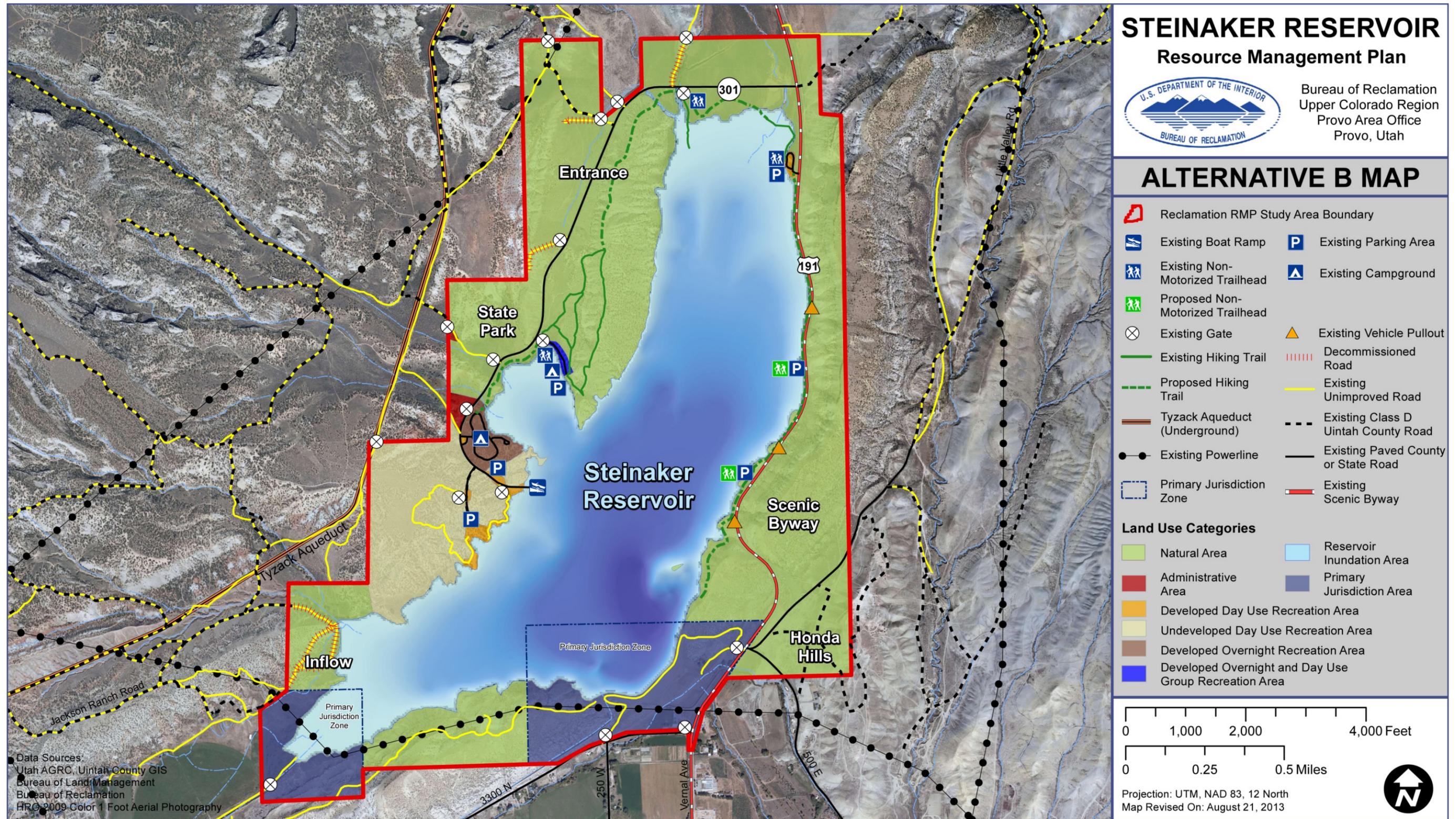


Figure 2-3. Resource Conservation Emphasis Alternative B Map for the Steinaker Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Lands surrounding the existing State Park facilities, approximately 113.5 acres, would continue to be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area. Due to proximity to developed facilities, these areas already have a significant amount of day use such as off-trail hiking. These areas would remain open for day use but developed facilities would not be expanded.

Alternative B: Area-Wide Management

Partnerships The various partnerships that exist between State and Federal agencies through statutes, regulations, and agreements would continue under Alternative B. State Parks would continue to manage recreation activities and provide law enforcement. When necessary, Uintah County would continue to provide additional law enforcement support to State Parks as well as fire protection for the Study Area. The UDWR would continue to manage fish and wildlife resources within the Study Area. Reclamation would need to expand existing partnerships or pursue new ones to achieve Alternative B planning objectives. Reclamation would work to formalize and continue any existing partnerships that have not been formalized to establish roles and commitments of resources from respective management entities.

Reclamation would pursue additional partnerships with Uintah County, Vernal City, UDWR, U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Scenic Byways Program, and other entities to facilitate best management of study area resources. Reclamation would consider contracts with qualified private concessioners for provision of specific public recreation facilities and/or activities and would consider formal partnerships with private nonprofit recreation user groups for provision and maintenance of specific public recreation facilities and/or activities.

Water Resources Water operations, managed by UWCD, would continue as normal under Alternative B. Any site redesign or rehabilitation of existing recreation facilities would need to incorporate adequate sanitation facilities to prevent water contamination in Steinaker Reservoir. Site redesign or facility rehabilitation would also incorporate improved stormwater control design elements. Reclamation would identify water quality impacts originating in Steinaker Reservoir and suggest ways to meet beneficial use designations. Under Alternative B, water quality would continue to be monitored by UDWQ. Reclamation and the UWCD would continue to coordinate with UDWQ to monitor potential contaminants, bacteria, and viruses that would pose threats to aquatic life and human health.

Recreation and Visual Resources Under Alternative B, Developed Day Use Recreation Areas and Developed Overnight Recreation Areas would be maintained at their current sizes and locations. The number of designated campsites (31) would remain the same under Alternative B. Site redesign or rehabilitation of existing recreation facilities would be implemented, based on needs and available funding as determined by State Parks and Reclamation. Reclamation would evaluate consistency with visual quality management objectives in the renovation and redesign of existing recreation facilities.

There is an existing need to expand and link existing hiking trails within the Study Area and to provide a trail along US-191 for fishing access. These facilities would be consistent with Alternative B land-use designations and have been included in the alternative as illustrated in Figure 2-2. Alternative B does not include any additional buildings, picnic areas, campsite areas, OHV riding areas, or trailheads.

State Parks would continue to be responsible for identifying and enforcing recreation capacities for both land-and water-based recreation, identifying appropriate recreational use areas for various activities, and managing user conflicts. Some programs would likely be implemented as funding becomes available; these would include installing interpretive displays and providing improved access for persons with disabilities.

Under Alternative B, Reclamation would allow public OHV access to the Reservoir Inundation Area for ice fishing from the State Park Area boat ramp, as conditions permit and in accordance with existing Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2). State Parks would be responsible to manage this use. Reclamation would also coordinate with the appropriate management entities regarding potential OHV use on designated state and county roads, or portions thereof, within the Study Area. However, Reclamation would not propose any new developed OHV trailhead facilities under Alternative B. Additionally, an existing informal OHV riding area (Honda Hills Area) would be closed to that use, consistent with the conservation emphasis of Alternative B.

Natural and Cultural Resources With Alternative B, management of the Study Area would focus on conservation of natural and cultural resources. For example, Reclamation would encourage and work with the UDWR to develop a Fishery Management Plan that would seek to enhance recreational fishing opportunities where feasible within existing reservoir operating criteria and a Habitat Management Plan that would seek to conserve viable wildlife habitat where feasible using management strategies to protect wildlife values. In developing these plans Reclamation and its partners would also consider plantings of native plant species that are beneficial aquatic plants in vegetated shallows and shrubs and trees along shorelines and riparian areas where appropriate.

The RMP would also include specific objectives to develop and implement drainage improvements, stormwater best management practices, and an Integrated Pest Management Plan. The latter would focus on controlling noxious and invading weeds, pests, and aquatic nuisances within the Study Area. Control methods could include mowing, applying chemicals, burning, removing, pulling, and trapping. This plan would improve current vegetation management within the Study Area.

Reclamation would continue to cooperate with UDWR, UDWQ, and other entities that monitor accumulations of selenium and mercury and provide adequate public information and education. Working with State Parks, Reclamation would continue fencing maintenance efforts to keep livestock and OHVs out of riparian wetlands and other sensitive areas. In developing recreation site redesign or rehabilitation activities, Reclamation and State Parks would develop an appropriate plant list for future landscaping, erosion control, and water conservation.

Consistent with Federal and State laws and regulations, cultural and paleontological sites would continue to be protected from the unauthorized collection and excavation of artifacts and all other ground-disturbing activities. Reclamation would coordinate with the Utah State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) and the cultural resource sections of State Parks and Reclamation, as necessary, to protect cultural and paleontological resources. Specific objectives would be developed to identify, manage, and interpret cultural and paleontological resources under Alternative B.

Land Management Reclamation and its partners would continue to evaluate access and access controls and recommend improvements as needed. Reclamation and State Parks would work with Uintah County to manage OHV use within the Study Area in accordance with State and County laws. For purposes of the RMP, an unimproved road is defined as a road that does not have a paved or gravel surface and is irregularly maintained or not maintained. With Alternative B, user-created unimproved roads (unimproved roads that are not designated as county roads or that are not used for administrative access purposes) would be decommissioned, particularly wherever these roads present erosion problems, provide access to unsafe areas, or enable trespass into the Primary Jurisdiction Area. Boundary fencing, gates, and cattle guards would be installed, maintained, or upgraded as needed to prevent trespass.

As is currently the case, Reclamation would determine the appropriate uses for borrow pit areas, identify mineral rights for Reclamation lands, and coordinate with appropriate entities managing surrounding lands regarding any potential indirect effects to Reclamation lands and the reservoir.

Alternative B: Specific Area Management

Specific Management Area designations under Alternative B are described below and shown on Figure 2-3.

State Park Area This area includes an Administrative Area, Developed Day Use Recreation area, Developed Overnight Recreation Area, Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area, and Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area. A portion of the Administrative Area would be redeveloped as a long-term camping area. The proposed location was previously developed as a staff housing area with two residential mobile homes. The residential mobile homes have been moved off site, and the location is currently used for equipment storage. There is an existing 1,000-gallon underground septic system located in the area that is currently unused. State Parks would redevelop this site to provide 6–10 full service campsites (water, sewer, and 50-amp electric service) that could be rented for longer periods of time than recreational campsites, which are limited to 14-day stays during any period of 30 consecutive days [43 CFR 423.33(b)]. Pursuant to 43 CFR 423 Subpart E, Reclamation would approve the long-term camping area as a special use area at Steinaker Reservoir. This Environmental Assessment serves as the public process required by the federal regulation prior to making such designation. In making the designation, Reclamation would allow State Parks to lease and manage the long-term camping sites. State Parks would determine and collect fees and would lease sites on a month-by-month basis.

As illustrated in Figure 2-3, portions of the State Park Area would also be managed as a Natural Area to protect natural and cultural resources. The existing Eagle Ridge hiking trail would be expanded and linked with the main State Park facilities area and other hiking trails along the north end of the reservoir. Consistent with the conservation emphasis of Alternative B, developed facilities would not be expanded into new areas, but existing facilities would be redesigned or upgraded as needed. Facility upgrades and additions that were being implemented at the initiation of the RMP planning process include a boat trailer parking expansion and an accessible fishing pier located near the existing boat ramp. These facilities are also incorporated into Alternative B. An unimproved road that is not a county road and is not used for administrative access purposes would be decommissioned.

Reclamation would allow public OHV access to the Reservoir Inundation Area from the State Park Area boat ramp for ice fishing, as conditions permit and in accordance with existing Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2). State Parks would be responsible to manage this use. During the RMP planning process, State Parks expressed interest in increasing overnight camping stays by allowing public OHV use within the State Park Area and on the entrance road to Steinaker Reservoir. As described above for Area-Wide management of Recreation and Visual Resources under Alternative B, Reclamation would coordinate with the appropriate management entities regarding this potential designation.

Entrance Area Under Alternative B, the Entrance Area would be managed as a Natural Area. Disturbed areas would be re-vegetated and erosion control would be provided as necessary. A hiking trail would be added and an existing trailhead/parking area would be improved. Reclamation would coordinate with the appropriate management entities regarding potential designation of OHV use on the entrance road or portions thereof; however, no OHV trailhead or other new developed facilities would be included with Alternative B. Two unimproved roads that are not county roads and that are not used for administrative access purposes would be decommissioned.

Scenic Byway Area Under Alternative B, the Scenic Byway Area would be managed primarily as a Natural Area to protect natural and cultural resources, including scenic quality along the highway. The existing scenic byway pullout site would be managed as a Developed Day Use Recreation Area. Existing walking paths and parking pullouts along the highway would be improved for safety and to provide improved shoreline fishing access while limiting erosion.

Honda Hills Area Under the conservation emphasis of Alternative B, the Honda Hills Area would be designated as Natural Area to restore habitat values for wildlife. No new facilities would be developed and the unimproved roads, trails, and existing informal OHV riding areas would be closed to that use. Disturbed areas would be revegetated and erosion control would be provided as necessary to return the area to more natural conditions.

Primary Jurisdiction Area Management of the Primary Jurisdiction Area would be the same under any RMP alternative. The Primary Jurisdiction Area is set aside for operation and maintenance of the dam and feeder canal facilities. It is not open to access for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Permitted access and use of this area would be determined by Reclamation and UWCD.

Inflow Area Under Alternative B, the Inflow Area would be designated as Natural Area to protect natural and cultural resources. Disturbed areas would be re-vegetated and erosion control would be provided as necessary. No new facilities would be developed. User-created unimproved roads in the Inflow Area would be decommissioned.

Reservoir Inundation Area Management of the Reservoir Inundation Area would be the same under any RMP Alternative. State Parks has determined that Steinaker Reservoir has a maximum boat-carrying capacity of 70 boats; however, existing parking areas can only accommodate approximately 40 boat trailers at a given time. A planned boat parking expansion would increase the parking capacity to a maximum of about 60 boat trailers (M. Murray 2012a, pers. comm.).

State Parks would continue to maintain the current maximum boat-carrying capacity of 70 boats, reducing this number as necessary to compensate for reservoir water level fluctuations and available parking, and to promote public health and safety. Under Alternative B, Reclamation would allow public OHV access to the Reservoir Inundation Area for ice fishing from the State Park Area boat ramp, as conditions permit and in accordance with existing Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2).

Alternative C: Recreation Development Emphasis

Alternative C provides for and expands a variety of recreational opportunities by locating new facilities on accessible lands suitable for recreational development to meet demand. New boating, camping, picnicking, and parking facilities, and the accompanying access roads, would be developed. Specific components would include: expansion of group recreation sites; addition of rental cabins or yurts; expanded hiking trails, improved shoreline access and an accessible fishing dock; and development of motorized and nonmotorized trailheads and trail connectivity. Opportunities to contract services with private concessionaires would be considered as appropriate. Facilities that improve or protect environmental quality would be included, as well as regulation and information systems to increase public awareness.

To accommodate these elements, Alternative C would allocate additional lands to developed recreation purposes, as illustrated in Figure 2-4. Table 2-1 indicates allocation of 27.1 acres to Developed Day Use Recreation, 18.7 acres to Developed Overnight Recreation, and 7.5 acres to Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area. Collectively, these designations double the area available for developed use compared to existing conditions (Alternative A). Administrative, Primary Jurisdiction, and Reservoir Inundation areas would not change. A large proportion of the Study Area, 537.6 acres, would remain Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area while 325.0 acres would be designated as Natural Area.

Alternative C: Area-Wide Management

Partnerships The same management actions and policies for partnerships described under Alternative B would be implemented under Alternative C.

Water Resources The same management actions and policies for water resources described under Alternative B would be implemented under Alternative C.

Recreation and Visual Resources The emphasis of Alternative C is accommodating expanded recreation facilities and opportunities. Figure 2-4 illustrates specific area designations that are consistent with recreation development suitability analysis. The footprint of the State Park facilities would be expanded beyond existing boundaries to accommodate new facilities. Developed Overnight Recreation Area facilities would be redeveloped within the existing footprint and would be expanded to the southeast. Some of this expanded area would be devoted to proposed rental cabins or yurts. The number of designated campsites would increase to 58 under Alternative C. Similarly, the Developed Day Use Recreation Area would be redesigned within its existing footprint and also expanded to fill in currently undeveloped area between the boat ramp and existing beach day-use area. For group use facilities, the existing Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area would be expanded to the northeast to include additional facilities.

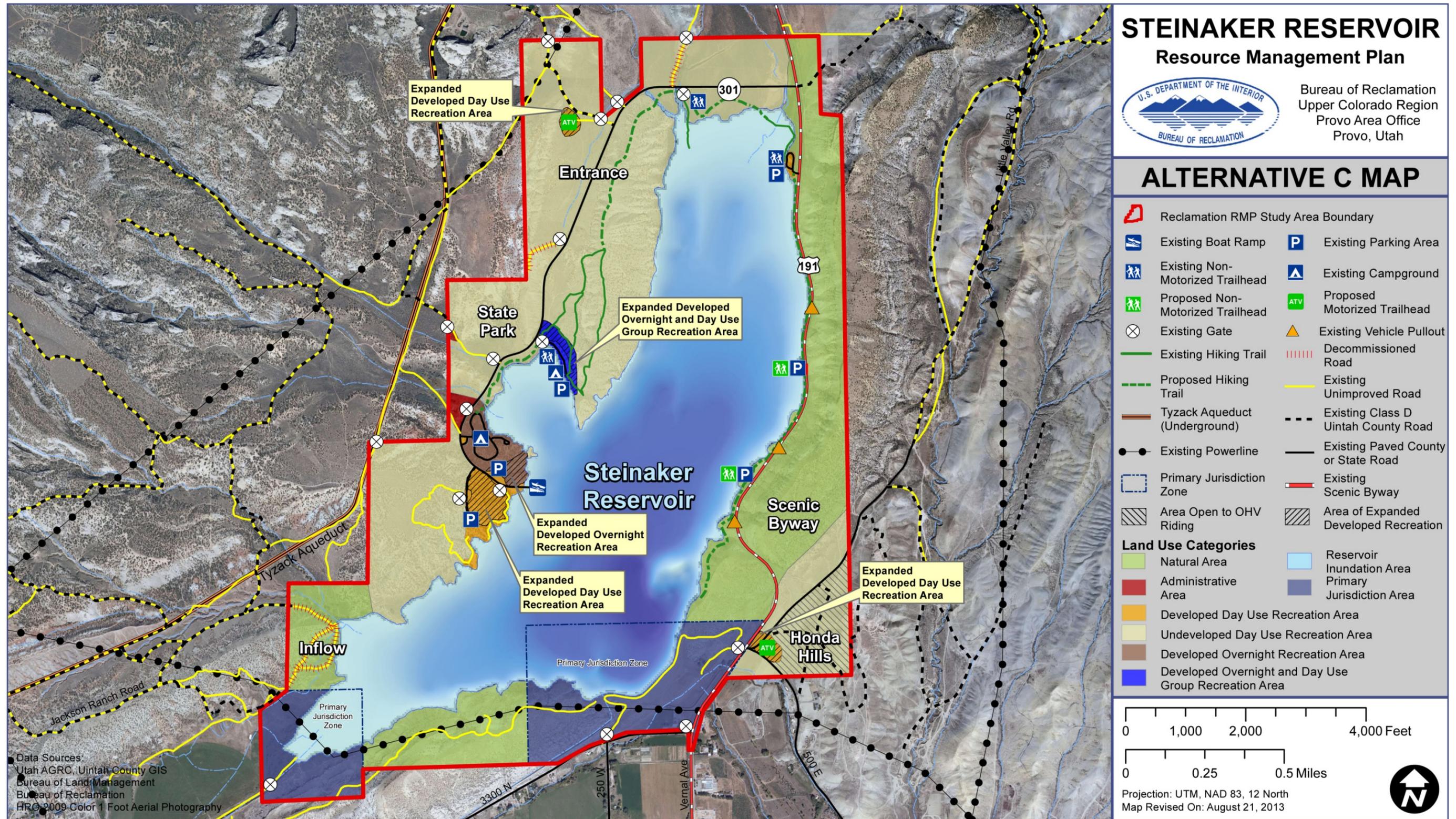


Figure 2-4. Recreation Development Emphasis Alternative C Map for the Steinaker Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Under Alternative C, Reclamation would allow public OHV access to the Reservoir Inundation Area for ice fishing from the State Park Area boat ramp, as conditions permit and in accordance with existing Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2). Reclamation would also coordinate with the appropriate management entities regarding potential OHV use on designated state and county roads, or portions thereof, within the Study Area. Additionally, new OHV trailheads would be developed in two locations as shown on Figure 2-4. A trailhead in the Honda Hills Area would include vault toilets and designated parking. A similar trailhead would be developed in the northwest portion of the Study Area, providing access through the Study Area onto BLM motorized trails known as the Doc's Beach area to the west of Steinaker Reservoir. The proposed locations for trailheads are adjacent to existing designated trails and are currently used as trailheads with no facilities. Site conditions would be improved with development of new facilities. State Parks and/or Uintah County would maintain these trailheads and collect day-use fees as warranted.

Implementation of any of the proposed facilities would be contingent on assessment of demand, available funding, and site-specific environmental evaluation as required by NEPA. Reclamation would also evaluate consistency with visual quality management objectives in the design of renovated or new recreation facilities.

State Parks would continue to be responsible for identifying and enforcing recreation capacities for both land-and water-based recreation, identifying appropriate recreational use areas for various activities, and managing user conflicts. Programs would likely be implemented as funding becomes available; these would include installing interpretive displays and providing improved access for persons with disabilities.

Natural and Cultural Resources While additional Study Area lands would be converted to developed uses under Alternative C, natural and cultural resources would be planned for and actively managed in the same manner as described for Alternative B. Therefore, the same management actions and policies for natural and cultural resources described for Alternative B would be implemented under Alternative C.

Land Management Reclamation and its partners would continue to evaluate access and access controls and recommend improvements as needed. Reclamation and State Parks would work with Uintah County to manage OHV use within the Study Area in accordance with State and County laws. For purposes of the RMP, an unimproved road is defined as a road that does not have a paved or gravel surface and is irregularly maintained or not maintained. With Alternative C, user-created unimproved roads (unimproved roads that are not designated as county roads or that are not used for administrative access purposes) would be decommissioned, particularly wherever these roads present erosion problems, provide access to unsafe areas, or enable trespass into the Primary Jurisdiction Area. Boundary fencing, gates, and cattle guards would be installed, maintained, or upgraded as needed to prevent trespass.

As is currently the case, Reclamation would determine the appropriate uses for borrow pit areas, identify mineral rights for Reclamation lands, and coordinate with appropriate entities managing surrounding lands regarding any potential indirect effects to Reclamation lands and the reservoir.

Alternative C: Specific Area Management

Specific Management Area designations under Alternative C are described below and shown on Figure 2-4.

State Park Area Under Alternative C, portions of the State Park Area would continue to be managed as Administrative Area, Developed Day Use Recreation Area, Developed Overnight Recreation Area, Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area, and Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area. A portion of the Administrative Area would be redeveloped as a long-term camping area. The proposed location was previously developed as a staff housing area with two residential mobile homes. The residential mobile homes have been moved off site and the location is currently used for equipment storage. There is an existing 1,000-gallon underground septic system located in the area that is currently unused. State Parks would redevelop this site to provide 6–10 full service campsites (water, sewer, and 50-amp electric service) that could be rented for longer periods of time than recreational campsites, which are limited to 14-day stays during any period of 30 consecutive days [43 CFR 423.33(b)]. Pursuant to 43 CFR 423 Subpart E, Reclamation would approve the long-term camping area as a special use area at Steinaker Reservoir. This Environmental Assessment serves as the public process required by the federal regulation prior to making such designation. In making the designation, Reclamation would allow State Parks to lease and manage the long-term camping sites. State Parks would determine and collect fees and would lease sites on a month-by-month basis.

Consistent with the recreation development emphasis of Alternative C, existing Developed Overnight and Developed Day Use Recreation Areas would be expanded in size to accommodate new facilities. Existing facilities would also be redesigned or rehabilitated as needed. The existing Eagle Ridge hiking trail would be expanded and linked with the main State Park facilities area and other hiking trails along the north end of the reservoir. Facility upgrades and additions that were being implemented at the initiation of the RMP planning process include a boat trailer parking expansion and an accessible fishing pier located near the existing boat ramp. These facilities are also incorporated into Alternative C. An unimproved road that is not a county road and is not used for administrative access purposes would be decommissioned.

Reclamation would allow public OHV access to the Reservoir Inundation Area from the State Park Area boat ramp for ice fishing, as conditions permit and in accordance with Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2). State Parks would be responsible to manage this use. During the RMP planning process, State Parks expressed interest in increasing overnight camping stays by allowing public OHV use within the State Park Area and on the entrance road to Steinaker Reservoir. As described above for Area-Wide management of Recreation and Visual Resources under Alternative C, Reclamation would coordinate with the appropriate management entities regarding this potential designation.

Entrance Area The Entrance Area would be managed primarily as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area under Alternative C. A new hiking trail would be constructed to connect the Eagle Ridge Trail to the Scenic Byway Trailhead and an existing trailhead and parking area at the north end of the reservoir would be improved. A new, OHV trailhead with vault toilets and designated parking would be constructed within a Developed Day Use Recreation Area to provide access onto BLM motorized trails known as the Doc's Beach area to the west of Steinaker Reservoir. State Parks and/or Uintah County would maintain the trailhead and collect

day-use fees as warranted. An unimproved road that is not a county road and that is not used for administrative access purposes would be decommissioned.

Scenic Byway Area Under Alternative C, management of the Scenic Byway Area would be the same as Alternative B., The Scenic Byway Area would be managed as a Natural Area to protect natural and cultural resources, including scenic quality along the highway. The existing scenic byway pullout site would be managed as a Developed Day Use Recreation Area. Existing walking paths and parking pullouts along the highway would be improved for safety and to better provide shoreline fishing access while limiting erosion.

Honda Hills Area The Honda Hills Area would be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area. Consistent with the recreation development emphasis of Alternative C, a new OHV trailhead with vault toilets and designated parking would be developed within a Developed Day Use Recreation Area and open riding of OHVs would be allowed within a designated area. State Parks and/or Uintah County would maintain the trailhead and collect day-use fees as warranted.

Primary Jurisdiction Area Management of the Primary Jurisdiction Area would be the same under any RMP alternative. The Primary Jurisdiction Area is set aside for operation and maintenance of the dam and feeder canal facilities. It is not open to access for the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Permitted access and use of this area would be determined by Reclamation and UWCD.

Inflow Area Under Alternative C, the Inflow Area would be managed the same as under Alternative B. The Inflow Area would be designated as a Natural Area to protect natural and cultural resources. Disturbed areas would be re-vegetated and erosion control would be provided as necessary. No new facilities would be developed. User-created unimproved roads in the Inflow Area would be decommissioned.

Reservoir Inundation Area Management of the Reservoir Inundation Area would be the same under any RMP Alternative. State Parks has determined that Steinaker Reservoir has a maximum boat-carrying capacity of 70 boats; however, existing parking areas can only accommodate approximately 40 boat trailers at a given time. A planned boat parking expansion would increase the parking capacity to a maximum of about 60 boat trailers (M. Murray 2012a, pers. comm.). State Parks would continue to maintain the current maximum boat-carrying capacity of 70 boats, reducing this number as necessary to compensate for reservoir water level fluctuations and available parking, and to promote public health and safety. Under Alternative C, Reclamation would allow public OHV access to the Reservoir Inundation Area for ice fishing from the State Park Area boat ramp, as conditions permit and in accordance with existing Utah administrative rule R651-411-2(2). State Parks would be responsible to manage this use.

Summary Comparison of Alternatives and Impacts

Table 2-2 summarizes the land-use designations for each of the Steinaker Reservoir management areas, by alternative. None of the alternatives would modify existing management of the Primary Jurisdiction or Reservoir Inundation areas. Under any alternative, developed recreation facilities

Table 2-2. Comparison of Land-Use Designations for Resource Management Plan (RMP) Alternatives by Management Area.

MANAGEMENT AREAS	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
	NO ACTION	RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
State Park Area	AA ^a , DDURA ^b , DORA ^c , DGRA ^d , UDURA ^e	AA, DDURA, DORA, DGRA, UDURA, NA ^f	AA, DDURA, DORA, DGRA, UDURA
Entrance Area	UDURA	NA	DDURA, UDURA
Scenic Byway Area	UDURA, DDURA	NA, DDURA	NA, DDURA
Honda Hills Area	UDURA	NA	DDURA, UDURA
Primary Jurisdiction Area	PJA ^g	PJA	PJA
Inflow Area	UDURA	NA	NA
Reservoir Inundation Area	RIA ^h	RIA	RIA

^a AA = Administrative Area

^b DDURA = Developed Day Use Recreation Area

^c DORA = Developed Overnight Recreation Area

^d DGRA = Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Area

^e UDURA = Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area

^f NA = Natural Area

^g PJA = Primary Jurisdiction Area

^h RIA = Reservoir Inundation Area

in the Study Area are concentrated at the State Park Area. Under Alternative A, most of the Study Area would be managed as an Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Area, which is consistent with existing use. Consistent with the conservation emphasis, under Alternative B Reclamation would designate areas outside of the State Park Area as Natural Area. The Natural Area designation would limit development of recreation facilities to nonmotorized uses. With Alternative C, only the Scenic Byway and Inflow areas would be designated as Natural Area; two OHV trailhead facilities would be allowed, one within the Honda Hills Area and the other within the Entrance Area.

Table 2-3 summarizes the impacts of each alternative for the Steinaker Reservoir RMP Study Area. For a detailed description of impacts by resource, see Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences. Based on the impact assessments, Table 2-4 summarizes how well each alternative would fulfill the RMP goals. A full statement of RMP goals and objectives is provided in Appendix A.

The No Action Alternative would be least effective at fulfilling the RMP goals, particularly goals related to expanding and enhancing recreation opportunities (Goal C1) and providing quality recreation opportunities that minimize conflicts (Goal C2). While existing recreation facilities could be redesigned or rehabilitated under the No Action Alternative, there would not be opportunities to provide expanded facilities at the location of the existing State Park facilities, to improve shoreline fishing access, to expand hiking trails, or to work with other entities to develop and improve connectivity to motorized and nonmotorized trails beyond the Study Area.

Table 2-3. Summary of Resource Management Plan (RMP) Impacts by Alternative.

IMPACT INDICATOR	ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B: RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	ALTERNATIVE C: RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
Partnerships			
Change in the number and type of resource management partnerships	<p>No change to the number and type of partnerships.</p> <p>Existing partnerships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Bureau of Land Management • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation • Uintah Water Conservancy District • Utah Division of Wildlife Resources • Utah Department of Environmental Quality • Utah Department of Transportation • Uintah County 	<p>Current partners listed for Alternative A would remain with increased responsibilities related to a conservation emphasis.</p> <p>Potentially new resource management partners include local conservation organizations and adjacent landowners.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B, plus additional responsibilities and/or partnerships related to a recreation development emphasis.</p> <p>Potentially new resource management partners include those listed for Alternative B and also local recreation interest groups.</p>
Water Resources			
Change in the amount of unimproved roads due to decommissioning	No change from existing conditions (5 total miles of unimproved roads, including 0.7 mile within 50 feet of the reservoir or a tributary stream).	Decrease of 1.1 miles of unimproved roads, with less than 0.1 mile decrease within 50 feet of a stream or the reservoir.	Decrease of 1.0 mile of unimproved roads, with less than 0.1 mile decrease within 50 feet of the reservoir or tributary stream.
Change in the amount of nonmotorized trails	No change from existing conditions (1.7 miles of nonmotorized trails within the Study Area, including 0.4 mile within 50 feet of the reservoir or tributary stream).	Increase of 2.8 miles of nonmotorized trails within the Study Area, including 1.4 miles within 50 feet of the reservoir or tributary stream.	Same as Alternative B.
Change in the amount of developed recreation areas	No change from existing conditions (26.7 acres of existing developed recreation areas; see Table 2-1).	No change from existing conditions (26.7 acres of existing developed recreation areas; see Table 2-1).	Increase to a total of 53.3 acres of developed recreation areas, including 1.1 new acres within 50 feet of the reservoir or tributary stream.
Change in the amount of Natural Areas	No change from existing conditions (see Table 2-1).	Increase of 776 acres of Natural Area, including 50.6 acres within 50 feet of the reservoir or tributary stream.	Increase of 325 acres of Natural Area, including 23.4 acres within 50 feet of the reservoir or tributary stream.
Change in the number and types of toilet facilities	No change from existing conditions.	Additional use of existing septic systems within the State Park Management Area with the addition of 6–10 long-term camping sites.	Additional number of vault toilets and additional septic system use within the expanded State Park Area where developed recreation areas would be expanded and 6–10 long-term camping sites would be added. Vault toilets would be added at OHV trailheads in the Entrance and Honda Hills areas.

STEINAKER RESERVOIR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table 2-3. (Cont.)

IMPACT INDICATOR	ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B: RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	ALTERNATIVE C: RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
Recreation and Visual Resources			
Change in recreational opportunities	No change from existing conditions.	Developed Recreation Areas would remain the same. Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Areas would decrease by 776.2 acres as Natural Areas would be designated. Administrative, Primary Jurisdiction, and Reservoir Inundation areas would remain the same.	Developed Day Use Recreation Areas would increase by 16.7 acres. Developed Overnight Recreation Areas would increase by 4.8 acres. Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Recreation Areas would increase by 5.1 acres. Undeveloped Day Use Recreation Areas would decrease by 352.1 acres as 325.0 acres of Natural Areas would be designated and 26.6 acres of Developed Recreation Areas would be designated.
Change in visitation and recreational facilities	No change from existing conditions. Total developed campsites at 31. Total day-use picnic sites at 38. Group camping at 50 PAOT. Total boat parking at 36. Total Trailhead parking at 63. Total persons at one time (PAOT): 795. Total boat ramps at 1.	Increase in boat parking stalls to 60. Total PAOT increases to 915. Total boat ramps remain at 1.	Expanding the footprint of the existing State Park Area facilities to Developed Overnight and Developed Day Use Recreation Areas would increase campsites from 31 to 39 and the picnic sites from 41 to 49. Total PAOT increases to 790. Total boat ramps remain at 1.
Change in Water and Land Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WALROS) Classification	No change from existing conditions.	The Inflow Area WALROS Classification would change from RN7 to SP8. The Scenic Byway Area WALROS Classification would change from RD5 to RD4. All other areas would exhibit no change in WALROS Classification from existing conditions.	The Inflow Area WALROS Classification would change from RN7 to SP8. The Scenic Byway Area WALROS Classification would change from RD5 to RD4. The Honda Hills Area WALROS Classification would change from RN7 to RN6. The Entrance Area WALROS Classification would change from RN6 to RD6. The State Park Area WALROS Classification would change from RD5 to RD4. All other areas would exhibit no change in WALROS Classification from existing conditions.
Change in visual-resource conditions	No change from existing conditions.	No change in visual-resource conditions.	No change in visual-resource conditions.
Natural and Cultural Resources			
Change in the amount of shoreline erosion	Shoreline erosion would be expected to continue. No change from existing conditions and trends.	Slightly reduced shoreline erosion with designation of Natural Area.	Same as Alternative B, with fewer acres designated as Natural Area.
Change in the amount of soil disturbance	91.9 acres (total existing soil disturbance).	76.4 acres (total existing and new soil disturbance).	96.5 acres (total existing and new soil disturbance).

Table 2-3. (Cont.)

IMPACT INDICATOR	ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B: RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	ALTERNATIVE C: RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
Change in the quantity, condition, and level of disturbance of upland vegetation communities	Existing level of disturbance is 91.9 acres. No change in current upland vegetation conditions and trends.	Level of disturbance reduced to 76.4 acres through designation of 776 acres of Natural Area. Construction of 2.8 miles of new trails. Overall potential for improved condition of upland vegetation.	Level of disturbance increases to 96.5 acres through development of new facilities. Construction of 2.8 miles of new trails. Conversion of 26 acres to developed recreational uses. Overall slight potential for decreasing condition of upland vegetation.
Change in the quantity, condition, and level of disturbance of riparian-wetland vegetation communities	No change from existing riparian-wetland conditions and trends.	Potential for some impacts due to new trails proposed within riparian-wetland areas. Potential for improvement due to designation of Natural Areas within riparian-wetland areas.	Potential for some impacts due to new trails proposed within riparian-wetland areas and recreation facility expansion adjacent to riparian-wetlands. Potential for improvement due designation of Natural Areas within riparian-wetlands.
Change in the overall quality and amount of wildlife habitat	No change from existing conditions and trends.	Little or no impacts related to the loss of wildlife habitat. Enhancement and protection of important habitats as a result of designating Natural Areas.	Minimal impacts related to habitat loss as a result of facility development and uses.
Change in the amount of human-related disturbance	No change from existing conditions and trends.	Decrease in disturbance related to restrictions of vehicle access and designated parking areas. Short-term increase in disturbances during construction of facilities in localized areas where human activity would increase in association with the development of new facilities. Impacts would be minimal because of the limited amount of proposed development, current condition of areas proposed for development, and availability of similar habitat in the surrounding area.	New facilities would be constructed under Alternative C, resulting in more short- and long-term wildlife disturbances. Impacts would be minimal because of the current condition of areas proposed for development and the availability of similar habitat in the surrounding area.
Change in the quality and quantity of fish spawning and recruitment habitat	Ongoing negative impacts associated with unfettered shoreline access around Steinkaker Reservoir.	Minimal impact associated with designating Natural Areas and creating hiking trails.	Negative impact associated with continued unfettered shoreline access, as well as developing new recreational facilities.
Change in the amount of angling pressure	No change from existing conditions. However, a future increase in visitation would continue to increase fishing pressure.	Slight negative impact with increased walking/hiking access and shoreline access, which would increase fishing pressure.	Negative impact associated with developing new recreational facilities with more boat launching and recreational capacity, as well as increased shoreline fishing access through trail use.

STEINAKER RESERVOIR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table 2-3. (Cont.)

IMPACT INDICATOR	ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B: RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	ALTERNATIVE C: RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
Change in the threat of aquatic invasive species infestation	No change from existing conditions. However, a risk is always present.	Little to no impact without increases or improvements to facilities and boat ramps.	Negative impact associated with developing new recreational facilities and increasing boat launching traffic allowing for greater potential for infestation.
Change in the quantity and quality of habitat for special status species	No change from existing conditions and trends.	Minimal impacts to the quantity and quality of habitat related to facility upgrades and improvements. Enhancement of habitat through designation of Natural Areas and development of a Habitat Management Plan.	Minimal impacts of habitat loss due to facility improvements and new facility developments; site-specific environmental analysis required. Enhancement of habitat through designation of Natural Areas and development of a Habitat Management Plan.
Change in the level of human-related disturbance for special status species	No change from existing conditions and trends.	Short-term increase in disturbance during improvements to facilities in localized areas. Long-term decrease in disturbance due to decommissioning of unimproved roads and Natural Area designations. This would also provide minor benefits to vegetation communities with potential to support rare plants.	Some localized increase in disturbance with facility improvement and new facility development; site-specific environmental analysis required. Long-term decrease in disturbance due to decommissioning of unimproved roads and Natural Area designations. This would also provide minor benefits to vegetation communities with potential to support rare plants.
Change in the integrity of cultural resource sites	Potential impacts to integrity of surficial and subsurface cultural resources unchanged.	Potential slight increased impact to the integrity of surficial and subsurface cultural resources.	Increased potential to impact the integrity of surficial and subsurface cultural resources caused by increased development.
Change in the condition of paleontological resource localities	Potential impacts to condition of surficial and subsurface paleontological resources.	Potential impacts to condition of surficial and subsurface paleontological resources.	Increased potential to impact the condition of surficial and subsurface paleontological resources caused by increased development.
Change in the use and quality of Indian Trust Assets (ITAs)	No projected impact to ITAs.	No projected impact to ITAs.	No projected impact to ITAs.
Land Management			
Change in the development of locatable, saleable, or leasable mineral resources	No projected impacts to energy, minerals, and other extractive resources.	No projected impacts to energy, minerals, and other extractive resources.	Possible impacts to the development of saleable mineral resources in the Honda Hills portion of the Study Area.
Change in the amount of sanitation facilities	No change from existing conditions.	Additional use of existing septic systems with the addition of a long-term camping area.	Increase in the number of vault toilets and possible expansion of existing septic systems.

Table 2-4. Resource Management Plan (RMP) Goal Fulfillment by Alternative.

STEINAKER RESERVOIR RMP GOALS	ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION	ALTERNATIVE B: RESOURCE CONSERVATION EMPHASIS	ALTERNATIVE C: RECREATION DEVELOPMENT EMPHASIS
Goal Category A: Partnerships			
Goal A1: Support Existing Agreements and Contracts and Encourage New Partnerships that Improve Management Practices for Steinkaker Reservoir's Associated Lands and Resources (Issue A1)	⊙	●	●
Goal Category B: Water Resources			
Goal B1: Protect Water Quality in Steinkaker Reservoir (Issue B1)	⊙	●	⊙
Goal Category C: Recreational and Visual Resources			
Goal C1: Increase Visitation and Revenue by Improving Existing Recreational Facilities, Expanding and Enhancing Recreation Opportunities, and Providing Access to Regional Recreation Resources (Issue C1)	○	⊙	●
Goal C2: Provide for Safe, Quality Recreation Opportunities that Minimize Conflicts (Issue C1)	○	⊙	●
Goal C3: Protect and Manage Visual Resources (Issue C2)	●	●	●
Goal Category D: Natural and Cultural Resources			
Goal D1: Protect and Enhance the Quality of the Fishery and Fishing Opportunities (Issues D1 and D2)	⊙	●	●
Goal D2: Protect and Enhance Native Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat (Issues D3 and D4)	⊙	●	⊙
Goal D3: Determine Occurrence of Special Status Species and Identify Important Habitat Areas (Issue D4)	⊙	●	⊙
Goal D4: Control Erosion (Issue D5)	⊙	●	⊙
Goal D5: Protect and Manage Paleontological Resources (Issue D6)	●	●	⊙
Goal D6: Protect and Manage Cultural Resources (Issue D7)	●	●	⊙
Goal Category E: Land Management			
Goal E1: Provide Appropriate and Safe Access to Public Use Areas (Issue E1)	⊙	⊙	●
Goal E2: Evaluate Access Needs for Adjacent Private Land Owners (Issue E2)	●	●	●
Goal E3: Manage Mineral Development (Issue E3)	●	●	●

Legend: ● Fulfills goal; ⊙ Partially fulfills goal; ○ Does not fulfill goal.

Under Alternative B, Reclamation would not allow expansion of recreation facilities beyond existing disturbances and would designate the majority of lands surrounding the reservoir as Natural Area. Additionally, under Alternative B, Reclamation would work cooperatively with partner entities in developing a Fishery Management Plan, Habitat Management Plan, and Integrated Pest Management Plan. Consequently, this alternative best fulfills RMP goals related to protecting natural and cultural resources (Goal Category D). Alternative B partially fulfills goals related to recreation facilities (Goal C1) and recreation opportunity (Goal C2). This is because Reclamation and its partners would work toward the objectives of redesigning or rehabilitating existing facilities and making improvements to shoreline access and hiking trails within the Study Area.

Under Alternative C, Reclamation would work with partners toward the goals of not only improving existing recreation facilities but also adding new recreation facility sites at Steinaker Reservoir. Therefore, this alternative would best fulfill goals C1 and C2, as well as Goal E1. However, as a result of increasing recreation development, fewer lands surrounding the reservoir would be designated as Natural Area. Sensitive resources would still be avoided and Reclamation would still work cooperatively with partner entities in developing Fishery Management, Habitat Management, and Integrated Pest Management Plans. Consequently, Alternative C would partially fulfill Category D goals related to protecting natural resources (Goals D2, D3, D4, and D5).

Under any of the RMP alternatives (A, B, or C) Reclamation would continue to have responsibility for protecting and managing visual, paleontological, and cultural resources (Goals C3, D5, and D6) and to manage access and mineral development (Goals E2 and E3). Reclamation would continue to work with partner entities to meet these goals. Therefore, these goals would reasonably be fulfilled regardless of the RMP alternative selected. Because Alternative C would be expected to increase the geographical extent and frequency of recreational activity on Study Area lands, however, it would have greater potential to have effects on cultural and paleontological resources. Thus, Alternative C was rated as partially fulfilling Goals D5 and D6.

Special Use Area Designation for Long-Term Camping

This EA includes evaluation of a proposed long-term camping area, included as a Special Use Area designation under Alternative B or C. This Special Use Area would constitute a private exclusive use as defined in federal regulation 43 CFR 429. Based on the evaluation in this EA, Reclamation determined that this exclusive use would not conflict with authorized project purposes and would not create any new public safety or security issues at Steinaker Reservoir. Additionally, this exclusive use would not conflict with public recreational uses and would not limit Reclamation's ability to expand public recreation facilities as needed to meet future demand. Reclamation is required to notify the public at least 15 days prior to making the designation (43 CFR 423.61). Reclamation is also required to review all private exclusive use at least every 5 years to ensure compliance with certain established criteria pursuant to 43 CFR 429.32. This requirement has been included in the specific area management direction for the State Park Management Area (Appendix B).

Preferred Alternative

Based on public comments, input from the Planning Work Group, and internal deliberations, Reclamation has identified Alternative C as the Preferred Alternative.

Alternatives Considered and Eliminated from Detailed Study

No other potential RMP alternatives were suggested or developed; however, there were some suggested additions to Alternative C that were not adopted as components of the alternative. These suggestions included development of a picnic, rest area, and trailhead facility near the dam. Reclamation lands at this location are within the Primary Jurisdiction Zone of the dam. Consequently, Reclamation would not allow development of facilities in this area. Other suggestions included expansions of parking areas along US-191, and development of a biking trail along US-191. While such facilities would not be proposed by Reclamation as part of the RMP, under any RMP alternative Reclamation would consider proposals offered by other entities (such as Uintah County, the local National Scenic Byway committee, and/or the Utah Department of Transportation) to develop such facilities.

Another suggestion was to develop a OHV trailhead at the State Park entrance adjacent to US-191. Instead, under Alternative C, Reclamation proposes to develop a OHV trailhead adjacent to an existing motorized trail access located in the northwest portion of the Study Area. As discussed for Alternative C, this trailhead would provide access onto existing BLM motorized trails known as the Doc's Beach area to the west of Steinaker Reservoir. If Alternative C is selected for the RMP, Reclamation would work with partner agencies and recreation interest groups to facilitate motorized and nonmotorized trail linkages onto lands beyond the Study Area; thus, while a trailhead is not proposed on Reclamation lands adjacent to US-191, Reclamation would consider allowing trail linkage to occur in this vicinity should future trails be developed by other entities.

A proposal was also made to develop an "overflow" camping area as a component of Alternative C located between the existing Developed Overnight Recreation Area and the Developed Overnight and Day Use Group Area. Reclamation has instead proposed that existing facilities would be redesigned or rehabilitated under any RMP Alternative and that Alternative C would expand new facilities onto currently undeveloped but suitable lands that are adjacent to the existing facilities.

Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be implemented to avoid potential adverse effects to resources within the Study Area. Unless otherwise noted, each of these mitigation measures will be implemented for any of the three alternatives. For reference purposes, these mitigation measures are also stated in Appendix C: Environmental Commitments.

Water Resources

Potential impacts to water quality associated with RMP action alternatives would be mitigated through proper design, installation, and maintenance of stormwater best management practices

(BMPs), placement of vault toilet facilities in high-use recreation areas, and use of animal-proof garbage receptacles. Stormwater BMPs would reduce or eliminate stormwater-generated sediment and potentially eliminate untreated stormwater discharge into the reservoir. Vault toilets address impacts from untreated human waste entering the reservoir, and animal-proof garbage receptacles also reduce the amount of trash potentially entering the water body.

Riparian vegetation restoration and bank stabilization, as well as maintaining existing riparian buffers, would provide protection from soil erosion, reduce sediment loads to the reservoir or tributary streams, and filter pollutants transported by stormwater runoff. Locating trails outside of the riparian and marsh vegetation present between the full-pool and low-reservoir elevations would provide a buffer to help mitigate any runoff impacts from the proposed trail.

Under any alternative, Reclamation will continue existing interagency partnerships that maintain Steinaker Reservoir water quality and will participate in any future interagency coordination and partnership efforts associated with the Ashley Creek watershed.

Recreation and Visual Resources

In site-specific design, visual-resource impacts can be reduced or eliminated by using facility-design and land-planning techniques that borrow from naturally established line, form, color, and texture. Design considerations include building materials, size and scale, color, location, screening, and distance from critical viewpoints or transportation corridors. Visual-resource values must be considered throughout the RMP process as the assignment of visual-management classes is based on the management decisions made in the RMP. All proposed actions that would result in surface disturbances must consider the importance of the visual resource and the impacts the project may have on the characteristic landscape. Management decisions must reflect the importance of visual resources within the Study Area while also giving consideration to other resource values and uses.

Geology and Soils

Shoreline erosion is currently occurring along the reservoir full pool elevation throughout much of the Study Area, except in those areas where shoreline stabilization has been provided (e.g., along the dam and Highway 191). Appropriate erosion control and shoreline stabilization measures will be installed where appropriate to prevent further erosion in high-use areas.

To mitigate soil erosion impacts, Reclamation would implement erosion control measures for individual projects under Alternatives B and C. Implementation of proper erosion controls would mitigate impacts caused by construction activities and stormwater runoff. Mitigation measures would include requiring a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for all construction operations that disturb 1.0 acre or more; this would require use of published BMPs for controlling erosion and sedimentation from stormwater runoff and would address runoff from all roads (paved and unpaved), trails, campgrounds, parking lots, and administrative buildings.

Vegetation Including Wetlands

Mitigation measures for either action alternative will include the development of noxious and invasive weed control strategies as a part of an Integrated Pest Management Plan. Fence lines can facilitate weed invasion as winds blow invasive vegetation against fences, where it becomes

trapped and releases seed. Therefore, including a provision for removal of redundant or unnecessary fence lines as part of the Integrated Pest Management Plan would provide some weed management benefit. Additionally, the plan should address weed control strategies to be implemented along all existing and future boundary and access control fences in the Study Area.

After site-specific environmental assessment and design, appropriate sediment and erosion control strategies would be implemented during construction activities to limit impacts to the upland and riparian-wetland vegetation communities. In site-specific designs, disturbed areas would be replanted with appropriate native species. Should it be found that any site-specific projects would involve filling riparian-wetland communities, Reclamation would comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Section 404 requires wetland impacts be mitigated and that no net loss of wetland occurs. The Section 404 permitting and mitigation process is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Wildlife and Fisheries

Mitigation measures that would minimize or avoid impacts to wildlife are recommended below. These measures would be integrated into development of a Habitat Management Plan if either action alternative is selected for the RMP:

- At appropriate locations, signs would be posted to encourage recreationists to stay on the trail and within developed recreation facility boundaries to minimize the amount of vegetation trampling and disturbance to wildlife.
- Wetland and riparian habitats would be protected in accordance with existing federal regulations. During the development and expansion of recreation facilities, construction would, to the extent possible, avoid disturbance (both directly and indirectly) of wetland and riparian areas.
- Wildlife management would be coordinated between Reclamation and appropriate partner agencies to specify suitable recreation within the Natural Areas and identify measures to target areas that were previously impacted by recreationists and are in need of restoration.

Under Alternative B or C, Reclamation will engage partners, particularly State Parks and UDWR, in developing a Fishery Management Plan. Among other elements, the Fishery Management Plan would include goals to emphasize aquatic invasive species awareness and preventive measures for the Study Area.

Threatened, Endangered, and Other Special Status Species

Mitigation measures for special status species are inclusive of those previously described for vegetation, wildlife, and fisheries. Surveys for special status species (wildlife and rare plants) would be completed as a component of site-specific environmental analysis prior to implementing any recreation facility developments.

Cultural Resources

Reclamation will ensure the completion of cultural resource compliance for all site-specific undertakings as a means to fulfill Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as well

as to avoid, reduce, or mitigate impacts to the integrity of cultural resources. Avoidance is the preferred method of cultural resource mitigation. If historic properties are located within the area of potential effects associated with a specific undertaking, and if they would be impacted by activities associated with the undertaking, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would be developed. The MOA would be among Reclamation, the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (if it chooses to participate), and any other party that assumes responsibility under the agreement. The MOA would include the terms and conditions agreed upon to resolve (mitigate) the impacts of the undertaking upon historic properties.

Paleontological Resources

Reclamation will ensure the completion of paleontological resource compliance for all site-specific projects as a means to fulfill Section 6302 of the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, as well as to avoid, reduce, or mitigate impacts to the condition of paleontological resources. Avoidance is the preferred method of paleontological resource mitigation. If avoidance of paleontological resources is not possible, a mitigation plan would be developed. The mitigation plan would include the terms and conditions agreed upon to resolve (mitigate) the impacts to paleontological resources.

Indian Trust Assets

Reclamation will ensure the completion of Indian Trust Asset (ITA) compliance for all site-specific projects as a means to fulfill both U.S. Department of the Interior (512 DM 2) and Reclamation policies regarding ITAs, as well as to avoid, reduce, or mitigate impacts to ITAs. Avoidance is the preferred method of ITA mitigation. If avoidance of ITAs is not possible, a mitigation plan would be developed. The mitigation plan would include the terms and conditions agreed upon to resolve (mitigate) the impacts to ITAs.

Energy, Minerals, and Other Extractive Resources

Under Alternative C, potential mitigation measures for saleable mineral resources will include designing and developing the proposed Developed Day Use Recreation Area in the Honda Hills Area such that the saleable mineral resources continue to be accessible.

Wastewater, Solid Waste, and Hazardous Materials

Under Alternative C and pending site specific environmental analysis and design, local and state regulations concerning septic tank renovations will be followed during the possible expansion of the existing septic systems in the Developed Overnight Recreation Area. Additionally, providing adequate refuse collection frequency at all refuse collection locations in the Study Area will help reduce the potential of groundwater, soil, or surface water contamination.