



## United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Glenwood Springs Field Office  
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# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**NUMBER:** - DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2009-0092-EA

**CASEFILE NUMBER:** N/A

**PROJECT NAME:** Lookout Mt. Hang Gliding Launch Improvements

**LOCATION:** T6S, R89W, Sec 11, NWSW, 6<sup>th</sup> Principal Meridian. Refer to attached location map.

**APPLICANT:** Tom Vail, Local Glenwood Springs, Hang Gliding Community

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

**Proposed Action:** The proposed action would be to authorize the local Hang Gliding Community, represented by Tom to conduct improvements on two (2) sites that are in the Lookout Mountain area and would involve approximately 300 sq. ft. on BLM public lands (see attached map).

The project involves the removal of rocks and construction of dirt filled steps at the SW site, and adding fill material (weed free dirt/soil) specified by BLM to both the NW and SW sites. The fill material would be trucked to the site via existing roads. Material would then be moved to the identified launch areas shown on the map with hand tools and wheel barrels. Material will be rough graded and compacted with hand tools. All disturbed areas will be seeded with a BLM specified seed mixture. No equipment will be used for the project. Maximum depth of fill would be 18". The objective of both site improvements is to create an open fairly level area to increase usability and safety for the take-off area. The improvements would create a suitable walking surface while carrying gliders down to launch. The project is currently proposed for completion in summer of 2009.

The NW site improvement consists of just adding fill material, rough grading and compacting with hand tools.

The SW launch site is above the previously approved (2008) paragliding launch improved under CO-140-2008-060 EA. This improvement would be directly above to what has already been cleared last year. The SW launch improvements would include moving rocks with rock bars and hand tools, adding fill material, rough grading and compacting with hand tools, and constructing four (4) steps approximately 8' x 8' that would be framed using timbers and filled with dirt .

No additional improvements are being proposed and parking would be the same as it occurs today within the existing parking area.

**No Action Alternative:** The two site improvements at the identified launch sites on Lookout Mountain would not be authorized. Recreational uses would likely continue at the location; however safety issues would continue to be of concern and unauthorized actions may happen without BLM involvement or coordination.

**Background:** Hang gliding from Lookout Mountain has occurred since the early 1980's. The site has proven to be a starting point for cross-county flights as well as local soaring. There are two take-off points, facing Northwest and Southwest, suitable for varying wind directions.

**PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION:** The purpose of the proposed action is to authorize the addition of fill dirt to create a more suitable and safer walking surface for the public using this area to launch on BLM public lands. This will also create a site more conducive to a wider range of wind conditions.

**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The proposed action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Glenwood Springs Resource Management Plan.

Date Approved: Jan. 1984, revised 1988, amended in November 1991 - Oil and Gas Leasing and Development - Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended Nov. 1996 - Colorado Standards and Guidelines; amended in August 1997 - Castle Peak Travel Management Plan; amended in March 1999 - Oil and Gas Leasing & Development Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended in November 1999 - Red Hill Plan Amendment; and amended in September 2002 – Fire Management Plan for Wildland Fire Management and Prescriptive Vegetation Treatment Guidance.

Decision Number/Page: Page 34 of the Glenwood Springs Resource Area Resource Management Plan:

Decision Language: Recreation Resource Management Objective, to ensure the continued availability of outdoor recreational opportunities which the public seeks and which are not readily available from other sources, to reduce the impacts of recreational use on fragile and unique resource values, and to provide for visitor safety.

## **STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH**

In January 1997, Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. The five standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. The BLM is in the process of completing land health assessments on a landscape basis. The landscape which includes this proposed action is scheduled for an assessment in 2010. Since the assessment has not been completed on this landscape, there will be no formal determination made on achievement of the standards. However, the environmental analysis must address whether the proposed action or alternatives being analyzed would result in impacts that would maintain, improve, or deteriorate land health conditions relative to these five standards.

## **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

This section provides a description of the human and natural environmental resources that could be affected by the proposed action and no action alternative. In addition, the section presents comparative analyses of the direct and indirect consequences on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the various actions.

A variety of laws, regulations, and policy directives mandate the evaluation of the effects of a proposed action and alternative(s) on certain critical environmental elements. Not all of the critical elements that require inclusion in this EA are present, or if they are present, may not be affected by the proposed action and alternative (Table 1). Only those mandatory critical elements that are present and affected are described in the following narrative.

In addition to the mandatory critical elements, there are additional resources that would be impacted by the proposed action and alternative. These are presented under **Other Affected Resources**.

### **Critical Elements**

<b>Table 1. Critical Elements of the Human Environment</b>									
<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Affected</i>		<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Affected</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
Air Quality	X			X	Prime or Unique Farmlands		X		X
ACECs		X		X	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species*	X			X
Cultural Resources		X		X	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid		X		X
Environmental Justice					Water Quality, Surface and	X			X

					Ground*				
Floodplains		X		X	Wetlands and Riparian Zones*		X		X
Invasive, Non-native Species	X		X		Wild and Scenic Rivers		X		X
Migratory Birds					Wilderness		X		X
Native American Religious Concerns		X		X					

\* Public Land Health Standard

### Cultural Resources

Affected Environment: A Class III cultural resources inventory (GSFO#5499-10) encompass the proposed action. No cultural properties were identified that are eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Therefore, no formal consultation with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was needed and a determination of “**No Historic Properties Affected**” was made in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NRHP), as amended (16 USC 470f), National BLM/SHPO Programmatic Agreement (1997), and Colorado Protocol (1998).

*Proposed Action:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: There would be no direct impacts to cultural resources from the implementation of the proposed action. However, indirect long-term cumulative impacts from increased access and the presence of project personnel could result in a range of impacts to known and undiscovered cultural resources in the vicinity of the location. These impacts could range from illegal collection and excavation to vandalism.

A standard Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation for cultural resource protection would be attached to the permit. The importance of this stipulation should be stressed to permittee informing them of their responsibilities to protect and report any cultural resources encountered during vegetative clearing, rock removal, ramp removal, and reseeded. This is especially important since the CCC picnic area, an historic property eligible for listing on the NRHP, is nearby.

*No Action Alternative:* The potential for indirect long-term cumulative impacts would remain the same, since recreational use would continue or possibly increase over the long term.

### Environmental Justice

Affected Environment: Review of 2001 data from US Census Bureau indicates the median annual income of Garfield County averages \$43,560 and is neither an impoverished or wealthy county. Median annual income of Eagle County averages \$59,037 and is not impoverished but is

considered a wealthy county. U.S. Census Bureau data from 2006 shows the minority population of Garfield and Eagle County comprises less than 3 % of the total population<sup>1</sup>.

Garfield County		Eagle County	
Median Household Income		Median Household Income	
Estimate	90% Confidence Interval	Estimate	90% Confidence Interval
\$50,119	\$ 47,045 to \$53,393	\$59,037	\$55,067 to \$63,294

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The proposed action and alternatives are not expected to create a disproportionately high and adverse human health impact or environmental effect on minority or low-income populations within the area.

### **Invasive, Non-native Species**

Affected Environment: Infestations of Dalmation toadflax (noxious weed) have been reported in the vicinity of the proposed action. Given the widespread nature of invasive plant species in the field office it is also assumed that some level noxious weeds exists at the proposed action’s location.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Noxious weed populations are a threat to land health as they contribute to loss of rangeland productivity, increased soil erosion, reduced species richness, reduced wildlife habitat quality, and reduced aesthetic quality. Weeds generally germinate and become established in areas of surface disturbing activities or other human activities. The proposed action would create conditions where noxious weed populations could increase. Populations of Dalmation toadflax or other noxious weeds in the area would invade the site immediately following the disturbance.

*Proposed Action:* To reduce the opportunities for weeds to become established, the disturbed areas will be reseeded with a certified weed-seed free mixture of native grasses adapted to the site (as indicated in the Vegetation Section). The applicant (Glenwood Springs Soaring Society) will monitor the disturbance to detect the presence of any noxious weeds and will be responsible for promptly controlling any noxious weeds on the Colorado State List A or B (except redstem filaree or quackgrass) within the disturbed area. If the applicant chooses to use herbicides as the control method on public lands, a Pesticide Use Proposal shall be submitted to the BLM and approved prior to initiating any herbicide spraying.

*No Action Alternative:* Under the No Action alternative, no new surface disturbance would occur in the project area and the risk of noxious weed invasion would remain the same as the current situation.

### **Migratory Birds**

Affected Environment: BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-050 provides guidance toward meeting the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) responsibilities under the Migratory

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Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Executive Order (EO) 13186. The guidance directs Field Offices to promote the maintenance and improvement of habitat quantity and quality. To avoid, reduce or mitigate adverse impacts on the habitats of migratory bird species of conservation concern to the extent feasible, and in a manner consistent with regional or statewide bird conservation priorities.

The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to “identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.” *Birds of Conservation Concern 2008* (<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/BCC2008/BCC2008m.pdf>) is the most recent effort to carry out this mandate.

The conservation concerns may be the result of population declines, naturally or human-caused small ranges or population sizes, threats to habitat, or other factors. Although there are general patterns that can be inferred, there is no single reason why any species was is on the list. Habitat loss is believed to be the major reason for the declines of many species. When considering potential impacts to migratory birds the impact on habitat, including: 1) the degree of fragmentation/connectivity expected from the proposed project relative to before the proposed project; and 2) the fragmentation/connectivity within and between habitat types (e.g., within nesting habitat or between nesting and feeding habitats. Continued private land development, surface disturbing actions in key habitats (e.g. riparian areas) and the proliferation of roads, pipelines, powerlines and trails are local factors that reduce habitat quality and quantity for many species.

The Glenwood Springs Field Office is within the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau Bird Conservation Region (BCR). The 2008 list include the following birds: Gunnison Sage Grouse, American Bittern, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Snowy Plover, Mountain Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, Lewis's Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Veery, Bendire's Thrasher, Grace's Warbler, Brewer's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Black Rosy-Finch, Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, and Cassin's Finch.

The GSFO planning area provides both foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory birds that summer, winter, or migrate through the area. The habitat diversity provided by the broad expanses of sagebrush, mixed mountain shrub, oakbrush, aspen, pinyon-juniper woodlands, other types of coniferous forests and riparian and wetland areas support many bird species. The Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Lewis's Woodpecker and Grace's Warbler are characteristically found in pinyon/juniper woodlands and the Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) is found within sagebrush habitats. Other Birds of Conservation Concern 2008 may also occur locally. Many species of raptors (red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, northern goshawks, Cooper's hawks, kestrels and owls) not on the Fish & Wildlife Service's Birds of Conservation Concern list also could occur in the area.

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Bald eagles are known to winter along portions of the Colorado, Eagle and Roaring Fork Rivers and its major tributaries. Wintering bald eagles are generally present from mid-November to mid-April. Large mature cottonwood trees along the rivers and their major tributaries are used as roosting and perching sites, and these waterways provide the main food sources of fish and waterfowl. Upland habitats adjacent to these waterways are used as scavenging areas primarily for winter killed mule deer and elk. Major

threats include habitat loss (specifically cottonwood stands), human disturbance and illegal shooting. Bald eagles are increasing in numbers throughout their range and were removed from the federal threatened and endangered species list in 2007 however bald eagles are still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

#### Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

*Proposed Action:* The proposed action has a low potential to disrupt nesting attempts by migratory bird species. As the area is already being used for launching purposes, the removal of rocks and construction of dirt filled steps at the SW site, and adding fill material to both the NW and SW sites is unlikely to reduce the extent or quality of habitat available for migratory bird breeding functions. The proposed action would have little influence on the abundance or distribution of breeding migratory birds at a landscape level.

*No Action:* There would be no impacts to migratory bird species from the no action alternative.

#### **Native American Religious Concerns**

Affected Environment: The Ute tribes claim this area as part of their ancestral homeland. At present, no Native American concerns are known within the project area and none were identified during the inventory. The Ute Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Bands, the primary Native American tribe with ties to this area of the GSFO, have indicated that they do not wish to be consulted for small projects or projects where no Native American areas of concern have been identified either through survey or past consultations. Therefore, formal consultation was not undertaken. If new data are disclosed, new terms and conditions may have to be negotiated to accommodate their concerns.

*Proposed Action:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Although there would be no direct impacts from the proposed action, indirect impacts from increased access and personnel in the vicinity of the proposed project could result in impacts to unknown Native American resources ranging from illegal collection to vandalism. The standard Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation for cultural resource protection would be attached to the permit. The importance of this stipulation should be stressed to permittee informing them of their responsibilities to protect and report any cultural resources encountered during vegetative clearing, rock removal, ramp removal, and reseeded.

*No Action:* The potential for indirect long-term cumulative impacts would remain the same, since recreational use would remain the same or increase over the long term.

#### **Special Status Species (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 4)**

##### Affected Environment - Listed, Proposed, and Candidate Species

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/endspp/CountyLists/COLORADO.pdf>), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate plant and animal species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring in Garfield County: Colorado hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*), Ute Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), Parachute beardtongue (*Penstemon debilis*), DeBeque phacelia (*Phacelia submutica*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*), and humpback chub (*Gila cypha*).

##### Aquatic Wildlife:

No designated critical habitat exists for any Federally listed, proposed or candidate aquatic wildlife species in or near the project area.

##### Terrestrial Wildlife:

The project area is mapped as "other" lynx habitat. "Other" habitat is defined as sagebrush or pure aspen within 500 meters of winter foraging habitat (spruce-fir dominated). The site is mapped as "other" habitat due to its proximity to mapped winter foraging habitat located within 500 meters to the east on BLM lands.

##### Plants:

No occupied or suitable habitat is found within the project area for any of the four federally listed, proposed or candidate plant species which occur in Garfield County. No occupied habitat is present within the vicinity that could be indirectly impacted by the proposed action.

##### Affected Environment - BLM Sensitive Species

##### Aquatic Wildlife:

Three species (Flannelmouth sucker, bluehead sucker, roundtail chub) are all known to reside within the Colorado River several miles north of the project area.

##### Terrestrial Wildlife:

The following table lists special status terrestrial wildlife species in the Glenwood Springs Field Office.



proposed action should have “**No Effect**” to any of these fish or their habitats due to the small project size, the low potential offsite soil movement, the distance from waterways and the distance from designated critical habitat.

**Terrestrial Wildlife:**

No Federally ESA listed animal species would be affected by the proposed action. Although the proposed action is located in “other” lynx habitat, vegetation at the site is a mixed mountain shrub community, consisting of oakbrush and sagebrush. This habitat type is very marginal for lynx and it is unlikely that lynx would utilize the project area. Pure aspen or pure sagebrush near coniferous forests provide habitat for alternative prey in the summer months. Given the project site does not provide suitable habitat for lynx, the proposed action would have “No Effect” to Canada lynx.

**Plants:**

Due to the absence of any occupied or suitable habitat within or adjacent to the project area, the proposed action would have “**No Effect**” on any of the four listed, proposed, or candidate plant species in Garfield County.

*No Action Alternative:* The no action alternative would have “No Effect” to any T&E listed wildlife or plant species.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation – *BLM Sensitive Species:*

*Proposed Action:*

**Aquatic Wildlife:**

The project is proposed for the top of Lookout Mountain on a relatively flat area on the edge of Lookout Mountain Park. The site is already somewhat disturbed as the site is currently used as a launch site. Proposed disturbances would be minimal. Seeding should help to stabilize soils at the site. Any offsite sediment should be minimal and not impact downstream fisheries. The proposed action should have negligible impacts on any of these fish or their habitats due to the small project size, the low potential offsite soil movement, the distance from waterways and the distance from designated critical habitat.

**Terrestrial Wildlife:**

The proposed action should have negligible impacts on any of these BLM sensitive terrestrial wildlife or their habitats due to the small project size, the low potential offsite soil movement, and the distance from occupied or potential habitat.

**Plants:**

Due to the absence of any known occupied or suitable habitat for BLM sensitive plant species, the proposed action would have no impact on these species.

*No Action Alternative:* The no action alternative would have negligible effects on any BLM sensitive wildlife or plant species.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Special Status Species:

A formal Land Health Assessment has not yet been completed in this area. The proposed action would have minimal impacts on threatened, endangered, or sensitive species and would not preclude this standard from being met.

**Other Affected Resources**

In addition to the critical elements, the resources presented in Table 2 were considered for impact analysis relative to the proposed action and no action alternative. Resources that would be affected by the proposed action and no action alternative are discussed below.

<b>Table 2. Other Resources Considered in the Analysis.</b>			
<i>Resource</i>	<i>NA or Not Present</i>	<i>Present and Not Affected</i>	<i>Present and Affected</i>
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire/Fuels Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Law Enforcement			
Paleontology	X		
Noise	X		
Range Management		X	
Realty Authorizations			X
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics	X		
Soils*			X
Vegetation*			X
Visual Resources		X	
Water Rights	X		
Wildlife, Aquatic*			X
Wildlife, Terrestrial*			X

\*Public Land Health Standard

**Realty Authorizations:**

Affected Environment: Right-of-way (ROW) authorization COC-63242 for Garfield County Emergency Services is located adjacent to the proposed action. The holder of the lease is concerned with the security of the building, and unauthorized climbing of the tower.

### Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

*Proposed Action:* Implementation of the proposed action could increase use at the site and therefore increase vandalism on the facility, and unauthorized climbing on the tower. The Garfield County Emergency Services would like to be informed of any paragliding events in advance.

*No Action Alternative:* The no action alternative would have no change on realty actions.

### **Soils (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 1)**

Affected Environment: According to the *Soil Survey of Rifle Area, Colorado: Parts of Garfield and Mesa Counties* (USDA 1985) the northwest site would occur on the soil map unit Lamphier loam and the southwest site would occur on the soil map unit Jerry loam. The surface geology in this vicinity consists of red bed sedimentary rocks of the Maroon Formation that are Permian and Pennsylvanian in age. The steep topography and erosive geologic formations surrounding the City of Glenwood Springs have resulted in areas such as the proposed southwest site to be mapped No Surface Occupancy (NSO 14) for Debris Flow Hazard Zones to minimize erosional processes and to protect life and property. Following is a brief description of the two soil map units within the project area.

- Jerry loam is a deep, well drained soil found on mountainsides at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 9,500 feet and on slopes of 12 to 50 percent. Parent material for this soil is sandstone, shale, and basalt. Surface runoff for this soil is slow and the erosion hazard is moderate. Primary uses for this soil include wildlife habitat and grazing.
- Lamphier loam – This deep, well drained soil is found on fans and mountainsides at elevations ranging from 7,500 to 10,000 feet and on slopes of 15 to 50 percent. This soil is derived from sandstone and shale rocks. Surface runoff for this soil is slow and the erosion hazard is classified as slight. Primary uses for this soil include grazing, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

*Proposed Action:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Proposed activities would result in additional sediment available for transport during runoff events prior to the establishment of vegetation. In addition, the southwest site would occur within the Debris Flow Hazard Zone, which is currently protected by NSO 14. The proposed southwest site would have little to no effect on existing geologic conditions. Given the scale of the proposed activities and the distance from perennial drainages, it is anticipated that the effects of the proposed activities would be minor and of short duration. Proposed mitigation would include operating in dry conditions and seeding to prevent excessive runoff and to promote timely revegetation.

*No Action Alternative:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The no action alternative would have no effect on soil resources.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Upland Soils: The proposed action and the no action alternative would not likely prevent Standard 1 for Upland Soils from being met.

### **Vegetation (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3)**

#### Affected Environment:

The project area is located at approximately 7,900 feet elevation near the top of Lookout Mountain east of Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Vegetation in the project area consists of Gambel oak, mountain big sagebrush and other mesic mountain shrubs. Herbaceous understory vegetation includes bromes, bluegrasses, and other grasses and forbs.

#### Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

##### *Proposed Action:*

The proposed action involves removing rocks and adding fill material to two sites on Lookout Mountain to create two level launch pads. Ground disturbance would result in the loss of approximately 300 square feet (2.1 acres) of vegetation.

##### **Mitigation:**

To aid in restoring a native plant community to the site and to provide a low-growing, non-clumping grass cover that will not impede foot traffic but will minimize the potential for noxious weeds to invade and become established, all disturbed areas will be seeded with native perennial grasses adapted to the site. The seed mix and application rate are given below:

<u>Species of Seed</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Application Rate (PLS lbs/ac)</u>
Western wheatgrass	Arriba, Rosana	9.0
Thickspike wheatgrass	Critana, Bannock, or Schwendimar	7.0
Letterman needlegrass	VNS	<u>5.8</u>
<b>Total</b>		<b>21.8 PLS lbs/ac</b>

The seed shall be certified free of noxious weeds. Seed may contain up to 2.0 percent of “other crop” seed by weight, including the seed of other agronomic crops and native plants; however, a lower percent of other crop seed is recommended. Seed tags or other official documentation shall be supplied to the Authorized Officer at least 7 days before the date of proposed seeding for acceptance. Seed that does not meet the above criteria shall not be applied to public lands.

The seed will be broadcast-seeding, followed by raking or harrowing to provide ¼ to ½ inch of soil cover. Minimize foot traffic at the site until seedlings become established.

*No Action Alternative:* Under the no action alternative, no rock removal or hauling of fill material to the site would occur. There would be no impacts to vegetation other than the trampling of the area that already occurs due to existing uses of the area.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also **Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial**): A formal Land Health Assessment has not yet been completed in this area. The proposed action, with implementation of mitigation specified above, would have minimal impacts on plant communities and would not likely prevent the area from meeting Standard 3 for healthy plant communities.

**Wildlife, Aquatic (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3):**

Affected Environment:

The proposed activity is located near the head of Cemetery Gulch a small ephemeral drainages that drains into the Roaring Fork River approximately 1.7 miles downstream. The Roaring Fork River contains brown, brook, and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and mottled sculpin. In addition, numerous aquatic insects are present.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

*Proposed Action:*

Vegetation clearing is proposed to occur on the top of Lookout Mountain on a relatively flat area on the edge of Lookout Mountain Park. The site is already somewhat disturbed as the site is currently used as a launch site. Proposed vegetation clearing and ground disturbance would be minimal. Seeding should help to stabilize soils at the site. Any offsite sediment should be minimal and not impact downstream fisheries.

*No Action Alternative:*

Under the no action alternative, no ground clearing or vegetation removal would occur and no impacts to aquatic wildlife would result.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also **Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial**): A formal Land Health Assessment has not been completed for the project area. Based on the size and location of the proposed activity, the action should have minimal bearing on the watersheds ability to meet, move towards meeting, or maintaining Standard 3 for aquatic wildlife.

**Wildlife, Terrestrial (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3)**

Affected Environment:

The proposed action lies within a mixed mountain shrub community. This habitat type provides cover, forage, breeding and nesting habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including mule deer, elk, wild turkey, small mammals and birds. The project area does not provide critical habitat for any wildlife species.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

*Proposed Action:* The proposed action has a low potential to disturb wildlife species or degrade wildlife habitat. Since the area is already being used for launching purposes, removing a small amount of vegetation would have minimal impacts to wildlife. Wildlife species may be displaced from the project area due to noise and an increase in human presence during project construction. Most species would return after the project is complete and are likely already habituated to some human presence.

*No Action Alternative:* Under the no action alternative, no ground clearing or vegetation removal would occur and no impacts to terrestrial wildlife would result.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also **Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic**): A formal Land Health Assessment has not been completed for this area. The proposed action would not preclude this standard from being met for terrestrial wildlife.

**PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

Garfield County

**INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Kay Hopkins	Outdoor Recreation Planner	VRM, WSR, WSA
Michael Kinser	Rangeland Management Specialist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Cheryl Harrison	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Religious Concerns
Jeff O'Connell	Hydrologist	Soil, Air, Water, Geology
Brian Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Terrestrial Wildlife, T/E/S Wildlife
Dereck Wilson	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-native Species, Range Management
Carla DeYoung	Ecologist	ACEC, T/E/S Plants, Vegetation, Land Health Assessments
Carole Huey	Realty Specialist	Realty Actions and Authorizations

## FONSI

### CO-140-2008-060 EA

The environmental assessment, analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action, has been reviewed. The proposed action with mitigation measures result in a finding of no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

### DECISION RECORD

#### DECISION:

It is my decision to approve the proposal submitted and implemented by, Tom Vail representing the Glenwood Springs hang gliding community for vegetation clearance at the Lookout Mountain launch site. This decision will facilitate a safer launch location for the public using the area and provide for economical and environmentally sound project. .

#### RATIONALE:

1. Approval of the proposed action is to facilitate the vegetation removal proposal submitted by the Tom Vail representing the Glenwood Springs hang gliding community. This action will improve existing conditions at the current launch site and provide for a safer launch environment.
2. The environmental impacts have been mitigated with measures included in the attached Conditions of Approval.

#### MITIGATION MEASURES:

##### 1. Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that if newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area must stop and the agency Authorized Officer notified immediately (36 CFR 800.13). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), requires that if inadvertent discovery of Native American Remains or Objects occurs, activity must cease in the area of discovery, a reasonable effort made to protect the item(s) discovered, and immediate notice made to the BLM Authorized Officer, as well as the appropriate Native American group(s) (IV.C.2). Notice may be followed by a 30-day delay (NAGPRA Section 3(d)). Further actions also require compliance under the provisions of NHPA and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act.

2. Proposed mitigation would include operating in dry conditions and seeding to prevent excessive runoff and to promote timely revegetation.

3. To aid in restoring a native plant community to the site and to provide a low-growing, non-clumping grass cover that will not impede foot traffic but will minimize the potential for noxious weeds to invade and become established, all disturbed areas will be seeded with native perennial grasses adapted to the site. The seed mix and application rate are given below:

<u>Species of Seed</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Application Rate (PLS lbs/ac)</u>
Western wheatgrass	Arriba, Rosana	9.0
Thickspike wheatgrass	Critana, Bannock, or Schwendimar	7.0
Letterman needlegrass	VNS	5.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>21.8 PLS lbs/ac</b>

The seed shall be certified free of noxious weeds. Seed may contain up to 2.0 percent of "other crop" seed by weight, including the seed of other agronomic crops and native plants; however, a lower percent of other crop seed is recommended. Seed tags or other official documentation shall be supplied to the Authorized Officer at least 7 days before the date of proposed seeding for acceptance. Seed that does not meet the above criteria shall not be applied to public lands.

The seed will be broadcast-seeding, followed by raking or harrowing to provide ¼ to ½ inch of soil cover. Minimize foot traffic at the site until seedlings become established.

NAME OF PREPARER: Kay Hopkins, Outdoor Recreation Planner

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

  
Karl Mendone

Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist

DATE SIGNED: 7/27/2009

APPENDICES: Location map

ATTACHMENTS: None

## Lookout Mt. Hang Gliding Launch Improvement Sites

