

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2005-131-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Big Trujillo Wash Recreation Site Improvements

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T1N R102W Section 7

APPLICANT: BLM

ISSUES AND CONCERNS (optional): White River ACEC and T&ES (aquatic & terrestrial)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: Upgrade approximately 1000 foot length of existing river access route from unimproved native surface two track to allow for all weather safe travel of low clearance vehicles by increasing route width from 12 foot running surface to 18 feet with a grader and surfacing with pit run gravel. To aid in stream bank stabilization, willows will be planted on sandy terraced banks. Tamarisk and Russian Olive trees will be hand-cut and hand-treated with BLM approved chemical. A fence will be installed (see attached map) to inhibit vehicle and foot travel through proposed vegetative treatment areas to decrease the likelihood of re-introduction of noxious/invasive plant species. Hazardous cottonwood trees (to be determined and flagged by office Forester) will be removed to provide for safe public use. Install information kiosk to provide river use, ACEC discussion and ethical information (such as Tread Lightly! And Leave No Trace). Install site identification signage along RBC road 2. Rio Blanco County Road and Bridge will provide all labor and materials for road improvements. (See attached map)

No Action Alternative: No upgrades would occur and no area information would be provided at the Big Trujillo site.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION: Current public access profile is degraded, unimproved native material two track route with no public information concerning White River recreation use. The proposed action would enhance public access and provide a managed recreational experience along the White River to derive specific benefits identified as “1) individual

cultural/historical/rural lifestyle/quality of life/satisfaction, family orientation, 2) socio-cultural-environmental sensitivity, 3) economic – local and regional economic growth/stability, and 4) environmental – enhanced environmental ethics.”

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: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: 2-42

Decision Language: Within “White River ACEC (Kenny Reservoir to Shavetail Bridge)...establish launch sites/interpretive facilities” to provide for “canoeing, cold and warm water fishing and camping” activities for the following experience/benefits related to: “1) individual cultural/historical/rural lifestyle/quality of life/satisfaction, family orientation, 2) socio-cultural-environmental sensitivity, 3) economic – local and regional economic growth/stability, and 4) environmental – enhanced environmental ethic.”

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These 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. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The site of the proposed actions is located approximately 12.31 miles south of Dinosaur National Monument which is a PSD Class II airshed. Special designations regarding visibility have been established within the monument boundaries. Implementation of the proposed action will not compromise air quality locally or within the monument boundaries.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Temporary increases in fugitive dust levels may occur with upgrading of the road. However, the proposed action calls for surfacing the roadway with pit run gravel which will decrease long term fugitive dust production.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: The BLM will obtain all required local, state, and federal air quality permits necessary for completion of the proposed action. A maximum speed limit of 15 mph should be implemented and continued maintenance (blading) of the access road will be necessary to minimize fugitive dust levels. Any stockpiled soils associated with road upgrading will be wetted to minimize dust production.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: The project site is encompassed by the White River Riparian ACEC, which was designated to highlight management and protection of riverine riparian communities, bald eagle nest and roost habitats associated with cottonwood gallery forests, and aquatic and floodplain habitats that constitute designated critical habitat for the endangered Colorado pike-minnow. Two Controlled Surface Use Stipulations (CSU) numbers 2 and 5, from the White River ROD/RMP would apply.

The primary management objectives associated with this ACEC's management includes:

- Maintaining or improving to proper functioning condition, bank, channel and floodplain processes associated with designated critical habitats for listed fishes of the Upper Colorado River Basin (i.e., Colorado pike-minnow).
- Emphasize management practices that maintain or improve overall riparian conditions and development opportunities
- Land actions would be conducted in a manner consistent with the maintenance or enhancement of bald eagle riverine habitat suitability and utility
- Plants established in the ACEC should be native forms, and unless unattainable, from locally gathered seed

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: See discussion in Threatened and Endangered Species section. In summary, the proposed action would complement ACEC objectives by maintaining or restoring the site's long-term site potential as a properly functioning riverine riparian community and endangered fisheries, and its short and long-term utility as bald eagle habitat.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: See discussion in Threatened and Endangered Species section.

Mitigation: The following controlled surface use stipulations are applicable to this action, but because the action is consistent with, or complements the stipulation's intended objectives, it recommended that both stipulations be excepted.

CSU-2 (WR-12) ACECs (White River Riparian, Coal Oil Rim, Oil Spring Mountain, East Douglas Creek) These ACECs are known to contain, or have potential to contain, T/E plants or plants that are candidates for listing as T/E, State of Colorado plant species of concern, BLM sensitive plants, remnant vegetation associations, and/or unique plant communities. A plant inventory will be conducted prior to approving any surface disturbing activities within the ACEC boundaries. Surface disturbance will not be allowed within mapped locations of these plants. The presence of the above listed plants would require relocating surface disturbance or facilities more than 200 meters. The timing required for conducting the plant inventories may require deferring activities longer than 60 days.

EXCEPTION: This stipulation may be excepted by the Area Manager if an environmental analysis of the proposed action indicates that the plants of concern would not be affected.

MODIFICATION: None.

WAIVER: None.

CSU-5 (WR-15) Bald Eagle Nest, Roost, and Perch Substrate This is a controlled surface use area for maintaining the long term suitability, utility and development opportunities for specialized habitat features involving nest, roost, and perch substrate on federal lands. Prior to authorizing surface disturbance within this area, and pending conferral or consultation with the USFWS as required by the Endangered Species Act, the Area Manager may require the proponent/applicant to submit a plan of development that would demonstrate that: 1) involvement of cottonwood stands or cottonwood regeneration areas have been avoided to the extent practicable; 2) special reclamation measures or design features are incorporated that would accelerate recovery and/or reestablishment of affected cottonwood communities; 3) the pre-development potential of affected floodplains to develop or support riverine cottonwood communities has not been diminished; and 4) the current/future utility of such cottonwood substrate for bald eagle use would not be impaired.

EXCEPTION: The Area Manager may grant an exception to this stipulation if an environmental analysis indicates that the proposed or conditioned activities would not affect the long term suitability or utility of habitat features or diminish opportunities for natural floodplain functions. Surface disturbance and occupation may also be authorized in the event that established impacts to habitat values would be compensated or offset to the satisfaction of the BLM in consultation with USFWS and CDOW.

MODIFICATION: Integral with exception and stipulation.

WAIVER: None

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: There are no recorded sites in the project area. A Class III Pedestrian Survey was completed. No new Cultural Resource materials were uncovered.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: On site the following noxious weeds have been found, tamarisk and hoary cress.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The hoary cress was treated in June of 2005. Tamarisk is found on site and can be controlled by cut stump or bark treatments with herbicide. Additional use of the area would increase the opportunity for introduction of noxious weed species.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: By not developing this area the noxious weed problems the inventory intervals become less frequent and the opportunity for a large scale infestation increases as would the cost of control.

Mitigation: Noxious weed treatments would comply with BLM policy and regulation.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Tamarisk and low-density cottonwood-dominated riparian communities associated with the lower White River support an assemblage of breeding birds during the months of May, June, and July that include the more specialized riparian associates: blue and black-headed grosbeak, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, and song sparrow, as well as cavity-dwelling species that would be expected to occupy the site's scattered Fremont cottonwoods, including northern flicker, American kestrel, and European starling. The majority of the site above the first terrace is dominated by an open greasewood stand with an annual weed understory (primarily cheatgrass). These habitats support relatively depauperate breeding communities consisting of such generalists as blue-gray gnatcatcher and western meadowlark. None of the birds associated with the project area are categorized as having higher conservation interest by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (i.e., Land Bird Conservation Plan).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Elements of the proposed action that would have potential to influence migratory bird breeding efforts include: road improvement activities, the removal of existing high-risk cottonwood trees, physical removal and herbicide treatment of tamarisk, Russian olive, and hoary cress, protective fencing of riparian vegetation, installation of revetment, and reestablishment of native woody and herbaceous vegetation.

Road improvements would take place primarily in and immediately adjacent to the existing track. It is likely that greasewood habitats lying immediately adjacent to the existing access road would support little, if any, nesting activity. Cottonwood removal, treatment of exotic species, revetment installation, and reestablishment of native vegetation (e.g., seeding or transplants) would take place outside the nesting season and would have no consequence on nesting efforts. Due to workforce constraints, installation of protective fencing may take place during the nesting season, however, this activity would involve a narrow corridor between the existing access road and river, and would involve only herbaceous vegetation or initial woody redevelopment (e.g., cottonwood, willow)—a situation conducive to the support of no more than a single song sparrow territory. Collectively, the proposed action would have a low potential to affect any more than 2 migratory bird nesting attempts, none of which involving birds of higher conservation interest.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no action authorized that would have potential to disrupt migratory bird nesting activity.

Mitigation: Cottonwood removal, revetment installation, treatment of exotic species, and reestablishment of native vegetation (e.g., seeding or transplants) would be scheduled to be implemented outside the nesting season of May 15 to July 15.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: The general project area provides nesting and wintering habitat for the threatened bald eagle and critical habitat (i.e., channel and 100-year floodplain) for the Colorado pike-minnow.

Beginning about 1995, bald eagles established a single nest over a several year period 7 miles downstream of the project site. This site was closely associated with, and generally was situated between, cottonwood stands that also function as communal winter roosts. All of these features are located on private lands near the Utah border. No nesting or concentrated roosting activity has been noted between these features and Rangely (about 4 miles upstream).

The project site itself supports about a dozen cottonwood trees on abandoned river terraces. The trees form 2 single lines of widely spaced trees (i.e., along old terrace margins) and do not form a cohesive stand. Most of these trees contain dead and dying limbs and many have been further damaged by a recent wildfire; several have previously been felled and cut for firewood. These trees do not appear to be particularly old and do not possess structure or stature that would be expected to offer nor develop potential as eagle nest or roost trees.

The lower White River below Taylor Draw dam is occupied by adult forms of pike-minnow; the river is not known to fulfill any reproductive functions upstream of Utah. Maintaining proper functioning condition of channel features, including the river's 100-year floodplain, is the only recovery action applicable to the White River in Colorado.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Proposed graveling and minor widening of this parcel's access road is not expected to have substantive influence on the frequency, intensity, or nature of public visitation on or off the river (i.e., unintentional catch of pike-minnow or non-motorized boating disturbance of bald eagle nest activity). Road improvement is intended to reduce progressive site deterioration that typically attends bypass of road damage. The removal of 6 or 7 fire-damaged trees that pose a risk to day-use activities would have no effective influence on the current or foreseeable utility of this site for bald eagle roost or nest functions. Protective fencing, bank stabilization practices, and removal of tamarisk, Russian olive, and hoary cress on the river terraces would help promote the establishment of native and more erosion-resistant forms of bank vegetation and increase the likelihood of developing a stable site where cottonwoods can establish and mature. Interpretive facilities may help reduce the tendency for the public to target mature cottonwoods or snags as a source of firewood. It is believed that an opposing rock outcrop limits potential distribution patterns to narrow lines of trees along the river margin, but this structure would remain valuable as opportunistic hunting perches for eagles well into the future.

Eliminating seed sources of exotic plants and enhancing native vegetation expression and bank/floodplain formation/stabilization would contribute to proper functioning condition of the lower White River system on a local scale. The proposed action would be consistent with Colorado pike-minnow recovery objectives, but would not be expected to have any effective influence on overall riverine and aquatic conditions for the fish.

In summary, it is BLM's contention that the proposed action may affect, but would be unlikely to adversely affect populations or habitat associated with bald eagle and Colorado pike-minnow. Although consistent with restoration of proper functioning condition of pike-minnow critical habitat, proposed riverine enhancement work would yield benefits that would be discountable in scale and extent.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Ignoring ongoing recreational use along the river has resulted in the deterioration of several BLM river parcels, particularly from random day-use practices, including unauthorized firewood cutting and unregulated vehicle travel. This pattern of use is, to a lesser degree, taking place on the project area. Although the influences on bald eagle and Colorado pike-minnow habitats would be negligible, it is likely that without BLM attention terrace vegetation and bank/floodplain stability on this parcel would progressively deteriorate. Further, opportunities to enhance native plant expression on a local scale and more broadly educate the public on the values of riverine systems (e.g., damage associated with tree removal) would be foregone.

Mitigation: Most aspects of this project were specifically intended to enhance riverine conditions consistent with management of the White River ACEC and associated special status species habitats, including: the removal of exotic vegetation, revetment installation, redevelopment of native vegetation forms, and protective fencing.

Because this action potentially affects both bald eagle habitat and critical habitat associated with Colorado pike-minnow, BLM would conduct appropriate levels of Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. If necessary, conservation measures developed in the course of consultation would be integrated with project implementation.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Constituting relatively isolated and fragmented river reaches; BLM-administered river parcels are not influential in affecting overall river function or conditions (e.g., the proliferation of exotic vegetation). Although Taylor Draw dam is normally operated as run-of-river, this facility modifies river function such that sediment transport has been substantially reduced and major spring runoff events may be attenuated (e.g., prolonged bank-full flows and reduced incidence of flows escaping onto floodplain terraces). In certain respects, these factors limit BLM's ability to meet the public land health standards.

On a small scale, the project site is developing a narrow operable floodplain that is colonized and effectively stabilized by obligate woody and herbaceous riparian forms. By selectively removing exotic and noxious vegetation (e.g., Russian olive, hoary cress, tamarisk), installing revetment, and fencing to protect vegetation development on the river's floodplain, banks, and lower terraces, the proposed action would favor improved or accelerated development of native riparian forms that possess superior erosion resistance, thereby enhancing bank stability and floodplain formation--river functions consistent with the land health standards as well as management objectives for critical pike-minnow habitats.

Although the project area does not presently support cottonwood trees suitable as bald eagle roost or nest habitat, the proposed action, by increasing management presence, providing

educational materials on the values derived by cottonwood habitats, and promoting channel functions that provide sites for cottonwood regeneration in the long term, is consistent with achieving the standard with respect to bald eagle on a localized and long term basis.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of at sites included in the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this project. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants proposed for use may contain some hazardous constituents, they would be stored, used and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws, and the generation of hazardous wastes would not be anticipated. Solid wastes would be properly disposed of.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no-action alternative.

Mitigation: The applicant shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed actions.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located at the Big Trujillo Wash recreation site which is situated on the left bank of the White River in stream segment 21. A review of the Colorado's 1989 Nonpoint Source Assessment Report (plus updates), the 305(b) report, the 303(d) list and the White River ROD/RMP was done to see if any water quality concerns have been identified. It should be noted that stream segment 21 of the White River Basin has been listed on the states monitoring and evaluation list (M&E List) for sediment impairments. In addition, the White River ROD/RMP identifies stream segment 21 as NOT meeting water quality standards for sediment, salinity, and nutrients.

At the site of the proposed action, approximately eighty-five feet of the left bank (see attached map) is introducing significant volumes of sediment directly in to the White River. At this location, the channel is displaying traits of a C5 channel type. A Rosgen survey will be conducted at low flows to confirm this.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is aimed at restoring stream bank stability along the left bank of the White River at the Big Trujillo Wash recreation site. Installation of 3-4 log spurs will provide short term bank protection while dissipating energy at the site and forming a bankfull bench (up stream portion of the existing point bar) which will provide longer term protection.

Following completion, the rate of sediment supply to the sediment impaired White River from the affected bank will be subdued while allowing natural channel/bar migration to persist. Development of a bankfull bench at this location will provide additional riparian habitat. In addition, construction of log spurs will increase in-stream cover beneficial for fish habitat.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No improvements will be made to the recreation site. Bank cutting will continue and increased sediment loads to the White River will result.

Mitigation: The BLM will obtain the necessary permit from the Army Corps of Engineers prior to any construction within the high water mark. Before construction, cross sectional and longitudinal profiles will be conducted to acquire baseline channel/bank morphology data. Additional monitoring will be necessary to assess the functionality of stabilization efforts following completion.

The upper two feet of the existing cut-bank will be back-sloped (2:1 ratio) prior to installation of log-spurs. Large woody debris (LWD) used in construction of log-spurs will be no less than 15” in diameter and composed of wind damaged cottonwood trees located at the site. Log-spurs will be situated at bankfull to allow for natural floodplain development. To better anchor LWD, root masses will be kept intact and buried 2-3 feet deep and at least 10 feet back from the existing cut bank. Approximately the last 2-3 feet of each log-spur will also be buried in the channel to keep the structures in place. To reduce unnatural scour at the project location, LWD will NOT be suspended above any part of the channel/bank and log-spurs will be installed at an angle of 20-30 degrees (pointing up-stream) to the bank. Log-spurs will be evenly distributed (every 21 feet) along the affected bank.

Following installation of log-spurs, the back sloped portion of the upper bank (above bankfull) will be covered with jute netting and planted with willows to further stabilize the flood plain. This step will be critical as the proposed action calls for the removal of undesirable riparian species such as tamarisk and Russian olive.

All operations associated with bank stabilization (log spurs and recontouring the flood plain) will be permitted only during times of low flow.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The White River from Meeker to the Utah border has been identified as a perennial stream NOT meeting state water quality standards. However, the proposed actions will potentially improve water quality in stream segment 21. Further degradation of existing water quality is not anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: The project is adjacent to the White River. The riparian zones are functioning and have all the components of stable banks and floodplains. The riparian zone contains tamarisk which is a noxious weed.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The increased public use of the area is expected to locally disturb streambank vegetation but is not expected to affect overall streambank stability.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The public has access to this area and probably make use of the streambanks. Use would continue but impacts to the streambanks would be less than the proposed action.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The stream system meets the public land health standards for riparian systems and is expected to continue under both alternatives.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, Wilderness, or Wild and Scenic Rivers, threatened, endangered or sensitive plants exist within the area affected by the proposed action. For threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species Public Land Health Standard is not applicable since neither the proposed nor the no-action alternative would have any influence on populations of, or habitats potentially occupied by, special status plants. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The following data is a product of an order III soil survey conducted by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The accompanying table highlights important soil characteristics. A complete summary of this information can be found at the White River Field Office.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Slope	Ecological site	Salinity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Bedrock
25	Colorow sandy loam	0-3%	Sandy Salt desert	<2	Medium	Slight	>60
91	Torriorthents-Rock Outcrop complex	15-90%	Stoney Foothills		Rapid	Very high	10-20

25-Colorow sandy loam is a deep, moderately well drained soil found on alluvial valley floors, flood plains, and low stream terraces. It formed in alluvium derived dominantly from sandstone. Slope is 0 to 3 percent. The native vegetation is mainly low brush, grasses, and willow. Typically, the surface layer is pale brown sandy loam 5 inches thick. The upper 27 inches of the underlying material is light brownish gray, stratified loam and fine sandy loam, the next 11 inches is pale brown, stratified fine sandy loam and loamy fine sand, and the lower part to a depth of 60 inches or more is pale brown, stratified sandy loam and sand. In some areas the surface layer is loam or loamy fine sand. Permeability of the Colorow soil is moderately rapid. Available water capacity is moderate. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of water erosion is slight. The soil is subject to rare periods of flooding. The water table is at a depth of 4 to 6 feet.

91-Torriorthents-Rock outcrop complex (15 to 90 percent slopes) is located in extremely rough and eroded areas on mountains, hills, ridges, and canyonsides. Slopes mainly face south. The native vegetation is mainly sparse shrubs and grasses with some pinyon and juniper trees. Torriorthents are very shallow to moderately deep and are well drained and somewhat excessively drained. They formed in residuum and colluvium derived dominantly from sandstone, shale, limestone, and siltstone. No single profile of Torriorthents is typical, but one commonly observed in the survey area has a surface layer of pale brown channery loam about 3 inches thick. The underlying material is very pale brown channery loam, very channery loam, or fine sandy loam about 13 inches thick. Shale or sandstone is at a depth of 16 inches. Torriorthents are calcareous throughout. In some areas the surface layer is stony or flaggy. Permeability of the Torriorthents is moderate. Available water capacity is very low. Effective rooting depth is 10 to 20 inches. Runoff is very rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very high.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Increased public use may hinder revegetation efforts. Widening of the roadway from 12' to 18' will increase total disturbed surface area and decrease infiltration and permeability rates.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No improvements will occur and the condition of the access road will continue to deteriorate.

Mitigation: Surfaces cleared for upgrading the access road must be re-seeded and sufficient ground cover must be re-applied to minimize erosion. Travel pathways should be clearly marked to help mitigate further disturbance on re-vegetated areas.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: Soils within the project area meet the criteria established in the standards for upland soils. With proper mitigation, soil health will not be adversely impacted by the proposed actions.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The project area is a cottonwood terrace composed of cottonwoods, coyote willows, tamarisk, sagebrush and a variety of forbs and grasses. The vegetation of the area is relatively unaffected by grazing or public use with the exception of firewood harvest of dead cottonwoods.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: There is expected to be an increase in recreational use of the area with expectant damage to shrubs, forbs and grasses from off-road vehicle use, trampling and campfires. Harvest of woody materials for fuel wood is expected to continue or increase.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The public would continue to harvest firewood and fish, with disturbances of vegetation. Impacts are expected to be less than the proposed action.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): On those areas impacted by recreational use there would be a loss in vegetation integrity and would not meet the standard for plant community health.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The lower White River is a turbid, low-gradient warm water fishery that supports channel catfish and a host of native and exotic non-game fish, including the endangered Colorado pike-minnow (see Threatened and Endangered Species section).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action's influence on aquatic habitat is discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species section.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no-action alternative would influence aquatic habitat in the same manner discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species section.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): The discussion in the Threatened and Endangered Species section is applicable to this health standard.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: These riverine parcels along the lower White River are classified as deer severe winter range. These ranges are used by deer primarily during the late fall through

early spring months. The availability and quality of winter forage on this parcel is low (i.e., dominated by greasewood and basin big sagebrush) and predominantly annual-based herbaceous forage provides an abundant, but short duration forage source in spring. A limited amount of summer-long use is associated with riparian vegetation production, but use is constrained by a general lack of contiguous cover and proximity to a well-traveled county road. It is likely that non-game bird and mammal populations on this stretch of river are heavily influenced by the preponderance of exotic forms of vegetation (i.e., the supplanting of willow and Fremont cottonwood by tamarisk and Russian olive and the domination of terrace understories by cheatgrass and other exotic annuals). Although nongame wildlife affiliated with the lower White River are thought to be fully represented, it is likely that their abundance is much lower than the community's potential.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Actions associated with vegetation treatments and road maintenance would occur outside the primary period of big game occupation. Site development would not be expected to alter the intensity or frequency of seasonal public use and would, therefore, have no effective influence on the utility or suitability of this parcel for overall wildlife use.

Removal and/or treatment of tamarisk, Russian olive, and hoary cress and efforts to reestablish and protect native shrubs, trees and herbaceous species on this parcel would, on a local scale, help increase the likelihood of developing stable terraces where cottonwoods and willow can establish and mature. Although the project site is small and federal lands do not constitute a large fraction of riverine extent, as the variety and ground cover density of native vegetation are more thoroughly expressed in riparian and adjacent shrubland communities in the longer term, it is likely that a more complete and appropriate complement of shrubland and riparian-associated non-game wildlife would develop and/or increase in abundance (e.g., grosbeaks, chat, western jumping mouse, sagebrush vole).

Although erosion-resistant rock outcrops opposite this site would tend to limit future development of cottonwoods to narrow lines of trees along the river margin, proposed interpretive facilities may help reduce the tendency for the public to target mature cottonwoods or snags as a source of firewood.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Under the no action alternative, progressive deterioration from off-road vehicle use and indiscriminate day use would likely continue. Animal populations and habitats associated with the site would likely remain static or undergo slow declining trends.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): The project site, both from the terrestrial and riparian habitat respect, does not currently meet the land health standards for animal communities. The preponderance of weedy annuals on the terraces and exotic riparian shrubs and trees along the river detract substantially from potential habitat utility. This situation would reflect a no-action alternative. Removal and/or treatment of tamarisk, Russian olive, and hoary cress and efforts to

reestablish and protect native shrubs, trees and grasses on this parcel would, in the longer term, help satisfy the land health standard on a local scale. Although the site is small and federal lands do not constitute a large fraction of riverine extent, as native forms of vegetation are more thoroughly expressed, both in variety and ground cover density, it is likely that a more complete and appropriate complement of shrubland and riparian-associated non-game wildlife would develop. Although on a local scale, these actions would satisfy the land health standard by improving riverine conditions and removing a source of exotic weedy species from downriver dissemination, the limited extent of this parcel would have no effective consequence on the system as a whole.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation			X
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management		X	
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights		X	
Law Enforcement		X	
Noise		X	
Paleontology	X		
Rangeland Management		X	
Realty Authorizations			X
Recreation			X
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment: Current access road to Big Trujillo Wash river access is an high vehicle clearance unmaintained BLM route with a usable running surface of eight feet in width and increasing in spots. As rutting of the route surface occurs, vehicles will travel off travel surface to avoid ruts increasing the width of the route. Motorized vehicles in this area are limited to existing routes; no cross country travel is permitted.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Route will be surfaced with gravel and running width will be increased to accommodate safe travel of low clearance vehicles.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Access road will continue to degrade as a result of vehicular use as well as an increase in route width due to rut avoidance.

Mitigation: Routes shall be signed and a BLM road number will be assigned so regular scheduled maintenance may occur.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The area contains mature cottonwoods which are old dead and dying. Cottonwoods are not expected to establish where the mature trees are currently found without being planted. Russian olives a noxious weed species is found throughout the Rangely area and is expected to invade the project area. These trees do not provide forest products or useful materials.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The cottonwood trees are expected to die in the near future and be removed by individuals for fuel wood. This site may offer the opportunity to plant and reestablish cottonwoods as a part of the recreational development.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The cottonwood trees are expected to die in the near future and be removed by individuals for fuel wood.

Mitigation: None

REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS

Affected Environment: The proposed action will affect several rights-of-way and one power withdrawal in the vicinity of the Bib Trujillo Wash Recreation Site Improvements.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action will be crossing pipeline right-of-way COD055331 (Chevron Pipeline Company), is the area where two power lines are located COC014640 and COC01578A (Moon Lake Electric Association), and one telephone line COC28235 (Century Telephone). Also the access comes off County Road 2. There is an withdrawal for a power site, Reservation 31, Executive Order 7/21/1910, in place where the proposed recreation site is being located.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: The Colorado One Call procedure will have to be enacted in order to do any construction work in the vicinity of the pipeline and the other utility facilities.

Rio Blanco County will need to be notified of the proposal to access this site leaving County Road 2 and their specifications for ingress and egress will have to be applied.

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The proposed action occurs within the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). BLM custodially manages the ERMA to provide for unstructured recreation activities such as hunting, dispersed camping, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and off-highway vehicle use.

The project area has been delineated a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM). SPM physical and social recreation setting is typically characterized by a natural appearing environment with few administrative controls, low interaction between users but evidence of other users may be present. SPM recreation experience is characterized by a high probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

The project area has been delineated/most resembles a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of Roaded Natural (RN). RN physical and social recreation setting may have modifications which range from being easily noticed to strongly dominant to observers within the area. However, from sensitive travel routes and use areas these alterations would remain unnoticed or visually subordinate. There is strong evidence of designed roads and/or highways. Structures are generally scattered, remaining visually subordinate or unnoticed to the sensitive travel route observer. Structures may include utility corridors, microwave installations and so on. Frequency of contact is moderate to high on roads and low to moderate on trails and away from roads. RN recreation experience is characterized by a moderate probability of isolation from the sights and sounds of humans that offers an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: With an increase in development and access an increase in recreation use is expected. Opportunities for unstructured recreation will continue.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Continued unmanaged recreation use would continue and resource damage to other resources would likely continue unabated.

Mitigation: None.

VISUAL RESOURCE

Affected Environment: The proposed action is within a visual resource management (VRM) class II area. The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is small in scale relative to the surrounding landscape; therefore, any modifications will be unseen to the

casual observer from the key observation point along Rio Blanco County road 2, and VRM II objectives will be met.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impact on visual resources.

Mitigation: None.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: The proposed action would enhance public access within the White River ACEC (Kenny Reservoir to Shavetail Bridge) and provide a managed recreational experience along the White River to derive specific benefits as identified in the White River ROD/RMP. Cumulative impacts from recreation development were analyzed in the White River Resource Area PRMP/FEIS and carried forward in the White River ROD/RMP. This current proposed action will not exceed what was analyzed in the White River ROD/RMP

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: None

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights, Soils
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Tamara Meagley	Natural Resource Specialist	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Gabrielle Elliott	Archeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Robert Fowler	Forester	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Vegetation, Forest Management, Rangeland Management
Bo Brown	Hazmat collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Robert Fowler	Forester	Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Vegetation, Forest Management
Chris Ham	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation, Visual Resources
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Linda Jones	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Valerie Dobrich	Natural Resource Specialist	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

CO-110-2005-131-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) 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/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below. The proposed action is in concert with the objectives of the White River ROD/RMP in that it would provide a managed recreational experience along the White River in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of other resource values. The protection for other resource values will be assured by implementation of the mitigation measures described below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. The BLM will obtain all required local, state, and federal air quality permits necessary for completion of the proposed action. A maximum speed limit of 15 mph should be implemented and continued maintenance (blading) of the access road will be necessary to minimize fugitive dust levels. Any stockpiled soils associated with road upgrading will be wetted to minimize dust production.
2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:
 - whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
 - the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
 - a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
4. Noxious weed treatments would comply with BLM policy and regulation.
5. Cottonwood removal, revetment installation, treatment of exotic species, and reestablishment of native vegetation (e.g., seeding or transplants) would be scheduled to be implemented outside the nesting season of May 15 to July 15.
6. Because this action potentially affects both bald eagle habitat and critical habitat associated with Colorado pike-minnow, BLM would conduct appropriate levels of Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. If necessary, conservation measures developed in the course of consultation would be integrated with project implementation.
7. The applicant shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by the proposed actions.
8. The BLM will obtain the necessary permit from the Army Corps of Engineers prior to any construction within the high water mark. Before construction, cross sectional and longitudinal profiles will be conducted to acquire baseline channel/bank morphology data. Additional monitoring will be necessary to assess the functionality of stabilization efforts following completion.
9. The upper two feet of the existing cut-bank will be back-sloped (2:1 ratio) prior to installation of log-spurs. Large woody debris (LWD) used in construction of log-spurs will be no less than 15" in diameter and composed of wind damaged cottonwood trees located at the site. Log-spurs will be situated at bankfull to allow for natural floodplain development. To better anchor LWD, root masses will be kept intact and buried 2-3 feet deep and at least 10 feet back from the existing cut bank. Approximately the last 2-3 feet of each log-spur will also be buried in the channel to keep the structures in place. To reduce unnatural scour at the project location, LWD will NOT be suspended above any part of the channel/bank and log-spurs will be installed at an angle of 20-30 degrees (pointing up-stream) to the bank. Log-spurs will be evenly distributed (every 21 feet) along the affected bank.

10. Following installation of log-spurs, the back sloped portion of the upper bank (above bankfull) will be covered with jute netting and planted with willows to further stabilize the flood plain. This step will be critical as the proposed action calls for the removal of undesirable riparian species such as tamarisk and Russian olive.
11. All operations associated with bank stabilization (log spurs and recontouring the flood plain) will be permitted only during times of low flow.
12. Surfaces cleared for upgrading the access road must be re-seeded and sufficient ground cover must be re-applied to minimize erosion. Travel pathways should be clearly marked to help mitigate further disturbance on re-vegetated areas.
13. Routes shall be signed and a BLM road number will be assigned so regular scheduled maintenance may occur.
14. The Colorado One Call procedure will have to be enacted in order to do any construction work in the vicinity of the pipeline and the other utility facilities.
15. Rio Blanco County will need to be notified of the proposal to access this site leaving County Road 2 and their specifications for ingress and egress will have to be applied.

NAME OF PREPARER: Chris Ham

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

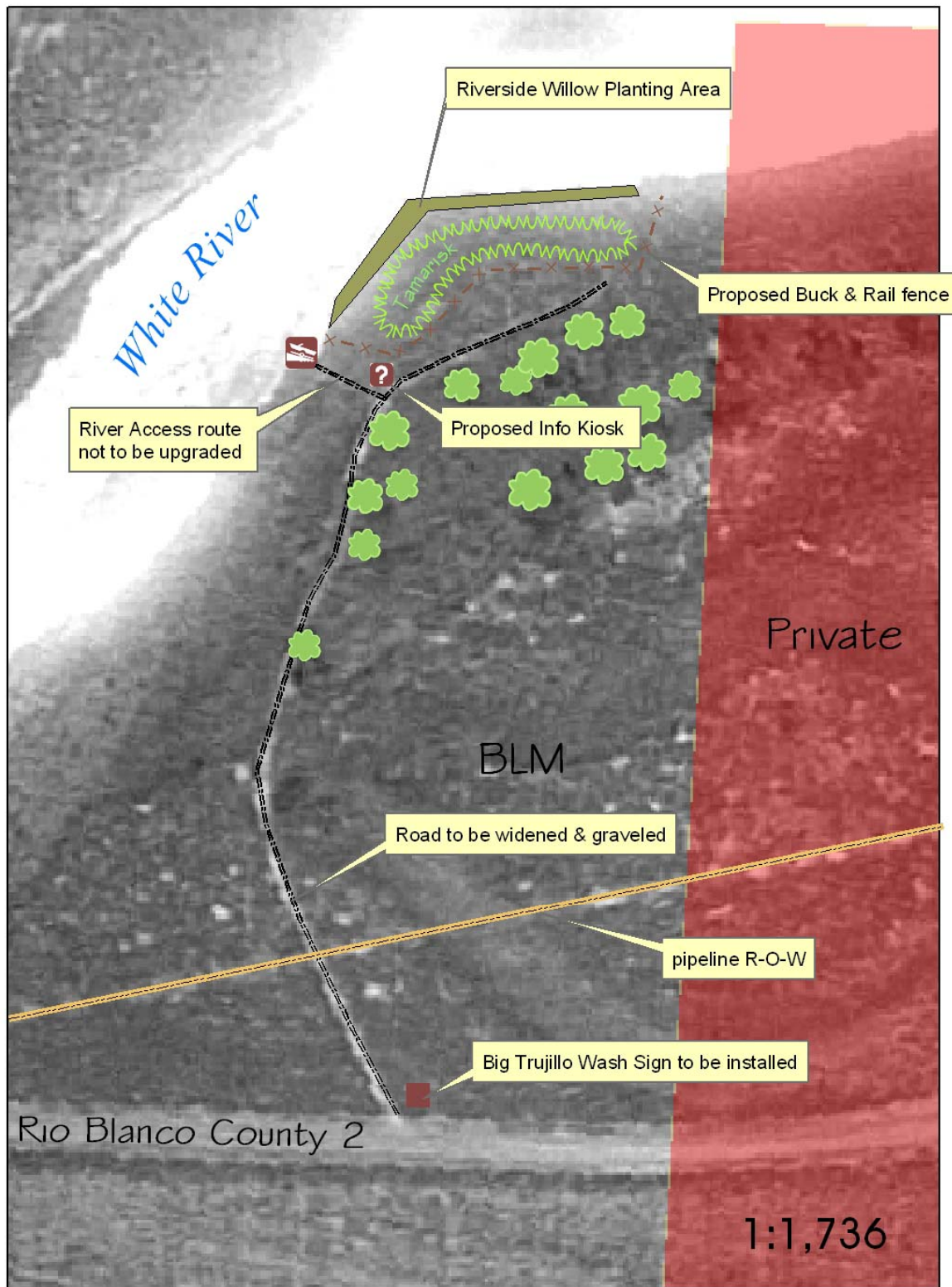
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Grant M. Paine
For Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: August 10, 2005

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed location of Recreation Improvements
Location map of the proposed action

Proposed Big Trujillo Wash Recreation Site Improvements

CO-110-05-131-EA



Location of Proposed Action CO-110-2005-131-EA

