



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# 2018 Briefing Book

Colorado

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# BLM Colorado Facts

**66.4 million** acres (66,386,000) total surface lands in Colorado • **8.3 million** BLM surface acres in Colorado • **27.1 million** BLM subsurface mineral acres in Colorado

## Energy



- 6,683 Producing Federal Oil & Gas Wells
- 2,222 Producing Federal Leases
- 1.5M Producing Acres
- 6 Producing Coal Mines



## National Conservation Lands 1.2M acres

- 2 National Monuments
- 3 National Conservation Areas
- 5 Wilderness Areas
- 53 Wilderness Study Areas
- 1 National Historic Trail
- 1 National Scenic Trail
- 2 Congressionally-designated Management Areas



## Heritage & Special Places

- 5 National Historic Landmarks
- 1 National Historic District
- 41 National Register of Historic Places Listings
- 52,938 Cultural Resource Sites
- 87 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- 2 National Natural Landmarks



## Recreation

- 354 Developed Recreational Sites
- 7 Colorado Scenic & Historical Byways
- 29 Special Recreation Management Areas
- 3 Blue Ribbon Fisheries
- 3 Fourteeners



## Resources

- 4 million acres of Forested Land
- 671 Wildlife Species
- 31 Endangered, Threatened, & Candidate Species
- 108 BLM Sensitive Species
- 7.9 million acres of Small Game Habitat
- 7 million acres of Big Game Habitat
- 4 Wild Horse Herd Management Areas
- 7.8 million acres Grazed by Livestock

## BLM HISTORY

The BLM's roots go back to the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. These laws allowed for the survey, sale, orderly settlement and governance of the original 13 colonies ceded to the federal government after the War of Independence. The geographer of the United States surveyed and numbered public lands into six-mile square townships.

As the United States acquired additional lands from Spain, France and other countries, Congress directed that the lands be explored, surveyed and made available for settlement. In 1812, Congress established the General Land Office in the Department of the Treasury to oversee these federal lands. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed and the nation's land base expanded further west, Congress encouraged settlement by enacting a wide variety of laws, including the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Mining Law of 1872.

These statutes allowed settlement in western territories. With the exception of the Mining Law of 1872 and the Desert Land Act of 1877 (which was amended), all have since been repealed or superseded by other statutes.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century marked a shift in federal land management priorities with the creation of the first national parks, forests and wildlife refuges. By withdrawing these lands from settlement, Congress amended the policy goals served by public lands. Instead of using them to promote settlement, Congress recognized that they should be held in public ownership for other resource values.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Congress took additional steps toward recognizing the value of public lands and directed the Executive Branch to manage activities on the remaining public lands. The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 allowed leasing, exploration and production of selected commodities such as coal, oil, gas and sodium to take place on public lands. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 established the U.S. Grazing Service to manage the public rangelands, while the Oregon and California Act of 1937 required sustained yield management of the timberlands in western Oregon.

In 1946, the Grazing Service merged with the General Land Office to form the Bureau of Land Management within the Department of the Interior. When the BLM was initially created, there were more than 2,000 unrelated and often conflicting laws for managing the

public lands. The BLM had no unified legislative mandate until Congress enacted the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

In FLPMA, Congress declared that these lands would remain in public ownership. Congress also gave the BLM the term "multiple use management," defined as "management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people."

## PUBLIC LAND STEWARDSHIP

In Colorado, the BLM manages 8.3 million acres of public lands and more than 27 million acres of mineral estate. Much of this land is concentrated in the western portion of the state. BLM lands in Colorado range from alpine tundra, colorful canyons and mesas in the southwest, to rolling sage covered hills in the northwest.

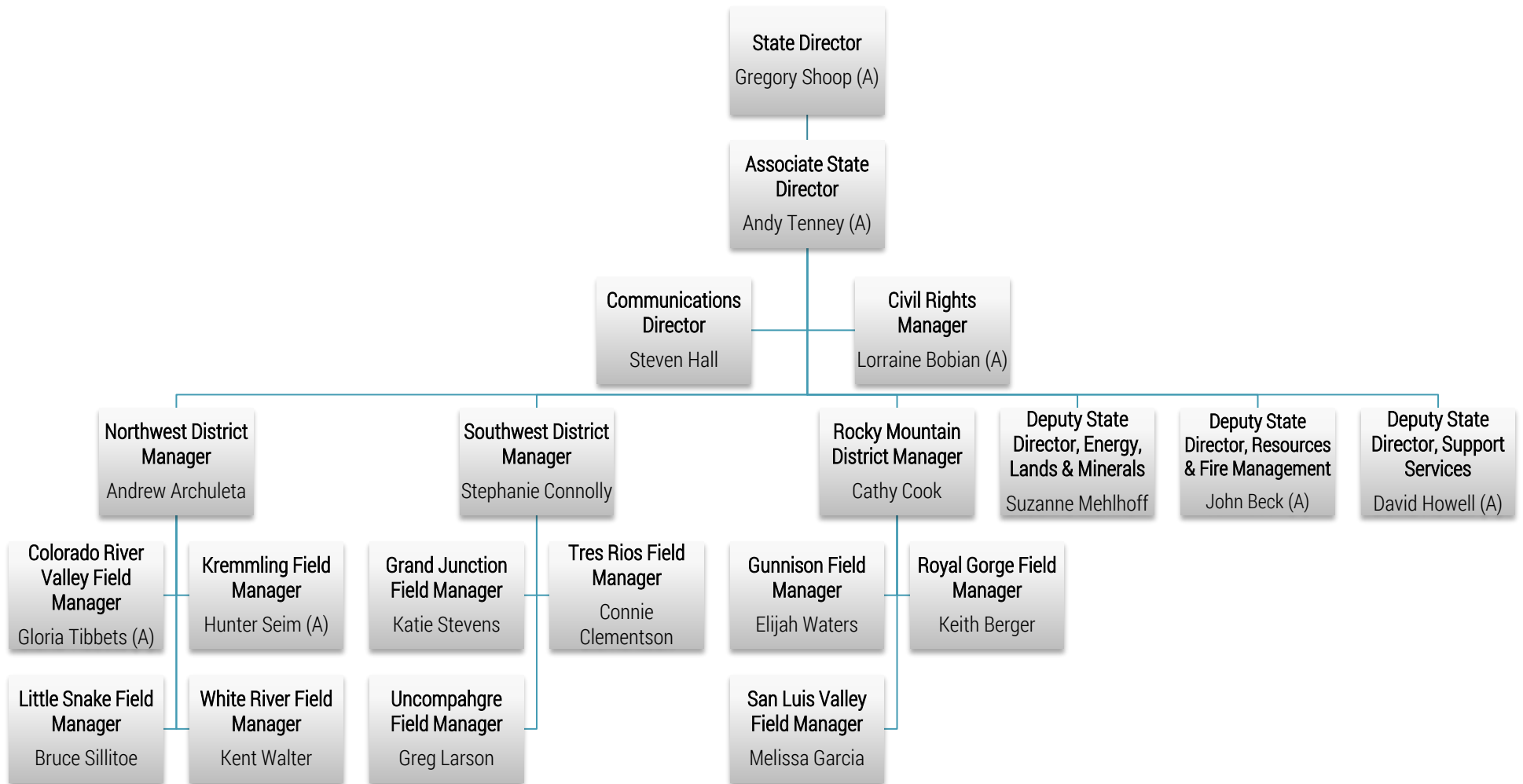
The people of Colorado value balanced use, conservation, resource development, recreation, and tourism. The economic health of many Colorado communities is supported by ranching, energy development and tourism associated with public lands. Public lands offer recreational opportunities, cultural resources, resource and energy potential and – in an increasingly urban world – vast open spaces.

BLM Colorado adheres to the principle of multiple-use management, which means we manage public lands for both commercial and public uses. Colorado's lands produce vast amounts of coal, oil, natural gas and geothermal power to help meet the nation's energy needs.

More than one-third of Colorado is owned by the public and is available for public use. We partner with other federal and state agencies, local governments, private employers, environmental groups and the public to ensure we are responsive to their needs.

BLM Colorado is committed to transparent, collaborative management of the public's lands and resources based on sound science.

# BLM Colorado Organization Chart



(A) = Acting

# Branch Chiefs & Program Leads

## **Abandoned Mined Lands**

Krista Doebbler  
303-239-3711

## **Business Resources**

Leigh Espy (A)  
303-239-3801

## **Cadastral Survey**

Randy Bloom  
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## **Conservation Biology**

Robin Sell  
303-239-3723

## **Cultural Resources**

Dan Haas  
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## **Engineering, Construction and Maintenance**

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303-239-3921

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

Lorraine Bobian (A)  
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## **Fire Management Officer**

Brian Achziger  
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## **Fisheries/Aquatic T&E/ Riparian**

Jay Thompson  
303-239-3724

## **Fluid Minerals**

Jonathan Fairbairn  
303-239-3753

## **Forestry**

John Ring  
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## **Freedom of Information**

Vacant  
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## **Fuels Program**

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## **GIS**

Natalie Dovgan  
303-239-3864

## **Hazardous Materials Management**

Krista Doebbler  
303-239-3711

## **Human Resources**

Brandon Bates (A)  
303-239-3920

## **Information Resources Management**

Natalie Dovgan (A)  
303-239-3864

## **Lands & Realty**

Jennifer Whyte (A)

## **Monitoring/Weeds/T&E Plants**

Carol Dawson  
303-239-3725

## **National Conservation Lands**

Chad Schneckenburger  
303-239-3738

## **Oil and Gas Quarterly Sales**

Rachel Vaughn  
303-239-3625

## **Paleontology**

Vacant

## **Planning**

Megan Gilbert  
303-239-3936

## **Public Information Center & Records**

Brian Klein  
303-239-3979

## **Range/Grazing**

Laria Lovec  
303-239-3808

## **Recreation**

Tim Finger  
303-239-3732

## **Rocky Mountain Fire Coordination Center**

Scott Swendsen  
303-445-4322

## **Solid Minerals**

Lisa Dawson  
303-239-3782

## **Soil, Air, Water & Water Quality**

Ed Rumbold  
303-239-3722

## **Trails/OHV/Youth Initiatives/Volunteers**

Jack Placchi  
303-239-3832

## **Water Rights**

Roy Smith  
303-239-3940

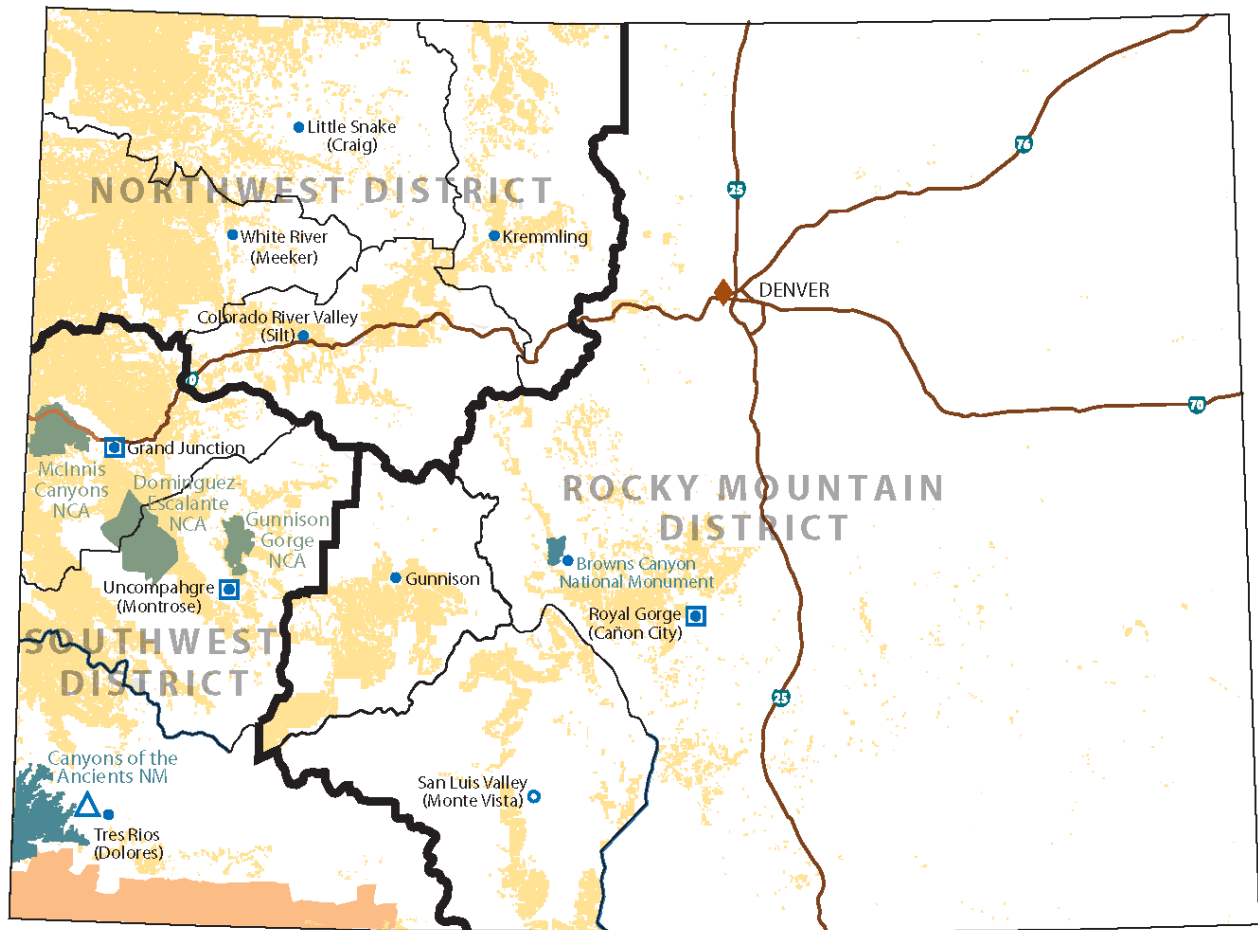
## **Wild Horses**












Stephen Leonard  
719-269-8511

## **Wildlife and T&E Species**

Vacant

# BLM Colorado Offices



- |   |  |   |                                |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------|
|  | BLM-managed Lands  |  | BLM State Office               |
|  | BLM National Monument  |  | BLM District Office            |
|  | BLM National Conservation Areas  |  | BLM Field Office               |
|  | Tribal lands where the BLM has trust responsibility for mineral operations |  | Anasazi Heritage Center        |
|   |  |  | Major Highways                 |
|   |  |  | BLM District Office Boundaries |
|   |  |  | BLM Field Office Boundaries    |

# Colorado State Office

2850 Youngfield Street • Lakewood, CO 80215 • 303-239-3700 • 303-239-3934 fax • [www.blm.gov/colorado](http://www.blm.gov/colorado)



## RECREATION

About 20 percent of BLM lands in Colorado are managed with a specific focus on recreation and tourism. Recreation areas include Special Recreation Management Areas, National Conservation Lands units, fishable and boatable rivers, cultural heritage and natural resource attractions, off-highway vehicle areas, scenic byways, watchable wildlife areas, and places to hunt and fish. The balance of BLM Colorado's lands receives less intensive recreational use, and is managed to maintain visitor freedom to choose where to go and what to do. Primary recreation opportunities include: heritage touring, sightseeing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, climbing, mountain biking, hiking, OHV driving, fishing, camping, hunting, picnicking, skiing and even spelunking. BLM Colorado issues approximately 42,000 recreation use permits, and administers approximately 670 special recreation permits, including more than 40 for competitive events, annually. These recreation attractions are less refined than those provided by other agencies, enabling visitors to reconnect with important heritage and cultural landscapes found just outside local communities.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, also known as the National Conservation Lands, highlights some of the West's most spectacular public lands. These areas conserve, protect and restore nationally significant landscapes recognized for their cultural, ecological and scientific values. The National Conservation Lands are congressionally or

presidentially designated and include national monuments, national conservation areas, national historic and scenic trails, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas and wilderness study areas. Colorado is home to 65 National Conservation Lands areas encompassing more than 1 million acres – about one eighth of all the BLM land in the state.

## FORESTRY

BLM Colorado manages 3.5 to 4 million acres of forested land. More than 2.5 million acres are considered woodlands, dominated by Pinyon pine, Juniper and Oak. The remaining forested acres consist of traditional commercial tree species like Ponderosa pine, Lodgepole pine and Douglas fir. Some of the wood products harvested include sawtimber, firewood, Christmas trees, post and poles, and biomass. Forested lands in Colorado tend to have low productivity rates, so the BLM's management focus is to restore forest health conditions. BLM Colorado works cooperatively with the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service and other partners to mitigate bark beetle-associated impacts and improve forest health.

Major forest health concerns:

- Mountain pine beetle outbreak aftermath in north-central Colorado
- Spruce beetle outbreak in southern Colorado
- Overstocked forests
- Decline of aspen stands

## WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Wildland fire threats grow each year partially due to past land management practices and aggressive fire suppression in the last 100 years. In 2017, BLM Colorado completed 31,286 acres of mechanical, chemical and prescribed fire treatments along with 14 Community Assistance actions. Highlights of the fuels program efforts include 26,159 acres of treatments associated with sage-grouse habitat and \$894,000 of funding directed toward the Southwest Colorado Resilient Landscapes Collaborative between BLM Colorado, BLM Utah, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Throughout the year, BLM Colorado helps counties complete wildfire protection plans by offering technical expertise and assistance



agreements. Since 2007, BLM Colorado averaged 369, fires per year. Average annual acres burned since 2007 are 11,364.

BLM Colorado Fire and Aviation Management Units (FAMUs):

- Northwest Colorado FAMU – Craig
- Upper Colorado River FAMU – Grand Junction
- Southwest Colorado FAMU – Montrose
- Front Range FAMU – Cañon City

BLM Colorado hosts the following fire suppression resources in the state during the fire season (May-September):

- One Interagency Hotshot Crew (20 people)
- One Wildland Fire Module (710 people)
- Seven Type-6 wildland fire engines
- Nine Type-4 wildland fire engines
- One Initial Attack Squad (5 people)
- One exclusive use helicopter and staff for a 90-day contract during fire season
- One Large Air Tanker Base in Grand Junction
- Four Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) reload bases
- A contingent of Great Basin Smokejumpers as needed

## EMERGENCY STABILIZATION & BURNED AREA REHABILITATION

The Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation (ES&R) program focuses on mitigating the impacts wildland fires have on ecosystems and communities. Wildfires that have the potential of significant damage to a natural or cultural resource may require ES&R. ES&R includes rehabilitating burned landscapes, reseeding vegetation, protecting watershed quality and preventing the spread of noxious weeds following severe wildfires. On average, the BLM initiates ES&R treatments on six to 10 fires annually. Given Colorado's extensive Wildland Urban Interface issues, problems with invasive species such as cheat grass and rugged terrain, most stabilization issues involve soil stabilization, construction of temporary fences and closures to prevent further damage.

## WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The diverse ecosystems and mosaic landscapes of BLM Colorado's public lands provide habitat for nearly 700 species of fish and wildlife, and 145 special status plants and animals including 18 Federally Threatened and 15 Federally Endangered species. BLM Colorado's wildlife habitat management goal is to ensure the natural abundance and diversity of fish, wildlife and special status species on public lands by maintaining, enhancing and restoring habitat productivity and quality. With four gold medal trout waters and three blue ribbon waters, some of Colorado's best fishing is found on BLM public lands.

Colorado's broad diversity of wildlife includes roughly:

- 475 bird species
- 130 mammal species
- 50 reptile species
- 70 fish species
- 20 amphibian species

BLM Colorado also hosts a number of invertebrates, including mollusks and crustaceans. Colorado is nationally recognized for its stream fishing and big game hunting. Flora is also abundant in the state. Approximately 3,322 taxa of plants, representing 143 families, have been described in Colorado. The plant family with the largest number of taxa is the Asteraceae.

## WILD HORSES & BURROS

In 1971, Congress passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act to protect and manage wild horses and burros on public lands. BLM Colorado manages four wild horse herd management areas: Piceance/East Douglas, Little Book Cliffs, Sand Wash Basin and the Spring Creek Basin. Colorado adopts about 300 wild horses and burros each year. Wild horses and burros are offered for adoption one Friday each month at the Canon City Wild Horse Inmate Program (WHIP) and occasionally in other areas of the state. In 1986, the BLM and Colorado Department of Corrections formed a partnership creating the WHIP, which is administered from the Royal Gorge Field Office. Select mustangs are trained by inmates who undergo both classroom and job training through an accredited college curriculum. Since the inception of the program, more than 3,000

inmates have participated and have gentled or trained more than 5,000 animals gathered from western rangelands.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

BLM Colorado's cultural resources program manages archaeological and historical sites. Sites include prehistoric camps, Fremont rock art, Ancestral Puebloan masonry pueblos, Ute traditional cultural sites, the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, and historic mines and ranches. Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum, near the town of Dolores, is one of three Bureau museums and holds about 3.8 million objects from the Southwest.

BLM Colorado's cultural resources program manages archaeological and historical sites. Sites include prehistoric camps, Fremont rock art, Ancestral Puebloan masonry pueblos, Ute traditional cultural sites, the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, and historic mines and ranches.

## PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Colorado public lands also have several internationally known paleontological sites, which are referred to as "localities." Garden Park, near Cañon City, is one of the most significant localities for dinosaurs in the world. The Kremmling Cretaceous Ammonite locality is one of the largest concentrations of marine fossils in North America.

Features:

- Garden Park Fossil Area National Natural Landmark
- Slumgullion Earthflow National Natural Landmark

Popular visitor destinations:

- Kremmling Cretaceous Ammonite Locality, Kremmling Field Office
- Garden Park Fossil Area, Royal Gorge Field Office
- Gold Belt Scenic and Historic Byway, Royal Gorge Field Office
- Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Byway, Grand Junction, Little Snake and White River Field Offices
- Rabbit Valley/Mygatt-Moore Quarry Interpretive Trail, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area

- Dinosaur Hill Interpretive Trail, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area
- Fruita Paleo Area Trail, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area

Scientific work:

- BLM issues permits for scientific work on vertebrate and other scientifically important invertebrate, plant and trace fossils.
- For more than 100 years, dinosaurs, mammals, snakes, birds, and many other forms of fossils have been studied on BLM Colorado lands.

Hobby collecting:

- Many areas outside of Monuments and National Conservation Areas are open for casual use collection of common invertebrate and plant fossils by casual use methods in reasonable quantities.
- BLM field offices can help provide information on areas open or closed to casual use collection of common fossils.

## GRAZING

On June 28, 1934, the Taylor Grazing Act was passed and signed into law. Congress dubbed its passage as "the Magna Carta of American conservation." The stated purpose of the Act was to "stop injury to the public grazing lands by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration, to provide for their orderly use, improvement, and development, to stabilize the livestock industry dependent on the public range and for other purposes." Today, the BLM authorizes livestock grazing on approximately 7.8 million acres within Colorado. These lands support livestock management on approximately 2,400 separate grazing allotments by more than 1,500 ranching operations.

## CADASTRAL SURVEY

The Cadastral Survey program is responsible for land surveys conducted throughout Colorado, including a fiduciary trust responsibility on Indian lands, specifically the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribes in Southwestern Colorado. Cadastral surveying services support land exchanges and disposals, identification of trespasses, identification of range allotment boundaries for fencing purposes, fuel hazard reduction efforts, surveying of wilderness or other congressionally designated area boundaries, and the collection of coordinate data on public land survey system corners for incorporation into the Geographic

Information System. Cadastral Survey is also responsible for the Geographic Coordinate Data Base (GCDB) initial data collection, maintenance, and updates for Colorado. GCDB is the standard for the depiction of the Public Land Survey System. Uses include digital updates of the Master Title Plats, tracking oil and gas leases, visual display of stipulations associated with parcels, a graphical understanding of data in the Resource Management Planning process, updates for the 100K mapping, and the basis for all land management decisions.

The BLM performs these services for and in cooperation with:

- U.S. Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Federal Highway Department
- Department of Defense
- Bureau of Indian Affairs

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

BLM Colorado established a Renewable Energy Team to help expedite processing renewable energy project applications.

**Geothermal:** The BLM began issuing leases for geothermal development in 1974. In 2012, BLM Colorado leased for geothermal production two parcels totaling 8,353 acres in the Gunnison Field Office. These two parcels are the only authorized geothermal leases on public lands in Colorado. In 2012, the BLM released a final environmental assessment and proposed amendment to the 1991 BLM San Luis Resource Management Plan for geothermal energy leasing on BLM-managed lands.

**Solar:** The BLM completed its Western Solar Plan in October 2012, which created the BLM Solar Energy Program and established policies, practices and mitigation strategies for future project-level solar development. In Colorado, the plan amended 13 land use plans to either allow or exclude utility-scale solar development and identified four Solar Energy Zones (SEZs) totaling 16,308 acres as ideal for solar development, as well as another 95,128 acres of variance lands surrounding the SEZs as potentially appropriate for solar development.

The BLM is currently analyzing amending the San Luis Resource Management Plan to deallocate the Fourmile

SEZ and surrounding variance areas from solar energy development. Based on new information, the BLM has identified concerns with sacred landscapes, tribal resources and values, big game winter range, scenic view sheds, air quality and migratory birds. If this area is de-allocated, three SEZs and surrounding variance lands will remain designated as priority areas for solar development.

In January 2017, BLM Colorado released its Solar Regional Mitigation Strategy (SRMS) for the San Luis Valley and Taos Plateau. This landscape-level strategy recommends mitigation and conservation measures to offset future solar development. The SRMS expands on groundwork built by the Western Solar Plan and takes the next key step toward utility-scale solar development on public lands in Colorado.

**Transmission:** In December 2016, the Secretary of the Interior approved two new transmission lines running through Colorado to accommodate additional electricity generation capacity for the next several decades. Both projects are co-located with existing roads and power lines to the extent possible to reduce disturbance and visual effects. Construction of the lines is expected to generate more than 2,300 jobs in Western communities. The projects are:

- TransWest Express, a TransWest Express, LLC project, is a 728-mile, 600kV DC transmission project from south-central Wyoming to Las Vegas.
- Energy Gateway South, a PacifiCorp (dba Rocky Mountain Power) project, is a 416-mile, 500 kV AC transmission project originating near Medicine Bow, Wyoming, traveling through northwest Colorado and terminating near Mona in central Utah.

## AIR QUALITY

Air resource protection is a complex component of the BLM's soil, water and air program. In accordance with its mandates under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the BLM ensures that all activities it conducts or authorizes comply with the Clean Air Act and other pollution laws and regulations.

In order to address potential air quality issues from BLM-authorized activities, BLM Colorado is implementing the Comprehensive Air Resources Protection Protocol (CARPP), a living document that identifies an adaptive strategy for proactively analyzing

and protecting air resources. As an element of the CARPP, the BLM develops an annual report to assess whether we are meeting air quality goals and determine any additional mitigation options.

BLM Colorado also funds the Colorado Air Resources Management Modeling Study (CARMMS) to predict air quality impacts and potential changing conditions from future energy development in the state. The CARMMS studies the impacts of oil, gas and mineral development by modeling air pollution, regional ozone formation and air quality related value impacts from emissions sources in planning areas across Colorado. BLM Colorado tracks implementation data like regional emissions inventories, oil and gas development rates and production information, and air pollutant monitoring data to ensure the current version of CARMMS remains relevant as a NEPA tool.

## FLUID MINERALS

In Fiscal Year 2016, Colorado received about \$183 million from royalties, rentals and bonus bid payments for all federal minerals, including oil and gas. Statewide, more than 22,900 jobs are tied to mineral and energy development on public lands. Oil and natural gas development from federal minerals serves as an important economic driver for Colorado's economy. BLM Colorado hosts up to four lease sales per year. The State of Colorado receives 49 percent of the proceeds of each lease sale. The BLM has a robust regulatory framework to guide leasing and development mandated by laws like the Mineral Leasing Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act. The BLM implemented oil and gas leasing reforms in 2010 to provide the public more involvement earlier in the process to better inform our decisions and help reduce conflict, protests and litigation.

## SOLID MINERALS

Solid mineral production on BLM land in Colorado involves three distinct mineral categories: locatable, leasable, and saleable. Locatable minerals include gold, silver, copper, molybdenum and uranium. Leasable minerals include coal, potash, and sodium. Currently, there are six producing coal mines (four underground and two surface operations) encompassing 60,000 acres in the state. In Fiscal Year 2016, coal energy production on BLM Colorado public lands supported about 2,000 jobs and directly contributed \$416 million

to the economy. Mineral materials produced in Colorado include limestone, rip-rap; flagstone, cut stone, moss rock, boulders, granite; non-decorative large rock; sand and gravel; burnt shale, river cobbles, cinders and scoria; fill material and non-decorative cinders; bentonite, clay; decomposed granite; masonry sand and aggregate; and concrete sand and road base. Common sand, gravel and other construction and landscaping materials are available to the public through material sales at fair market value, or through free-use permits to local, county and state agencies and nonprofit organizations. Colorado is one of the major mineral material producing states in the country.

## ABANDONED MINE LANDS

The Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program involves closing/securing hazardous mine openings and cleaning up historic mine sites discharging acidic water, tailings and waste rock that contain elevated concentrations of hazardous substances. Although Colorado's extensive mining history exists statewide, most of the BLM AML program work is done near the mining districts of the Upper Animas River, the Upper Arkansas River, the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River, and the Colorado Plateau. BLM Colorado's AML program maintains an inventory of known AML sites on BLM administered public land. Most of the sites are abandoned hardrock mines; however, our inventory of abandoned uranium mines has been growing by more than 200 per year since 2011 as the BLM collaboratively works with industry and other agencies to complete the uranium inventory on the Colorado Plateau. The BLM's AML program closes approximately 100 unsafe features annually and has completed 20 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) cleanup actions. As of 2016, the BLM's AML inventory in Colorado contains more than 14,000 features. About 2,500 features have been secured for public safety; remediated of toxic effects; or have been determined to not require further action.

## OIL SHALE

Oil shale lands managed by BLM Colorado are part of the largest known concentration of oil shale in the world - the Green River Formation. More than 70 percent of the formation is on public lands in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that the formation holds the equivalent of 800 billion barrels of recoverable oil. Based on the National Energy Policy Act of 2005, BLM Colorado approved seven Research,

Development and Demonstration (RD&D) leases via two separate solicitations for lease nominations. All of the RD&D leases were let to encourage industry to develop and test technologies aimed at developing oil shale resources on a commercial scale. In November 2012, the BLM published a plan to promote oil shale and tar sand resources on BLM-administered land in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The final programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) and plan amendments make nearly 700,000 acres in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming available for research and development of oil shale. The final PEIS also includes provisions for wildlife habitat conservation including Greater Sage-Grouse habitat.

## LANDS & REALTY

The BLM provides for land use, purchase, exchange, donation and sale; determines the boundaries of federal land; and maintains historic records for these ownership transactions. Land ownership transfer through purchase, exchange, donation and sale is an important component of the BLM's strategy. Disposing of (by sale or exchange) small, isolated and difficult to manage parcels improves the BLM's overall ownership pattern and reduces costs associated with managing those parcels as well as the potential risk of conflicts with adjacent landowners. Consolidated ownership patterns provide an efficient landscape for preservation, conservation and development on BLM lands. The bureau completes ownership transactions involving land and interests in land when such transactions are in the public interest and consistent with publicly-approved land use plans.

## VETERANS GREEN CORPS

Veterans Green Corps, a collaborative initiative of Veteran Green Jobs and existing conservation corps, empowers veterans to transition to civilian life by leveraging their leadership experience to meet pressing conservation needs on public lands. BLM Colorado employs crews of trained, returning veterans to work on outdoor-conservation projects on public lands.

In its fifth year, the Veterans Green Corps program allowed the BLM to accomplish much-needed

stewardship work while simultaneously providing many veterans with employment, a connection to nature, training, and experience working outdoors while grooming them for BLM employment. In 2018, the program will support eight weeks of crew work on a variety of Veterans Green Corps conservation projects.

## DIVERSITY INTERNSHIP PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

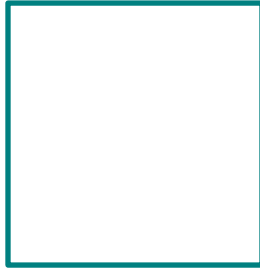
The Colorado Youth Corps Association administers the BLM Diversity Internship Partnership Program in partnership with accredited Colorado youth corps using BLM funding. The program focuses on employing youth and young adults age 15 to 30 years old, but all candidates are eligible to apply and are considered on a competitive basis. Youth corps provide young adults with meaningful work experiences such as mentoring, conversation and stewardship ethics, employable skills and career transition counseling. The BLM's goal is to offer youth corps graduates and other young people, especially those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, the opportunity to work with BLM personnel on BLM projects/facilities. Through this partnership, the BLM hopes to encourage youth and young adults to consider or continue careers and education in natural resources, especially with the BLM or other Department of the Interior agencies. In 2017, BLM Colorado provided job opportunities for 189 individual young adults, through 64 crew weeks and 50 internships statewide. The BLM extended or offered additional internships to 12 of these interns and hired three interns full-time (the U.S. Forest Service hired one intern as well). Youth provided 41,813 hours of labor in 2016.

## VOLUNTEERS

BLM Colorado's volunteer program is an essential component of the BLM's mission. The thousands of hours volunteers donate each year make it possible for the BLM to accomplish unfunded conservation work that would otherwise not be completed. In 2017, 2,855 volunteers statewide donated 196,186 hours at an estimated value of \$4,735,930.

# Colorado State Office Leadership

**Vacant**  
State Director



**Steven Hall**  
Communications Director  
303-239-3672



Steven Hall is the Communications Director for BLM Colorado. He has been in this position since 2007. He has worked for the BLM since 2003, previously as the BLM Wyoming External Affairs Chief and the Western Colorado Public Affairs Officer. Prior to joining the BLM, Steve worked as the Public Affairs and Marketing Director for Colorado State Parks and is a former fly fishing guide and backcountry outfitter from Colorado's Western Slope. He has a master's degree in journalism from University of Colorado Boulder.

**Greg Shoop**  
Associate State Director  
303-239-3700



Greg Shoop has worked for the BLM on and off since 1977. He has been in his current position as Associate State Director for the BLM Colorado Office since 2014. He has held positions at the field, state, and national levels throughout his career. Most recently, he worked as the Deputy Assistant Director for Resources and Planning in Washington, DC, from 2012 until 2014. Before that, he spent time in Colorado as the Front Range District Manager from 2009 until 2012. He also worked for 15 years in the private sector. Shoop is married and has two grown sons. Although he grew up on the east coast, he has considered Colorado his home since the 1980s. He is excited to be back in Colorado where he can root for the Broncos on local TV.

**Brian St. George**  
Deputy State Director  
Resources & Fire  
Management  
303-239-3801



Brian St. George has been the Deputy State Director for Resources and Fire at the Colorado State Office since December 2015. He was the Branch Chief for Planning from 2004 to 2009, and from 2009 to 2014, he was the Gunnison Field Manager. St. George has a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology, a master's degree in public administration and a master's degree in conservation biology. In his work with the BLM, St. George has focused on developing comprehensive resource management plans, building community relationships, promoting recreation opportunities and facilitating teams. In his free time, he loves recreating and exploring on public lands.

**Vacant**  
Deputy State Director  
Energy, Lands & Minerals  
303-239-3923



A native of northern Minnesota, Sue spent her formative years in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wyoming. She earned her Petroleum Engineering degree from the University of Wyoming and a Master's in Business Administration from Penn State University. Sue has 17 years of public service with BLM and the Department of Energy, along with nine years of industry experience. She returns to the BLM Colorado State Office from her dual-role position as Fluid Minerals Section Chief for the BLM National Operations Center and Engineering Branch Chief for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Energy Service Center. Additional previous positions include Fluid Minerals Branch Chief for BLM Colorado, Corporate Reserves Manager and senior engineering roles in the private sector, Research & Development Project Manager (DOE) in Oklahoma, Environmental Scientist in BLM's Division of Fluid Minerals in Washington, D.C., and BLM Casper District Petroleum and Mining Engineering roles in Wyoming. Sue and her husband John have two grown daughters, Jessa and Jade. She enjoys playing the piano, gardening, and family time in the mountains.

**David McCormack**  
Deputy State Director  
Support Services  
303-239-3957



David McCormack has been the Deputy State Director for Support Services at the BLM Colorado State Office since September 2013. Before beginning his career with the BLM, McCormack worked in the private sector as an IT Specialist in the Pacific Northwest. He joined federal service in 2000 as an IT Project Manager and Planner for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and continued his service as an IT Program Manager with the Department of Transportation from 2006 until 2009. From 2009 until September 2013, he worked as a Regional Chief Technology Officer for the U.S. Geological Survey before taking his current position with the BLM. McCormack has an associate degree in business from the University of Phoenix and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Columbia Southern University. He is also a certified Project Management Professional. In his free time, he enjoys spending time outdoors and with family and friends. He likes to travel, hike, camp, fish, hunt, golf and play softball.

**Gary Mannino**  
Special Agent-in-Charge  
303-239-3803



Gary Mannino transferred to Colorado from the Pacific Northwest where he had been working for the BLM's Office of Law Enforcement as the Region 2 Special Agent in Charge over Oregon / Washington, Idaho, and Alaska. Prior to coming over to the BLM in 2010, Gary worked as an Assistant Special Agent in Charge and Special Agent for the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Law Enforcement in the Pacific Northwest. Gary began his federal career as a Secret Service Agent in Atlanta, Georgia in 2001.

# Federal Lands/Minerals within BLM Field Office Administrative Boundaries

Minerals on public lands includes surface and associated federal mineral estate acreages, (the major portion of the BLM acreage), and surface-only (minerals owned by third parties). The Federal split estate mineral acreages underlying non-federal surfaces are collected separately and include minerals transferred to the Department of the Interior jurisdiction from the Federal Farm Mortgage Corporation. ("All Minerals" reserved in patents issued under the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916 comprise the major portion of this "split estate" acreage). Both compilations derive from lot-by-lot, 40-by-40, sections, townships, and county compilations of BLM-administered lands maintained for annual statistical report purposes and for Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) annual reports (not all BLM lands are

eligible for PILT payments). These acreages are updated when public lands/minerals are sold, exchanged, or acquired by purchase, donation, etc. Forest Service ownership acreages derives from their Forest-by-Forest, county-by-county annual statistical report. Some of these acreages are BLM estimates as some BLM-administrative boundaries within the Forests do not have common boundaries with Ranger District or other Forest Service Management Units. Forest Service sales, exchanges, acquisitions acreages are updated as information becomes available; however, considerable lag time may occur between the time a transaction occurs and the date the Forest Service accepts title to lands re-conveyed to the United States and provides copies of the documents to BLM.



# Rocky Mountain District

3028 East Main Street • Cañon City, CO 81212 • 719-269-8500 • 719-269-8599 fax



The Rocky Mountain District manages about 1.8 million surface acres and 12 million acres of subsurface minerals. The district is comprised of the Gunnison Field Office (GFO), Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO) and the San Luis Valley Field Office (SLVFO). RGFO is a Service First Center between the BLM and U.S. Forest Service.

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, part of the Royal Gorge Field Office, is co-managed with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and is one of the nation's most popular areas for commercial and private whitewater rafting, as well as premier guided and private fishing opportunities. The area attracts more than 740,000 visitors annually who contribute more than \$1 million to the local economy.

The Rocky Mountain District is also home to the Wild Horse Inmate Program (WHIP) located in Cañon City. The WHIP is the BLM's largest of five wild horse and burro holding facilities in the country that work with inmates. The WHIP is a cooperative agreement with the Colorado Department of Corrections, in which select wild horses and burros receive personal and extensive training as part of an inmate rehabilitative program. Horses and burros are then offered for adoption two Friday's each month. Since the inception of the program, more than 3,000 inmates have participated. They have gentled or trained more than 5,000 animals gathered from western rangelands.

The Front Range Fire & Aviation Management Unit covers 1,289,083 acres of BLM-administered lands

within the Royal Gorge and San Luis Valley Field Office boundaries. The unit covers all BLM lands east of the Continental Divide to the Colorado-Kansas state line and from the Wyoming state line to the New Mexico state line. The unit works closely with the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Department of Fire Prevention and Control, counties and numerous Fire Protection Districts.

The majority (80 percent) of all fires within the planning area are caused by lightning mainly during the annual Southwest monsoon.

Fuels management includes mechanical, chemical, biological and prescribed fire treatments, with approximately 2,500 acres treated annually. These projects target the wildland urban interface, areas that have values at risk and areas where there are minimal values at risk.



**Cathy Cook**  
Rocky Mountain  
District Manager  
719-269-8500

Most recently Cathy worked for the BLM in Washington, D.C. as the Deputy Division Chief for Fluid Minerals. Cathy began her career with the federal government as a geology student intern with the U.S. Forest Service in Missoula, Montana. She then worked in fire and mineral resource positions in Montana, Nevada and Colorado. Her work as a geologist led to an interest in GIS and a position with the U.S. Geological Survey's Alaska Science Center as a digital data analyst. She spent a number of years in university administration and consulting positions before returning to federal service as a Supervisory Physical Scientist in Wyoming and as a Branch Chief in Arizona.

# Gunnison Field Office

210 W. Spencer Ave., Suite A • Gunnison, CO 81230 • 970-642-4940 • 970-642-4990 fax

## FACTS

- 658,084 surface acres
- 2,215,336 subsurface acres
- 28 recreation sites (6 camping areas)
- 4 Recreation Management Areas: Alpine Triangle, Hartman Rocks, Cochetopa, and Powderhorn
- 3 Mountain peaks above 14,000 feet in elevation
- 2 Wilderness Areas (51,708 acres)
- 8 Wilderness Study Areas (67,353 acres)
- 3 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways: The Alpine Loop, The Silver Thread and The West Elk Loop
- 190 miles of trails
- 180,000 acres of forest land
- 3 endangered, threatened, and candidate animal species
- 500,000 acres of small game habitat
- 585,000 acres of big game habitat
- 2,690 miles of streams and rivers
- 582,718 acres grazed by livestock on BLM lands



Counties: Gunnison, Hinsdale, San Juan, Saguache and Ouray



Ecosystems within the Gunnison Field Office (GFO) range from dry sagebrush steppes at 7,000 feet; to forests of aspen, Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, Englemann spruce, and subalpine fir; to alpine tundra meadows that reach to more than 14,000 feet.

## RECREATION

**Overview:** Visitors from across the country come to the Gunnison Basin to enjoy the beauty and varied recreation experiences on public lands. The area contains high value recreation opportunities set in some of the most spectacular scenery in Colorado. Settings range from 14,000 foot peaks to lower elevation streams and rock formations. The area hosts about 1 million annual visits. The field office also receives an annual average of 4,000 hours in volunteer work, which equals \$70,000 in labor.

**Partnerships:** The BLM works closely with the Forest Service, National Park Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, towns, counties and the recreating public to offer and maintain outstanding recreation experiences.

Recreation partnerships include Hartman Rocks User Group, Crested Butte Nordic Club, Gunnison Nordic Club, Gunnison Trails Non-profit Organization, Lake City Chamber of Commerce, Lake City Marketing Board, Hinsdale County, Town of Lake City, Hinsdale County Trails Commission, Lake City Snowmobile Club, Hinsdale County Historical Society, Gunnison Trail Commission, Crested Butte Land Trust, Gunnison Valley OHV Alliance of Trail Riders, Lake Fork Valley Conservatory, Coal Creek Watershed Coalition, Gunnison County, Crested Butte Mountain Bike Association, Gunnison Free Riders, Peaceful Warriors, Western State Colorado University, Alpine Loop Alliance, Silverton Chamber of Commerce, Silverton Snowmobile Club, San Juan Mountain Association, the Town of Silverton, San Juan County, Ouray County and San Juan County Historical Society.

**Alpine Loop Back Country Byway:** The byway is an outstanding example of the back country byway system. It covers 96 miles of roads between the towns of Lake City, Ouray and Silverton. Depending on winter snow, the Loop opens late May/early June and closes in late October. About two thirds of the route is a dirt road

suitable for two-wheel-drive cars. A four-wheel-drive, high clearance vehicle or off-highway vehicle is required to traverse the entire route. Visitors can view the spectacular fall colors or breathtaking wildflowers in American Basin, and get a peek into the challenging life of early pioneers via historic cabins, mines, mills and ghost towns along the drive.

**Camping, Trailheads and Points of Interest along the Alpine Loop:** The GFO manages four fee campgrounds, approximately 300 dispersed campsites and 30 trailheads and points of interest along the Alpine Loop. These areas are heavily used for a variety of outdoor pursuits.

**Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail:** During the winter, this trail offers 80 miles of groomed routes. Skiers can also use these trails or make their own path on a wide variety of other routes. A hut-to-hut system for skiers is also available south of Lake City.

**Hartman Rocks Special Recreation Management Area:** Hartman Rocks Recreation Area (~14,000 acres) is a popular urban interface recreation area about three miles southwest of Gunnison. Its proximity to Gunnison provides easy access for a quick recreation experience close to town, or when higher elevation recreation sites are still snow-covered. It is also a destination location for mountain biking, rock climbing and single-track motorized enthusiasts. The BLM estimates Hartman Rocks receives about 50,000 visits each year. The area offers 45 miles of single-track multiple-use trails, 45 miles of roads, about 100 campsites, and hundreds of rock climbing and bouldering routes. Visitors may enjoy recreation activities such as mountain biking, motorcycling, all-terrain-vehicle riding, four-wheeling, rock climbing, bouldering, camping, trail running, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, dog sledding, target shooting, snow biking and hunting.

**Oh Be Joyful Recreation Area:** This area is located a few miles northwest of Crested Butte Colorado along the Slate River in Gunnison County. This area includes a campground set along the Slate River and Oh Be Joyful Creek, which features beautiful waterfalls. Recreation uses include world-class kayaking, mountain biking, camping, backpacking, horseback riding, waterfall viewing, fishing day hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and accessing wilderness.

**Cochetopa Canyon Special Recreation Management Area:** This area includes 2,500 acres in a narrow canyon along Cochetopa Creek and is located along

State Highway 114 southeast of Gunnison in Saguache County. The main types of recreation in the canyon are scenic driving and bighorn sheep viewing. Many visitors also camp, fish and picnic along this scenic route.

**Hunting:** Gunnison Field Office-managed lands provide great hunting opportunities for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, black bear, coyote, dusky grouse and several other species. Big game units within the Basin are 54, 55, 551, 66 and 67.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

The GFO manages two designated wilderness areas totaling 51,708 acres. GFO also manages eight wilderness study areas totaling 67,353 acres. Within the 67,000 acres of WSAs, the Gunnison Field Office manages three 14,000-foot peaks that receive high visitor use. These are the only 14,000-foot peaks managed by the BLM in the lower 48 states.

**Powderhorn Wilderness:** The area includes 45,000 acres of beautiful Colorado country jointly managed with the U.S. Forest Service. The elevation ranges from 8,600 to 12,600 feet. Above 12,000 ft. are two high-elevation plateaus that make up the largest relatively flat expanse of alpine tundra in the lower 48 states. The plateaus were created by Tertiary volcanic deposits believed to be 5,000 ft. thick in some areas.

**Uncompahgre Wilderness:** The GFO manages 6,000 acres of the American Flats portion of the Uncompahgre Wilderness. American Flats lies south of Wildhorse Peak. Numerous forks of the Cimarron River rush out of the central section of this wilderness, flowing north to eventually become one. You'll find a few small lakes and many streams with trout.

**Handies Peak WSA:** This area is located 10 miles southwest of Lake City in Hinsdale County. This 16,742-acre WSA is steep and mountainous with elevations ranging from 9,500 feet to more than 14,000 feet. Located within the WSA are 12 peaks above 13,000 feet, Handies Peak (14,048 feet) and several alpine lakes.

**Red Cloud Peak WSA:** This 37,579-acre WSA is located in Hinsdale County west of Lake City. Elevations in this WSA range from 8,800 feet to more than 14,000 feet. Two 14,000-foot peaks are located in this WSA, Redcloud Peak (14,043 feet) and Sunshine Peak (14,001 feet).

**American Flats WSA:** The 4,790-acre American Flats WSA is located on the south side of the larger Uncompahgre Wilderness. This WSA is characterized by its alpine tundra ranging from 11,000 to 13,000 feet in elevation.

**Bill Hare Gulch WSA:** This 370-acre WSA is located four miles north of Lake City in Hinsdale County. The topography is steep and is characterized by narrow, rugged drainages.

**Powderhorn WSA:** The 6,102-acre Powderhorn WSA includes wild canyons along with mixed spruce fir forest ecosystem in a remote area on the north side of the Powderhorn Wilderness.

**Whitehead Gulch (1,819 acres) & Weminuche (1,930 acres) WSAs:** These are remnants of study areas that were partially exchanged with the U.S. Forest Service in a boundary adjustment completed in 1983. They adjoin the 245,000-acre U.S. Forest Service-managed Weminuche Wilderness and offer hikers and horseback riders an opportunity to explore scenic landscapes in relative solitude.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The GFO contains a large quantity of cultural resources, covering a long range of human occupation in North America (since about 12,000 years ago). Sites from the Paleo-Indian through the historic periods are spread throughout the landscape, from mesa tops to drainages, from the lower elevation sagebrush environments up to timberline and above in the southern parts of the field office. The GFO actively preserves, protects, and manages more than 3,000 recorded cultural resources. Many of these are interpreted to educate visitors in the prehistory and history of the Gunnison Basin and on proper site etiquette when visiting these resources.

**Silverton Mining District:** The district contains numerous hard rock mining sites from the 1870s through the 1950s. The area also has a high density of archaic and ancestral pueblo sites. Animas Forks was originally named Three Forks and was developed in 1873. Today, visitors can see the remnants of the once thriving town of 30 cabins, a hotel, general store, saloon, post office and ore mill.

**Sound Democrat Stamp Mill:** Located in Placer Gulch, the mill was built in 1905 to crush and process gold and

silver/lead ore from the Sound Democrat Mine and the Silver Queen Mine.

**San Juan Chief Mill:** The mine and mill operation included a boarding house and a number of cabins that can still be seen today.

**Alpine Loop Scenic Byway:** This area provides an opportunity to view the history of the Lake City and Silverton mining era through a series of stabilized and interpreted significant sites relating to the mining and everyday life of the early settlers and miners of the high elevation San Juan Mountains.

**Old Spanish National Historic Trail:** This trail was pioneered in 1829 by Mexican traders as a horse and burro pack route that connected Santa Fe to Los Angeles.

Paleontological resources in the GFO include vertebrate and invertebrate fossils of plants and animals that once flourished millions of years ago. Several of these unique resources are scattered throughout the GFO.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The region's varied ecosystems provide habitat for:

- Elk
- Deer
- bighorn sheep
- pronghorn antelope
- bear
- mountain lion
- bobcat
- coyote
- beaver
- prairie dogs
- hawks
- eagles
- grouse
- song birds
- trout

Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species:

- Canada Lynx
- Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly
- Gunnison prairie dog
- Gunnison Sage-Grouse

**Gunnison Sage-Grouse:** The largest population of Gunnison Sage-Grouse, listed as threatened under the

Endangered Species Act, is found within the Gunnison Basin. The Gunnison Sage-Grouse was designated as a separate species from the Greater Sage-Grouse in 2000. Based on 2016 population estimates, there are only 4,553 Gunnison Sage-Grouse remaining within the Gunnison Basin.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing is broken into 109 active allotments serving 67 permittees and providing 34,000 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) of forage for domestic cattle, sheep and horses. Through a variety of vegetation studies and management practices, the GFO works to balance grazing use with wildlife needs, the protection of riparian areas, and the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. The range program, in cooperation with Gunnison, Saguache and Hinsdale counties, takes the lead on controlling invasive weeds in the area.

## LANDS & REALTY

This program focuses primarily on issuing and administering rights-of-ways for uses such as phone lines, access roads and electric transmission lines across public lands. The program also handles land ownership adjustments through land exchanges, acquisitions and disposals. Additionally, the Lands and Realty program work includes identifying and resolving trespasses on public lands.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

The GFO area includes one of only nine areas in Colorado that were identified as having the potential for commercially viable geothermal development. Nearly 9,000 acres on BLM, Gunnison National Forest, and private lands in the Tomichi Dome area were leased for geothermal activities.

## FORESTRY

Commercial forests and woodlands make up approximately 30 percent of BLM-administered land in the GFO. Timber types include (in order of abundance) Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir, Douglas fir, aspen, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, blue spruce, juniper and bristlecone pine. On average, approximately 410 forested acres per year were managed to meet multiple

objectives including: reducing the potential effects of insect and disease outbreaks, forest restoration to reduce the effects of historic fire suppression, wildlife habitat improvement and meeting the local demand for forest products. An Environmental Assessment was recently completed for timber sales to occur in areas heavily impacted by the spruce bark beetle and several timber sales are active or soon-to-be implemented.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

Currently, six Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) exist within the field office, three of which are located within Gunnison, Hinsdale and Saguache counties. The BLM is also working with the community to complete county-wide CWPPs for Gunnison and Hinsdale counties. During the last decade, approximately 1,000 acres of prescribed fire have been implemented and 300 acres treated with a forestry mulcher annually. These projects have varied from treatments immediately adjacent to the wildland-urban-interface to large landscape-scale fuel breaks, including treating approximately 500 acres of sagebrush and timber in the area.



**Elijah Waters**  
Gunnison Field  
Manager  
970-642-4449

Elijah Waters has been the Gunnison Field Office Manager since 2015. Before coming to Colorado, he worked in Oregon as a Fisheries Biologist and in Alaska as a Wildlife Biologist and Associate Field Manager. Waters has worked on a variety of resource issues with the BLM, including endangered species, land disposals and acquisitions, complex rights-of-way, subsistence, recreation, grazing and mining. He has a bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife sciences and a master's degree in wildlife biology, both from North Carolina State University. Waters is married and has three children. He and his family enjoy outdoor activities, including skiing, hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, biking and rafting.

# Royal Gorge Field Office

3028 East Main Street • Cañon City, CO 81212 • 719-269-8500 • 719-269-8599 fax

## FACTS

- 666,127 surface acres
- 6,474,368 subsurface acres
- 86 recreation sites (23 developed, 18 picnic areas, 32 camping areas, 20 boat ramps)
- 2 Special Recreation Management Areas
- 5 Wilderness Study Areas and 1 Instant Study Area (71,680 acres)
- 4 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways
- 1 National Scenic Byway
- 151,700 acres of woodlands (97,062 acres of forest land)
- 18 Endangered, Threatened, and Candidate species (12 listed, 6 candidates)
- 487 miles of streams and rivers
- 570,000 acres grazed by livestock



Counties: Baca, Bent, Chaffee, Custer, Crowley, El Paso, Fremont, Huerfano, Kiowa, Lake, Las Animas, Otero, Park, Prowers, Pueblo, Teller, Adams, Arapaho, Boulder, Cheyenne, Clear Creek, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, Kit Carson, Larimer, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Weld and Yuma

## RECREATION

Located on Colorado's Front Range, the Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO) recreation program is positioned to collaborate with adjacent communities in its planning efforts. The RGFO is actively involved with regional partners in the Cañon City area to develop recreation opportunities to bring greater awareness of the value that public lands can have for the region. Salida Mountain Trails, the City of Salida and several other local groups and businesses, are working with the BLM to develop an extensive mountain bike trail system that allows people to recreate between BLM land and the city of Salida. Due to these efforts, Salida is one of Colorado's top mountain bike destinations and is featured nationally as one of the BLM's Top 20 Mountain Bike Destinations.

**Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway:** The byway retraces historic railroad and stagecoach routes from the Arkansas Valley to the Cripple Creek Gold Mining District. The Gold Belt Byway is managed through a partnership of 10 local, state, and federal agencies, and a private nonprofit association (Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway Association, Inc.). Three internationally significant fossil sites lie along the

Byway, including the: The BLM Garden Park Fossil Area, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and Indian Springs Trace Fossil Site. The Byway includes Shelf Road Recreation Area, Phantom Canyon and the Beaver Creek Wilderness Study Area. Ongoing efforts include working with private landowners on conservation easements, improving public access, community economic development, and education, including youth engagement.

**Shelf Road Recreation Area:** Huge limestone cliffs attract thousands of technical rock climbers annually. The area's accessibility from Colorado's Front Range cities and relatively mild winters provide year-round opportunities for climbing enthusiasts. The scenic beauty, undeveloped character and availability of designated trails also attract mountain bikers, equestrians and hikers. Two developed campgrounds, Sand Gulch and The Bank, are open year-round. Since the campgrounds were first developed in 1995, visitor use has tripled, RGFO plans to expand campsites, parking and restrooms. The BLM manages Shelf Road Recreation Area in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to outdoor adventure and national and international

conservation. The Pikes Peak Climbers Alliance continues stewardship efforts at Shelf Road.

**Texas Creek OHV Area:** This area's rugged terrain, spectacular views of the Arkansas River Valley and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, as well as its proximity to U.S. Highway 50, attracts thousands of motorized users each year. The BLM manages the routes in the Texas Creek area and works with motorized recreation groups to assist in developing and maintaining motorized routes. Routes are available for 4-wheel drive vehicles, side-by-sides, ATVs and motorcycles.

**Fourmile Recreation Area:** Located east of the Arkansas River near Buena Vista, this area encompasses BLM and National Forest Service Lands with a wide variety of recreation opportunities. Highlights include the Midland Bicycle Trail, Barbara Whipple Trail System and Carnage Canyon Extreme 4-WD Trail. BLM lands are physically connected to the town of Buena Vista via a bridge over the river. Multiple volunteer projects with Buena Vista Singletrack Coalition, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association and Colorado Mountain Club have been completed to improve current routes located within the Fourmile Travel Management Plan area. The BLM is currently working with locals on how best to manage these highly valued lands for the benefit of the community.

**Oil Well Flats:** Just uphill from the first oil well drilled west of the Mississippi River, the trail system at Oil Well Flat provides high-quality hiking and mountain biking opportunities close to Cañon City. Volunteers from numerous organizations have assisted the BLM in developing the trail system, including AmeriCorps NCCC, Mile-High Youth Corps, Volunteers for Outdoors Colorado, Backcountry Horsemen of America, Lower Arkansas Mountain Bike Association and Canon Land Hikers and Walkers. The trail system has been discovered by the Front Range, generating renewed community interest in how to best capitalized on public lands and outdoor recreation.

**South Cañon Trail System:** In 2016, the BLM partnered with Fremont Adventure Recreation, a local recreation advocacy group, as well as Fremont County, the City of Cañon City, and the local Recreation District to construct an extensive trail system that connects town with their public lands, creating further interest in the value these lands and trails play in the community.

**Guffey Gorge and Cache Creek:** These two areas have special management needs due to the high volume of

visitors coming to each area. Guffey Gorge is popular for its swimming hole surrounded by rock cliffs. It is a standard amenity day-use site. Cache Creek is known for its recreational mining activities. The RGFO also manages Cucharas Canyon and Stanley Creek in Huerfano County, and Deer Haven and Four Mile/High Creek in Fremont and Teller Counties, each valued for their undeveloped character and opportunities for non-motorized recreation.

**Browns Canyon National Monument:** The ~22,000 acre monument is jointly administered by the BLM and the USFS Pike San Isabel National Forest and includes a portion of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area. Commercial and private whitewater rafting, angling, backcountry hiking, wilderness solitude, and 4WD exploration on the USFS Turret Trail are the primary attractions in the monument. Two CPW-administered recreation sites at Ruby Mountain and Hecla Junction provide designated camping and picnic opportunities as well as put-in and take-out for watercraft. The Ruby Mountain parking area is the primary access for hikers as well as the Railroad Gulch area on USFS-administered lands.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

The RGFO has five wilderness study areas (WSA) and one instant study area (ISA).

**Beaver Creek WSA:** This area consists of more than 26,150 acres of steep, remote granite canyons and is valued for its wildlife and fish habitat. The primary trailhead is located within the Beaver Creek State Wildlife Area at the end of Fremont County Road 132. A portion of this WSA, 13,734 acres, is within the Beaver Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

**Browns Canyon WSA:** This 6,614-acre area is located between the towns of Salida and Buena Vista just east of the Arkansas River within Browns Canyon National Monument. Rugged topography in the area creates a variety of settings including canyons and gulches that open to ridge tops with sweeping views of the Arkansas River Valley and the nearby Sawatch Mountain Range. The primary trailhead is located near the Ruby Mountain Recreation Site along Chaffee County Road 300. The entire WSA is located within an ACEC.

**Lower and Upper Grape Creek WSAs:** Spanning a large portion of the Grape Creek WSA watershed, these two

WSAs are located nearby Cañon City and Westcliffe. Lower Grape Creek WSA consists of 11,220 acres and Upper Grape Creek consists of 10,200 acres. Rugged peaks and inviting pools in the WSAs provide a diversity of terrain and offer a relatively long recreation season for hikers, anglers, hunters, and equestrians. Primary access is at the Bear Gulch trailhead. There are no developed trails within these WSAs. Grape Creek's riparian corridor is also an ACEC.

**McIntyre Hills WSA:** This area covers almost 16,000 acres of rugged country on the south side of the Arkansas River canyon about 15 miles west of Cañon City. There are no developed trail heads or trails within this area. A small portion of the WSA near the Arkansas River is within the Arkansas Canyonlands ACEC.

**High Mesa Grassland ISA** – This area covers 680 acres of public land, 13 miles northwest of Cañon City in Fremont County. It spans the rolling mesa and steep slopes of Table Mountain, locally known as Sommerville Table. Elevation varies from 8,500 to 9,100 feet. The unit includes 17 species of native grass, and the ISA is within a research natural area and an ACEC.

## PALEONTOLOGY

**Garden Park Fossil Area:** This area is important for paleontological research because of its wealth of Jurassic fossil data. The BLM identified the GPFA as an ACEC because of its paleontological resources. The National Park Service also designated the area in 1972, with a large addition in 2013, as a National Natural Landmark (NNL) with international significance. In addition, the State of Colorado designated it as a Research Natural Area under its Natural Areas Program.

**Paleontology Education:** The RGFO partners with multiple groups to protect paleontological resources through an education program that highlights the resources in the Garden Park Fossil Area. The RGFO worked with partners to create a presentation for the Marsh Quarry Tour that demonstrates the significance of the irreplaceable paleontological resources on public lands. The BLM's partners include the Fremont County Stones and Bones, the National Park Service National Natural Landmark Program, the Geological Society of America's GeoCorps Program and many local volunteers. The RGFO's efforts are funded by multiple programs including Hands on the Land, Take it Outside and other Department of the Interior youth initiatives.

In 2015, with the help of numerous partners, the RGFO developed a Junior Explorer activity book for geology and paleontology on the Gold Belt Byway, which has been a tremendous success with educators and students.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The RGFO manages cultural resources on BLM-managed land from the Continental Divide to the borders of Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. Sites and artifacts in the area range from more than 12,000 years old to 50 years old. Several historic mining districts still contain many scattered parcels of BLM land. These historic mining districts are near Cripple Creek, Leadville, Querida (Westcliffe/Silvercliff), Central City/Black Hawk, and areas west of Boulder. A historic trail is located on a parcel in Morgan County, and many of the reservoirs on the eastern plains still have BLM land underneath them. Sites include a charcoal-making camp, several town sites, a historic toll road and railroads.

Aboriginal sites range from the Paleo-Indian stage through the protohistoric. Prehistoric archaeological data are ephemeral, and often consist of chipped stone, faunal remains, ground stone, pottery and structural elements. The RGFO monitors 19 historic properties and performs proactive inventories on several other sites.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Each year BLM resource specialists provide educational programs to local students on a variety of topics including: wildlife, geology and paleontology. The BLM also supports local community events like the Arkansas River Clean-Up Green Up, Safety Town and Science Fairs. The BLM works with the Southwest Conservation Corps and Mile-High Youth Corps to provide stewardship projects and educational programs to youth aged 15-24.

**Teaching Environmental-education Naturally (TEN):** TEN helps educators develop ways to teach environmental education in the classroom, on the school grounds or "outdoor classrooms" on public lands. The Fremont program is a cooperative effort between the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, BLM, Natural Resources Conservation Service and two school districts. Fremont County teachers and educators attend the four-day class every other year. Educational materials are loaned to teachers through this program.



**Hands on the Land:** The BLM's Garden Park Fossil Area is a member of Hands On the Land, a national network of field classrooms connecting students, teachers, and parents to their public lands. For more information visit: [www.handsontheland.org/garden-park/](http://www.handsontheland.org/garden-park/).

**Take it Outside Youth Initiative Programs:** For the past 18 years BLM has teamed up with Rocky Mountain Field Institute to bring students from the Fountain Valley School to public lands to do service projects. Each year approximately 75 students participate in trail maintenance, education programs and team building.

**Federal Fossils:** When the Garden Park Paleontology Society closed the Dinosaur Depot Museum in 2013, they started a local Federal Fossil Collection of paleontological material from the Garden Park Fossil area. This collection was relocated to Canon City's Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center in 2014. The museum is a new partner in paleontological education and houses several BLM fossils. The RGFO is working with the local Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center to highlight both the historical and paleontological significance of many fossils that have been found in this area. The new exhibit "Digging It: Fossil Finds of Fremont County" will use technology to cater to a broad audience.

**Ecological Literacy Program:** Ecological Literacy Program: Greater Arkansas River Nature Association's (GARNA) mission is to develop awareness of and appreciation for the resources of the Greater Arkansas River area through educational activities, volunteer projects, community involvement and partnerships. Using youth funding, GARNA, the BLM and the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area have developed a program that pairs high school students with BLM staff, engaging them in outdoor activities. The program also works with 3rd, 6th and 7th graders as well.

**Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA):** Youth corps crews assist the BLM on trail projects on the Midland Hills trails, trails in Browns Canyon National Monument and trail systems near Cañon City.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The RGFO manages wildlife habitats ranging from the Great Plains to the Continental Divide. Habitats are managed to support terrestrial, aquatic and special

status species needs while fulfilling the BLM's multiple use mission. The program uses monitoring and inventory data supplemented with landscape-scale datasets to assess impacts and prioritize enhancement projects. The team provides expertise to important multi-agency workgroups that include the Southern Colorado Streamlining Team, Colorado Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Team, several habitat partnership committees, boreal toad recovery team and the South Park Wetlands Focus Group.

The program targets vegetation treatments to enhance big game habitat and offset increasing multiple use demands on public lands. The program also inventories and monitors several federally listed and Bureau Sensitive species including: Mexican spotted owl, peregrine falcon, bald and golden eagles, Gunnison's prairie dog, boreal toad, Arkansas Canyon stickleaf, alpine fen mustard, and Brandegees buckwheat. The program uses this data to help inform land management decisions.

## FORESTRY

Thirty-eight percent of the land managed by the RGFO is classified as commercial forest land or woodlands. The primary commercial species are ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, white fir, lodgepole pine, aspen and Engelmann spruce. Primary woodland species are pinyon pine, Rocky Mountain juniper and one-seed juniper.

The RGFO forestry program issues approximately 600 special forest product permits annually. These include personal-use permits and commercial permits (issued to small local companies). Currently, there are about 10 small sawmills and several logging companies scattered throughout the communities within the RGFO. New timber sales for 2016 will offer up to 1.25 million board feet of timber. These sales allow the RGFO forestry program to accomplish much needed forest management projects such as thinning and path cuts while also supporting local industry. In addition to timber sales, the RGFO uses stewardship contracts to perform forest restoration projects.

The RGFO has an ongoing outbreak of spruce beetle in much of the high elevation spruce/fir forests. This recent epidemic is being managed through the use of salvage harvesting, which removes dead and dying timber in order to prevent large-scale fuel buildup and reduce the severity of future disturbance. Additional ongoing forestry activities include intensive forest

inventory, seeding planting, regeneration surveys, timberstand improvement, and public education and outreach.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

The RGFO administers 333 grazing permits/leases on 400 allotments for 38,000 Animal Unit Months. The rangeland program is responsible for ensuring that grazing allotments meet standards related to Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado.

## WEED MANAGEMENT

This year, the weed management program expects to inventory 10,000 acres for new weed infestation areas and treat more than 900 acres. Evaluations are conducted to determine effectiveness of the previous year's treatments of about 700 acres. Aggressive treatments planned in 2016 of noxious weeds include, but are not limited to, knap weeds yellow toadflax, white top, various non-native thistles, leafy spurge, and salt cedar (Tamarisk). The RGFO's program works in cooperation with the Upper Arkansas Regional Weed Management Area, including Fremont and Chaffee counties.

## LANDS & REALTY

The RGFO is seeing increasing use of public lands in the area, due primarily to its close proximity to metropolitan areas such as Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo. The Lands and Realty program is further complicated by fragmented and split-estate ownership of surface and subsurface lands within the field office's boundaries.

## ABANDONED MINE LANDS

The RGFO AML program involves both safety closure efforts and CERCLA cleanup efforts that focus on historic mining districts, particularly west of Leadville. Safety closure efforts focus on closing hazardous abandoned mine openings in collaboration with the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety near Boulder, Westcliffe, and Buena Vista.

**Lake Fork Watershed:** The BLM collaborates with the Headwaters of the Arkansas Working Group (formerly the Lake Fork Watershed Working Group) to improve water quality for the Upper Arkansas River Watershed.

The partnership includes private landowners, and state and federal agencies.

## FLUID MINERALS

The RGFO manages approximately 2,500 oil and gas wells across eastern Colorado. The RGFO ensures that wells are permitted and inspected for compliance with federal regulatory requirements on drilling and production operations as well as the final abandonment of a well. Production records are routinely monitored and verified to ensure accurate royalty payments to the federal government. RGFO's well-trained staff is dedicated to protecting public lands and their resources by ensuring environmentally sound reclamation and rehabilitation procedures where lands are disturbed by oil and gas operations.

## SOLID MINERALS

Solid minerals management for the RGFO extends east from the Continental Divide to the Colorado-Kansas border and includes hard rock mining, placer activities, gravel pit management, and uranium and coal exploration. Minerals management is complex because of the scattered land status that is often un-surveyed in mountainous areas, as well as the split-estate minerals that are prevalent in eastern Colorado. The vast mineral resources and heightened interest by the public has prompted the RGFO to revamp its public minerals website and prepare a Mineral Potential Report for the entire field office area.

The RGFO manages more than 21 notices and 11 Plans of Operations under the Locatable Minerals Program. This includes gold mines in Lake and Boulder counties, a number of small placer mining operations along the Arkansas River from Cañon City to Leadville, new exploration operations for gold and uranium in Fremont County. The RGFO also manages five common use areas and more than 20 commercial and noncommercial gravel pits used for road maintenance and construction, building construction, landscaping and county road maintenance.



**Keith Berger**  
Royal Gorge Field Manager  
719-269-8522

Keith Berger has been the Royal Gorge Field Office Manager since March 2010. Berger began his career with the BLM in 1989 as a Rangeland Management

Specialist. He then worked as a Resource Advisor from 2004 to 2009. In 2009 and 2010, he worked as a Supervisor for Non-Renewable Resources. Berger has acted as the Gunnison Field Manager and the Branch Chief for Natural Resources. He has been actively engaged in the U.S. Forest Service and BLM fire programs since 1978. Berger has a bachelor's degree in rangeland ecology from Colorado State University. He and his wife have two grown children and enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, mountain biking, fishing, hunting and ATVing in Colorado.

# Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area

307 West Sackett • Salida, CO 81201 • 719-539-7289 • 719-539-3771 fax •  
parks.state.co.us/Parks/arkansasheadwaters

## FACTS

- 9,890 acres comprise the Cooperative Management Area
- 45 recreation sites (19 developed, 6 camping areas, 19 boat ramps)
- 2 Wilderness Study Areas (Browns Canyon 7,003 acres - McIntyre Hills 16,800 acres)
- 2 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways: Top of the Rockies (also a National Scenic Byway), and Collegiate Peaks

Counties: Lake, Chaffee, Fremont and Pueblo

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## RECREATION

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), stretching 152 miles along the Arkansas River, is a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Formed in 1989, this partnership allows agencies to provide visitors with recreation opportunities and care for significant natural resources of the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The U.S. Forest Service has also joined the partnership, although the BLM and the State retain the primary management for the recreation area.

Fees are collected at a number of self-service stations at recreation sites and campgrounds throughout the area. The AHRA visitor center includes the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA) bookstore containing maps and books on the area and activities.

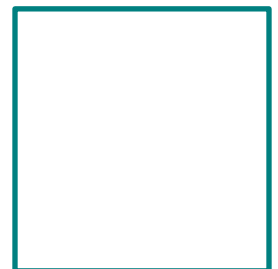
The AHRA issues commercial agreements to 54 boating outfitters, 15 walk and wade fishing companies, 28 photography companies and three shuttle companies.

CPW also provides employment for 25 seasonals with an annual payroll of about \$200,000 and nine full-time employees with a budget of about \$500,000.

The area offers outstanding opportunities for:

- Fishing
- Rafting
- Kayaking
- Picnicking
- Hiking
- Camping
- Mountain biking
- Sightseeing

**Vacant**  
Arkansas Headwaters  
Recreation Area River Manager



# San Luis Valley Field Office

1313 East Highway 160 • Monte Vista, CO 81144 • 719-852-7074 • 719-852-0165 fax

## FACTS

- 499,976 surface acres
- 2,594,033 subsurface acres
- 4 recreation areas
- 3 Wilderness Study Areas
- 1 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway
- 26,127 acres of woodlands
- 11 endangered, threatened, and candidate species (3 listed, 2 candidates)
- 102 miles of streams and rivers
- 474,000 acres grazed by livestock
- 251,194 acres of Areas of Environmental Concern



Counties: Saguache, Alamosa, Rio Grande, Conejos and Costilla

The public lands managed by the BLM's San Luis Valley Field Office (SLVFO) present myriad ecosystems; from alpine desert to the majestic Sangre de Cristo Wilderness on the eastern side of the Valley.

## RECREATION

The San Luis Valley Field Office (SLVFO) has a wide assortment of recreation opportunities ranging from Camping, mountain biking and hiking to bird watching and rock climbing. The SLVFO completed a travel management plan in 2010, which restricts motorized and mechanized travel to designated roads, trails and areas.

**Blanca Wetlands:** Ponds, marshes, playas, wet meadows, and uplands intermingle at Blanca Wetlands to provide rich and diverse habitats for wildlife, waterbirds and fisheries. Blanca Wetlands has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, or an ACEC, specifically for its recreation and wetland values, including playa and marsh habitats containing large populations of water birds; amphibians; macroinvertebrates; and 13 threatened, endangered and sensitive species.

**Penitente Canyon Special Recreation Management Area:** This area is an internationally recognized climbing area, offering 300 sport climbing routes. Among the more famous routes are: Los Hermanos de la Weenie Way and Bullet the Blue Sky, both in inner Penitente

Canyon; Forbidden Fruit on the "Whipping Wall" in Penitente Canyon; and Copacetic in the Rock Garden area. A developed campground offers tent and camper accommodations next to sheer orange-colored cliffs. An extensive trail system provides hiking and mountain biking opportunities.

**Zapata Falls Campground:** This campground sits among pinyon and juniper trees on the lower flanks of the Blanca Peak massif and is within close proximity to the National Park Service's Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Incredible views of the San Luis Valley and the San Juan Mountains can be seen from both the campground and nearby Zapata Falls Picnic Area. A short ¼ mile trail leads from the picnic area to Zapata Falls. For those in good physical condition, the trail continues from the falls up to the high country of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

**Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic & Historic Byway:** The BLM is working with the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and other partners to promote the Los Caminos Antiguos Scenic and Historic Byway through interpretive outreach.

The SLVFO is working to expand winter recreation opportunities near communities with partners such as San Juan Nordic Club, Eastern SLV Trails, and SLVGO! The SLVFO is also planning for Fat Bike use and snow grooming based on community and user group interest and proposals.

## PARTNERS

The SLVFO has extensive relationships with local groups to help support community needs.

SLVGO! represents all 18 communities, six counties, all levels of government, academia, industry, non-Governmental Organizations, and interested citizens regarding recreation in the San Luis Valley. The partnership completed the Trails and Recreation Master Plan in 2014

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) provides the BLM and USFS additional capacity through volunteer stewards and projects on an annual basis by using their extensive experience and expertise to attract volunteers seeking to give back to their communities and their public lands.

SLVFO partners with sister agencies to include Visitor services in the San Luis Valley located at the Rio Grande National Forest's Conejos Peak Ranger District, the Saguache Ranger District and the Divide Ranger District; and the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Visitor services include providing maps, brochures and various permits.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

**Wilderness Study Areas:** The SLVFO manages three WSAs: Black Canyon, Papa Keal and San Luis Hills.

**Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:** The SLVFO is continuing to inventory FO for lands with wilderness characteristics. To date, the BLM has completed revised inventories of public lands associated with two Solar Energy Zones in the southern end of the Valley. No management decisions have been made regarding any lands identified with wilderness characteristics, which is done through the land use planning process.

**National Scenic and Historic Trails:** The Old Spanish National Historic Trail crosses BLM lands throughout the Valley.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The San Luis Valley has a rich cultural landscape that includes traces of the mammoth hunters of the Late Pleistocene (ca. 12,000 BC), Hispanic settlements and

the gold mining camps of Bonanza and Duncan. Stone structures throughout the Valley suggest a possible Puebloan influence, and culturally peeled trees reflect the migrations of the Utes and Jicarilla Apaches. The Valley's wetland environments drew people from as far away as the high plains to exploit the rich game resources that included waterfowl, fish, elk and bison. The Valley also boasts segments of the Old Spanish Trail (1829-1848) and the newly established Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.

The Valley is famous for its Paleoindian sites, attracting researchers from universities around the country and the Smithsonian Institution. Around 7,500 years ago, humans began making and using a wider variety of tools and using a greater variety of resources during what is known as the Archaic Period. The SLVFO area is home to renowned rock art sites that are still important to Tribal partners today. By 1600, the Spanish Empire had established itself in nearby northern New Mexico. Permanent settlement came in 1852 with the establishment of the community of San Luis, Colorado's oldest community, which brought with it Colorado's first water right. By the 1880s, the United States government had established Fort Garland at the eastern entrance to the San Luis Valley and the railroad had arrived in the Valley, marking a new period of increased settlement.

**Mount Blanca:** The Sangre de Cristo mountain range has prominent significance to Native Americans and other cultures, including Mount Blanca and surrounding wetlands and playas on the valley floor. The area is also an important traditional resource collection area, is the focus of traditional cultural importance for multiple tribes, and is a critical viewshed.

**Kerber Creek Restoration:** Since the early 1990s, the SLVFO has been involved with restoring Kerber Creek. The most recent project began in 2005 as a coalition of government agencies, environmental organizations, and local landowners committed to restoring the Kerber Creek Watershed after a historic mining boom in Colorado's northern San Luis Valley.

## PALEONTOLOGY

The BLM's Elephant Rocks Area was habitat for Colombian mammoths that lived in the San Luis Valley during the Pleistocene Epoch. Local legend says that these giant creatures left their mark, and people visit the area to see the marks where mammoths rubbed against the rocks. In 2011, the vertebra of a young mammoth was found on BLM land near the town of

Villa Grove in Saguache County. It is estimated that the bones were deposited about 25,000 years ago. The last mammoths in the San Luis Valley died out about 13,000 years ago.

## LANDS & REALTY

The SLVFO's Lands and Realty program manages a wide range of authorizations (right-of-way grants) issued for roads, pipelines, communication sites, power lines, fiber optics lines and irrigation structures. The authorized uses are issued to entities such as private parties; companies; and county, state and federal agencies. The SLVFO pursues land and water acquisitions with willing sellers, which are funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Other activities include Recreation and Public Purpose Leases, processing and resolving trespass issues, assisting with conducting surveys, processing filming permits, processing temporary use permits, obtaining access easements, and solving title and boundary conflicts.

The SLVFO collaborates with Conejos County Commissioners, Conejos County Clean Water, and numerous volunteers and local students to clean up dump sites on public lands. The SLVFO also continues to partner with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and The Conservation Fund for land acquisition to benefit sportsmen's access and wildlife habitat.

## MINERALS

**Fluid:** Ninety-nine percent of the SLVFO managed lands are open to leasing if interest arises. Currently, there are no producing oil and gas wells on federal mineral estate in the San Luis Valley.

**Locatable:** BLM lands within the San Luis Valley host a historic operating turquoise mine. The "King Manassa" mine in Conejos County has been operating since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but turquoise from the site was a part of the ancestral Puebloan turquoise trade.

**Saleable:** The SLVFO manages commercial and noncommercial gravel pits for road and building construction and maintenance as well as three Common Use Areas: Limekiln, Ojito and Poison Gulch.

**Abandoned Mine Lands** – The SLVFO has steady work in the AML program, which involves closing and securing hazardous mine openings and cleaning up old

mine sites with acid discharge and tailings containing toxic concentrations of hazardous substances. Based on Colorado's mining history in the Bonanza mining district, the SLVFO program maintains an inventory of known hard rock abandoned mine lands on BLM administered public lands. These closures include installing bat gates to allow bat movement, roosting, and use of features when present and plugging and back-filling these mines for public safety.

## SOIL, WATER & AIR

The Rio Grande area is an important river riparian system with the Lower Rio Grande study area. The BLM and partners have collaborated on restoration planning that supports the ongoing effort of Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project.

Since the early 1990s, the SLVFO has been working with partners to restore the Kerber Creek Watershed after a historic mining boom in Colorado's northern San Luis Valley. After large-scale silver ore mining came to an end in the Bonanza Mining District in the 1930s, significant amounts of mine wastes were deposited along the stream. By the 1990s, this waste had been transported throughout the watershed by floods. After voluntary cleanup efforts by the American Smelting and Refining Company in the 1990s, the BLM analyzed 19 miles of the creek, from the town of Bonanza to Villa Grove, to determine further clean-up options. The Bonanza Stakeholders Group, a coalition of local landowners, was established in 2007 to further cooperation on restoration efforts.

## WILDLIFE, WETLANDS, & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The SLVFO manages a diversity of wildlife habitat ranging from low-elevation wetlands, grasslands and shrublands to mid-elevation ponderosa pine forests and mixed conifer forests. Waterfowl, shorebirds, amphibians and other wildlife inhabit the rich wetlands, while species such as the Gunnison prairie dog live in the dry low elevation grasslands. Black bear, mountain lion, pronghorn antelope, elk and mule deer are prevalent in the low and mid-elevation forests and bighorn sheep inhabit the steep rocky terrain. The vast majority of the SLVFO lands provide crucial winter range habitat for elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and bighorn sheep, as well as important birthing areas.

### Federally Threatened and Endangered species:

- Mexican spotted owl (Threatened)
- Yellow-billed cuckoo (Threatened)
- Southwestern willow flycatcher (Endangered)
- Gunnison Sage-grouse (Threatened)
- Canada lynx (Threatened)
- New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (Endangered)
- Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly (Endangered)
- Black-footed ferret (experimental, non-essential population)

The San Luis Valley's wetlands provide an important migratory stopover as well as breeding site for millions of birds in the Central flyway. From flocks of 25,000 Greater and Lesser Sandhill cranes spiraling into the sky singing their prehistoric song, to sky-blackening clouds of 100,000 ducks, the Valley's birds are a delight to bird watchers and hunters alike. The nearly 3,500 acres of wetlands at BLM's Blanca Wetlands and McIntire-Simpson properties are a critical component of this important habitat. The McIntire-Simpson property is designated as Critical Habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and is proposed as critical habitat for the threatened yellow-billed cuckoo.

Blanca Wetlands has been designated an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society and a wetlands Key Site by the Intermountain West Joint Venture, Blanca Wetlands playa and marsh habitats support more than 170 species of birds. This area also supports the state's largest population of breeding snowy plovers, a BLM sensitive species and state species of concern.

## YOUTH & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Each year, BLM resource specialists in the SLVFO provide educational programs to local students on a variety of topics, including wildlife, wetlands, cultural and heritage resources, recreation and geology. The SLVFO also has partnerships with Environment for the Americas to provide internships and conduct shorebird outreach and education to more than 300 local Latino youth annually. In addition to the EFTA interns, and interns brought on through a partnership with Adams State University, the office also works with Southwest Conservation Corp. In FY16, the SLVFO employed 12 Youth Corps interns- nearly one-third of all interns employed BLM Colorado.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

**Livestock and Rangelands:** The SLVFO manages 82 livestock grazing permits on 115 active grazing allotments for approximately 32,400 Animal Unit Months and covering 474,000 acres. Classes of livestock grazing in the SLVFO are cattle and domestic sheep. Grazing allotments are monitored to ensure range conditions are meeting the standards for public health. Those allotments being managed to improve resource conditions are monitored more frequently than those managed to sustain existing satisfactory conditions. The field office continues to manage for drought conditions on an allotment by allotment basis in coordination, with affected permittees and other interested publics.

**Noxious Weeds** – The SLVFO uses an integrated approach to noxious weed control. Use of herbicides is the main mechanism for controlling weeds although biological (bugs) and mechanical treatments are incorporated as necessary. The SLVFO partners with Saguache, Rio Grande, and Conejos counties and the Rio Grande National Forest to identify, map and control noxious weed infestations on BLM-administered lands, National Forest Service System lands, and county road rights-of-way.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

The BLM has identified three SEZs in the San Luis Valley as areas that are well suited for utility scale solar energy production. Recently the Colorado renewable energy team developed a Solar Regional Mitigation Strategy (SRMS) for Colorado SEZs, which identifies and mitigates impacts from potential future solar energy production to foster future solar development in the area. The team also completed a landscape assessment and an ethnography study concurrently with the SRMS to provide a broad-scale synthesis of the natural resources and trends in the ecoregion. The renewable energy program also funded research of golden eagle movement in wind, solar and transmission areas of Colorado; the Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory model on transmission and solar development; avian inventories; cultural surveys and wildlife planning in the San Luis Valley.

## RESEARCH & COLLABORATION

The SLVFO is active in research and collaboration as part of the National Wind Erosion Research Network (NWERN). The network consists of 13 intensively



instrumented research sites across the western United States and aims to develop standardized approaches to understanding wind erosion processes and facilitate collaborative efforts in aeolian research and land management. The San Luis Valley Field Office manages one of two network sites in Colorado, which is one of four operated by the BLM as a whole. The site requires the collection and processing of sediment and dust samples on a monthly basis and the measurement of vegetation and soil surface characteristics four times per year. Vegetation sampling follows intensified methods in line with the BLM's Assessment, Inventory, & Monitoring Strategy to make research and management more cohesive across the greater landscape. All data are submitted to the NWERN research team at the Jornada Institute via a central data portal for analysis, while a constant stream of meteorological information is available from each site via the Network website.

**Melissa Garcia**  
San Luis Valley Field  
Manager  
719.239.0494



Melissa Garcia began her career in the San Luis Valley as a BLM and Forest Service wildlife and fisheries technician. She was in the Student Career Experience Program in the early 2000s and was placed permanently in the San Luis Valley Public Lands Center as a terrestrial and aquatic wildlife biologist from 2003-2012. She moved to the Royal Gorge Field Office as an Assistant Field Manager for Renewable Resources in 2012. After that, she joined the Rocky Mountain District team as an Associate District Manager. Melissa became the San Luis Valley Field Office Field Manager in 2017. She is married with two children and loves to ski; ride mountain bikes, motorcycles and horses; hike and backpack; and enjoys watersports such as rafting and kayaking.

# Northwest District

2300 River Frontage Road • Silt, CO 81652 • 970-876-9000 • 970-876-9090



most productive oil and natural gas fields in the state, four of Colorado's nine coal mines and vast deposits of oil shale.

Urban interface issues and increasing pressure on BLM lands from recreation and other uses is an ongoing management challenge.

**Andrew Archuleta**  
Northwest District  
Manager  
970-876-9095



The Northwest Colorado District manages about 3.7 million surface acres and is comprised of the Colorado River Valley, Kremmling, Little Snake and White River field offices.

The District includes the Colorado River corridor along with the White and Yampa rivers. It is home to some of the largest deer and elk herds in the county, along with pronghorn, bighorn sheep and a wide variety of other wildlife. The Northwest District contains the majority of the Colorado range of the Greater Sage Grouse.

The Northwest District also manages 10.1 million acres of subsurface minerals, which includes some of the

Andrew Archuleta was the Field Manager at the San Luis Valley Field Office for eight years before joining the Northwest District in 2016. Before working with the BLM, he worked with the U.S. Forest Service as a District Ranger, Program Manager and On-Scene Coordinator. He also worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an Environmental Contaminants Specialist. Archuleta has a master's degree in wildlife biology. He is married and has two children. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, backpacking, woodworking and motorcycles.

# Kremmling Field Office

2103 E. Park Avenue • P.O. Box 68 • Kremmling, CO 80459 • 970-724-3000 • 970-724-9590 fax

## FACTS

- 377,351 surface acres
- 2,232,460 subsurface acres
- 30 producing oil wells, all in Jackson County. No producing natural gas wells
- 198,900 acres priority habitat and 18,900 acres general habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse
- Four Special Recreation Management Areas: North Sand Hills (1,450 acres), Upper Colorado River (15,000 acres), Strawberry (7,900 acres), Wolford (25,700 acres)
- One Extensive Recreation Management Area: Headwaters (13,800 acres)
- Eight Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- 3 Wilderness Study Areas (8,872 acres): Troublesome (8,158), North Sand Hills ISA (681), Platte River contiguous (33)
- 2 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways – Cache la Poudre-North Park Byway; Colorado River Headwaters Byway



Counties: 187,000 acres in Jackson, 144,000 in Grand, 27,000 in Larimer, 18,000 in Eagle, 2,400 in Summit

The Kremmling Field Office (KFO) is comprised of three regions: North Park, Middle Park and the Laramie River Valley. North Park and the Laramie River Valley are situated on the east side of the Continental Divide. The North Platte River's headwaters begin in North Park and the Laramie River to the east of the park is also a tributary to the North Platte.

## RECREATION

The KFO manages 30 miles of the Colorado River from Byers Canyon to State Bridge. The majority of the river corridor consists of Class I and II white water, with Gore Canyon offering a 5-mile section of expert-only Class IV and V white water. The KFO manages three primary public recreation areas along the Upper Colorado River: Pumphouse, Radium and State Bridge.

Most of the fall recreation use occurs in the forested areas. There are several major roads that provide access to large forested blocks of public land. Summer and winter travel maps are available at the Kremmling Field Office.

At the North Sand Hills in Jackson County, use over holiday weekends (Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day) ranges from 1,000 to 3,000 people per day.

Other weekends average about 100 people per day, while weekdays average about 50 people per day. Total visitation for the summer months is estimated at more than 20,000 visits a year.

KFO recreation activities include:

- Rafting
- Trout fishing
- Kayaking
- Camping
- Hunting
- Mountain biking
- Hiking
- OHV use
- Horseback riding
- Wildlife viewing

**Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA):** The area is popular with the public for its recreation opportunities and proximity to Grand, Summit, Routt, and Eagle counties, and the Front Range metropolitan area. The stretch of the Colorado River from Pumphouse to State Bridge is among the top three commercially-used rivers in the state. Annual visitation to that area exceeds 90,000 people.

**North Sand Hills SRMA:** This is an intensive OHV-use area that includes the only sand dune area in Colorado open to public OHV use. Motorized travel in this SRMA is limited to the open sand dune complex and existing open roads and trails.

**Strawberry SRMA:** Public lands in the Strawberry SRMA are valued for their easy access and close proximity to the communities of Tabernash, Fraser, and Granby. Residents of east Grand County enjoy a variety of close-to-home recreation opportunities in the area. The SRMA designation from the recent Approved Resource Management Plan will allow KFO to focus management in this area on creating sustainable recreation opportunities.

**Wolford SRMA:** This area is adjacent to Kremmling and offers close-to-town recreation opportunities in a natural setting. This area sees heavy OHV use by local, regional and statewide residents. The SRMA designation from the recent Approved Resource Management Plan will allow KFO to focus management in this area on creating sustainable recreation opportunities.

**Colorado River Headwaters Scenic and Historic Byway:** The partnership for this Byway includes Grand County, communities along the Byway, and federal and state agencies. The Byway starts at the Rocky Mountain National Park Visitor Center and ends at State Bridge on Colorado Highway 131. The Byway is about 80 miles long and winds through or by a variety of public lands. The Byway provides an educational message about the national significance of the headwaters of the Colorado River, and historic and present-day water use.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

**Troublesome Wilderness Study Area (WSA):** Consists of 8,250 acres of lodgepole pine forest located about 15 miles north of Kremmling. It has been recommended as not suitable for wilderness designation.

**Platte River Contiguous WSA:** Consists of 30 acres of steep ground along the North Platte River in North Park, near the Wyoming border. The WSA is contiguous with the U.S. Forest Service's Platte River Wilderness, which has resulted in the WSA being recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

**North Sand Hills Instant Study Area:** Consists of 672 acres within a sand dune complex that includes open sand, aspen and sagebrush habitats located 15 miles northeast of Walden. It was recommended as not suitable for wilderness designation.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The cultural resource program emphasizes consultation and coordination with the Tribal Councils of the three Ute tribes and the Northern Arapaho and the Eastern Shoshone tribes. The University of Northern Colorado began an in-depth ethnographic study of North Park beginning in 2008. This involves on-site visits to Traditional Cultural Properties by Native Americans with ties to Middle and North Parks. The Prehistoric resources discovered in Middle and North Parks contain a rich wealth of information spanning a 12,000 year history, and include Native American buffalo kill sites, tipi rings, eagle traps, wickiups, vision quest locations, burial sites, lithic quarries, and camp sites. The Yarmony Pit House site southwest of Kremmling is the oldest documented habitation structure in Colorado and is dated to 6,200 years ago. A burial removed from this location dates to 6,400 years ago, and is the third oldest burial ever to be discovered and scientifically excavated in Colorado.

The KFO also has significant invertebrate and vertebrate Paleontological resources, and a long history of scientific investigation. The Hayden Expedition of 1869 recorded the first dinosaur bone scientifically collected in Colorado, a tail vertebrae from an Allosaurus. Extinct species from the Miocene Era related to the modern horse, camel, deer, beaver and antelope have been discovered and excavated here.

**Barger Gulch – Folsom Habitation and Procurement Site:** Dates to 10,200 or more years ago. A ten-year excavation by the University of Wyoming was completed in 2007, revealing a rich history dating to the Folsom period.

**Kremmling Cretaceous Ammonite site:** Contains about 125 fossil invertebrate species, and dates to 72.5 million years ago. The KFO manages this area as a Research Natural Area and Area of Critical Environmental concern. The Giant Ammonite *platiceras meeki* is the most obvious fossil at this site with some female specimens measuring up to a meter across. Ten new species of bivalves, gastropods and mollusks were also discovered at the site.

## WILDLIFE & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The KFO administers public lands that support more than 300 species of fish and wildlife in a variety of habitats. These species inhabit 13 distinct habitat types ranging from wetland bottoms and riparian areas to subalpine forest. Wetland habitat is especially important in North Park at the Hebron Waterfowl Area which has been managed by the KFO with an emphasis on waterfowl habitat since the mid-1970s.

The KFO, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and several private partners worked together to develop a Watchable Wildlife Education Area at the Windy Gap Reservoir near Granby, which is an excellent example of collaborative planning and funding. The educational displays also include information about cultural resources, and the purpose of the reservoir and water diversion pipeline.

As a result of a land exchange completed in 1999, the BLM acquired 125 acres of land with adjudicated water rights, adjacent to the Colorado River, near Kremmling. That acquisition is known now as the Junction Butte Wetland Area. The KFO and Ducks Unlimited recognized the potential of the area to become very valuable habitat for waterbirds and BLM-sensitive amphibians by creating, enhancing and maintaining it as a wetland.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

The KFO administers 142 livestock grazing permits on 256 allotments covering 338,054 acres of BLM-administered public lands in Middle Park, North Park, and the Laramie River area. The KFO is dedicated to improving the condition of rangelands through partnerships with permittees, local organizations, and other government agencies. Compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health by implementing rotation-grazing systems is an integral part of maintaining or improving range condition on KFO-administered public lands.

Since many of the 256 allotments contain both BLM-administered and private land, cooperation is necessary to properly manage rangelands. In North Park, the Owl Mountain Partnership and the North Park Habitat Partnership Program have become strong partners with the BLM in efforts to improve the condition of rangelands.

## RIPARIAN PROGRAM

The field office has the headwaters of the Colorado, North Platte, and Laramie River, and manages approximately 200 miles of perennial streams and 4,850 acres of wetlands. Perennial streams are primarily in the Middle Park and Laramie River areas, while North Park has the larger wetland acreages, including 15 high elevation fens. Inventories have found at least six areas of very high to high biodiversity significance on lands managed by the resource area. Due to the land ownership pattern, many partnerships are necessary to manage the resource.

## NOXIOUS WEEDS

The KFO uses an integrated approach to noxious weed control. Emphasis is on prevention and incorporating high standards for site reclamation in all project implementation. Use of herbicides is the main mechanism for controlling weeds, although biological and mechanical treatments are used. The KFO partners with Grand, Jackson and Larimer counties to identify, map and control noxious weed infestations on BLM-administered lands. Currently, a manageable level of noxious weeds exists in the KFO. New weed infestations are being found, which could pose a risk of invading native habitat.

## SOIL, WATER & AIR

The KFO manages lands in the headwaters of three major drainages: the Colorado, the North Platte and the Laramie rivers. The program primarily facilitates resource projects by securing water rights and state permits for projects, assisting in developing projects, mitigating impacts, and monitoring the results of projects.

Since 2006, the office has participated in the state's "Water for the 21st Century" effort, attending the Colorado Basin and the North Platte Basin Roundtables as a BLM liaison. The KFO also is on the Non-Consumptive Use Subcommittees for the Colorado Roundtables, helping quantify water needs for recreational and biological purposes. As part of the RMP revision, the area's Travel Management Plan focuses on sustainable trails and roads that have minimal impacts to long-term soil health and water quality.

The KFO is part of the Grand County Water Information Network, which coordinates comprehensive water

quality monitoring, information and educational programs in the county. The KFO helped the Owl Mountain Partnership complete a watershed plan for Jackson County. The Plan, funded by a 319 grant, identifies the monitoring needed to assess water quality impaired streams. The BLM, as funding permits, is assessing listed stream segments on their lands to identify the source and extent of impairment and possible management actions to improve the stream.

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

Approximately 100,000 acres (about 30 percent) of the area administered by the KFO is in forest or woodlands.

The following is the acreage by species:

- Lodgepole Pine 68,000
- Aspen 18,000
- Subalpine Fir/Engelmann Spruce 2,000
- Douglas-fir 5,000
- Pinyon/Juniper 7,000

The lodgepole pine forest has experienced a major mountain pine beetle epidemic over the last 10 to 15 years, resulting in the loss of lodgepole pine stands over a large acreage. The forest has been through an extended drought and most stands are mature or overmature.

Dwarf mistletoe, a parasitic plant, is also common in most of the lodgepole pine stands and is a forest health problem that likely will infect lodgepole regeneration.

A looming problem exists in the more than 3,000 acres of young lodgepole pine stands that were regenerated during the 1980s and 1990s, which need to be pre-commercially thinned to prevent stagnated “doghair” stands and to remove mistletoe infected trees. These stands have between 2,000 and 5,000 trees per acre, while a desirable level is 200 to 450 trees per acre. Between 150 and 300 acres a year are treated, resulting in more than 2 million board feet that are salvaged annually. Jackson County has entered into a long-term stewardship agreement with the BLM for forest health and fuels reduction. This agreement will allow the BLM and Jackson County to implement contracts and projects to move the forests toward a healthier condition and to reduce the chances of a catastrophic fire.

## FUELS MANAGEMENT

Fuels treatments using both mechanical and prescribed fire, are important for vegetation management in KFO. The fuels management program assists other programs, mainly forestry, wildlife and rangeland management in accomplishing management objectives. Pile burning following timber sales, hazardous tree removal in diseased lodgepole pine stands, sagebrush treatments to improve forage for wildlife and livestock and removing pinon/juniper to improve the variety of wildlife habitats are examples of fuels management activities. Among recent fuels management projects are a fuels reduction project along the public-land boundary with the Gore Lakes subdivision, and the continued emphasis on the removal of hazardous trees due to the pine beetle epidemic along BLM roads. Successful fuels management employs collaboration with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Colorado State Forest Service Grand and Jackson counties and the U.S. Forest Service.

## LANDS & REALTY

The configuration of public lands in the KFO lends itself to an active land tenure program. The priorities are to acquire public access for recreational opportunities; retain public access, critical wildlife habitat, T&E species habitat, and riparian areas; and improve management of existing public lands by blocking up certain areas. The 1984 Kremmling Resource Management Plan is being revised. Most All land tenure projects are on hold so as not to make any decisions that would affect long-term planning decisions. The rights-of-way program has an average of 15-20 proposals per year. The KFO is active in the compliance, monitoring and reclamation aspects of the rights-of-way program, including weed and erosion control. Resolving trespass issues is a growing workload, due to the land configuration and high use of the public lands in the KFO.

## FLUID MINERALS

The primary fluid mineral resources being developed are oil, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) gas and some methane gas. The KFO has a long history of oil and gas drilling and production activity, with nearly 675 wells having been drilled since the early 1920s. Most of these wells are located in the central portion of Jackson County in the McCallum and surrounding fields. New wells drilled within the KFO's jurisdiction over the next 20 years

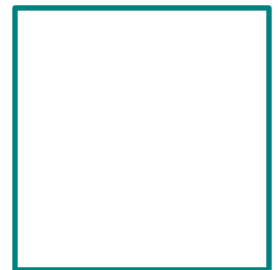
likely will be targeted at the Coalmont Niobrara Formation. The high potential area for oil and gas falls entirely within Jackson County. Interest in oil and gas leasing is mainly in Jackson County but also to some degree in Grand County, although, no oil or gas has been produced outside of Jackson County for more than a decade. Recent horizontal extraction techniques and economic discoveries of Niobrara oil production may promote leasing interest in unleased areas of the KFO.

**Coal:** Commercial or industrial coal mining in North Park ceased and no mining activity is likely in the KFO in the future. Although a considerable volume of mineable and marketable coal remains on federal lands in the McCallum area of North Park, the lack of reasonable-cost transportation in the area hinders use of this resource. There is some potential for methane gas in the near surface and deeper areas of the McCallum coal area.

**Locatable Minerals:** No significant future activity is anticipated on BLM-managed lands in the KFO. There may be interest in future drilling and exploration of gold placer claims on Independence Mountain in northwest Jackson County.

**Saleable Minerals:** Continuing trends of urbanization in eastern and southern Grand County and concentration of ownership in agricultural lands into single large ranches in Grand and Jackson counties yield long-term concerns about the availability of sand and gravel in the future. Existing free-use pits are in their last years of material supply: closures and reclamation of the old pits are anticipated. Demands from Jackson and Grand county governments are expected to increase for free-use sand and gravel resources on BLM-managed lands. Continuing demand for decorative stone will likely drive additional sales and the permitting of the new areas as they are discovered or requested.

**Vacant**  
Kremmling Field Manager  
970-724-3000



# Little Snake Field Office

455 Emerson Street • Craig, CO 81625 • 970-826-5000 • 970-826-5002 fax

## FACTS

- 1,303,540 surface acres
- 2,679,492 subsurface acres
- 12 recreation sites (6 developed, 4 picnic areas, 4 camping areas, 1 boat ramp)
- 6 Recreation Management Areas
- 7 Wilderness Study Areas (78,249 acres)
- 261,059 acres of woodlands (309,556 acres of forest land)
- 9 endangered, threatened, and candidate species (8 listed, 1 candidate)
- 570,400 acres priority habitat and 479,700 acres general habitat for Greater Sage Grouse
- 303 miles of streams and rivers
- 1 wild horse herd management area (157,730 acres)
- 1.2 million acres grazed by livestock



Counties: Moffat, Routt and Rio Blanco

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## RECREATION

**Axial Basin:** The Axial Basin encompasses 29,000 acres of public lands, private lands, and state lands between County Roads 55, 17 and 32. The area is known for its large population of deer, elk, and antelope. As a result, the Axial Basin Coordinated Resource Management Plan was developed opening up more than 11,000 acres of privately owned lands for public hunting access. This popular hunting area has become known to sportsmen as the Axial Basin Triangle.

**Cedar Mountain:** Cedar Mountain is a prominent landmark located five miles northwest of Craig, Colorado. The mountain encompasses an 880-acre block of public land and has an elevation of 7,500 feet. It rises 1,000 feet above the Yampa Valley providing panoramic views. Because of Cedar Mountain's isolation from similar terrain, the horseshoe-shaped rim provides a vantage point which offers a superior view of the surrounding countryside. Cedar Mountain offers a variety of recreational opportunities year round including: scenic and wildlife viewing, nature study, picnicking, hunting, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and horseback riding on 3.5 miles of trails.

**Diamond Peak:** The Diamond Peak area, located in the northwest corner of Colorado, has the small Rocky Reservoir campground situated among a grove of Aspen trees at more than 8,600 feet. Access to the campground is by dirt road and usually requires a high clearance vehicle. The area provides a remote and scenic experience with trophy big game and the opportunity to view moose.

**Emerald Mountain:** The Emerald Mountain Special Recreation Management Area is a 4,139 acre parcel situated southwest of Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The parcel was acquired in 2007 through a land exchange with the Colorado State Land Board and assistance of the Emerald Mountain Partnership. The SRMA is managed as two separate management zones. Zone 1 provides opportunities for strenuous, challenging mountain biking, Nordic Skiing, hunting, and similar activities. Zone 2 provides opportunities for wildlife viewing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and similar non-mechanized activities. Positive working relationships with partners, the local community, and organizations have resulted in the completion of Ridge Trail and continuing plans for future trails and trailhead



facilities. The area is designated as day-use only and is closed to all motorized travel.

**Little Yampa Canyon:** The Little Yampa Canyon Special Recreation Management Area is located 40 miles south of Craig. The 19,840-acre SRMA includes Duffy Mountain, Iles Mountain, Juniper Mountain and portions of the Yampa River and Yampa Valley Trail. The Yampa River through the SRMA is a popular flatwater boating area and is eligible for Scenic and Wild River status. The Yampa Valley Trail, which crosses through the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA, extends from Steamboat Springs, Colorado to Dinosaur, Colorado and connects with other regional trails. The area is popular for hunting, fishing, and OHV activities. Motorized and mechanized vehicles are allowed on designated routes only. Colorado Parks and wildlife is the primary manager of Yampa River public land access sites. State Parks provide consistent day-to-day management, facilities, signing, maintenance, and regulation enforcement, while Parks and Wildlife and BLM cooperatively enforce all applicable laws and regulations on public lands within the Yampa River corridor. The BLM is expanding recreation opportunities in this SRMA through expansion of campground facilities, development of interpretive hikes and drives, and partnership in marketing with the local Moffat County Tourism Bureau.

**Sand Wash Basin:** The Sand Wash Basin is located northwest of Maybell, Colorado and is easily accessible from Colorado State Highway 318. The Basin is a large, scenic expanse of high desert country that abounds with solitude and recreational opportunities including horseback riding, rock-hounding, hunting and off-highway vehicle use, which is the most popular recreational activity of the area. Approximately 160,000 acres of public lands is also home to the largest wild horse herd in Colorado.

**Sarvis Creek:** Sarvis Creek is a 35-acre property on the Upper Yampa River purchased in 2014 through a partnership among Western Rivers Conservancy, the BLM, U.S. Forest Service and Yampa River Legacy Partnership. The property provides access to world-class fish and wildlife habitat 13 miles from Steamboat Springs. The property is the historic Hubbard Summer Place and includes a cabin and now-protected historic artifacts.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS & SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

**Cross Mountain WSA:** This 14,081-acre site offers spectacular views into Cross Mountain Canyon where the Yampa River rages 1,000 feet below the canyon rim. The Yampa River in the canyon provides the expert kayaker with high risk and challenging white water not found elsewhere in the region. The south end of the mountain is excellent for day hikes while the north end of the mountain provides a large area for backpacking and backcountry camping. Erosion has worked on the mountain's east and west flanks, exposing colorful rocky rims, side canyons, and rock outcrops. This area is easily accessible from county roads and the National Park Service parking area along the Deer Lodge Road at the west end of Cross Mountain Canyon. All forms of motorized and mechanized vehicles are prohibited.

**Diamond Breaks WSA:** This 36,520-acre site is located south-west of Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge and provides a scenic mountainous backdrop to the Browns Park area. The series of colorful pinyon-juniper covered red sandstone ridges break toward the Green River to the north in Browns Park. The area offers opportunities for day hikes or backpacking. The WSA is west of and adjacent to the north end of Dinosaur National Monument and provides views into the Canyon of Lodore. Activities in the WSA include photography, nature study, wildlife viewing, hiking, backpacking, hunting and enjoying the cultural heritage. Motorized or mechanized vehicles are prohibited.

**Douglas Mountain WSA:** Douglas Mountain lies north of the Yampa River and east of the Green River. There are four BLM wilderness study areas directly adjacent to the northern boundary of Dinosaur National Monument on Douglas Mountain. They are the Ant Hills (4,354 acres), Chew Winter Camp (1,320 acres), Peterson Draw (5,160 acres), and Vale of Tears (7,420 acres). These remote WSAs consist of rugged hills and valleys on the flank of Douglas Mountain and are extensions of the landforms of Dinosaur National Monument to the south. This area provides interesting scenery with its ponderosa pine forest contrasting with red sandstone outcrops. There are no developed recreation sites in the Douglas Mountain area, but the area offers opportunities for visitors to enjoy deer and elk hunting, camping, sightseeing, hiking, backpacking and

horseback riding. Motorized and mechanized vehicle travel is limited to existing roads and trails.

**West Cold Spring WSA:** This 17,682-acre site on the north side of Browns Park extends 20 miles west to east with rough and steep south-facing slopes. Much of the area is characterized by draws and canyons that have cut the O-Wi-Yu-Kuts Plateau, forming a series of plateaus and ridges. Beaver Creek Canyon along the Utah border provides an excellent area for hiking or backpacking. A cattle trail extends the length of the canyon and Beaver Creek supports a trout fishery. The rugged Matt Trail also provides a challenging hiking route up or down the south face of the mountain. Spring hiking is good in the lower elevations, with summer and fall hiking at higher elevations. Both of these trails are closed to motorized vehicles.

**Irish Canyon ACEC:** Irish Canyon is a relatively remote and highly scenic canyon that makes up 11,680 acres. It is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern because of its unique geology, scenery, plant species and cultural resources. There is an interpretive exhibit and trail of ancient petroglyphs at the south entrance to Irish Canyon with other unmarked cultural sites in and around the area. All sites and artifacts are protected by Federal laws. At the north end of the canyon is a small campground. There are no developed trails. Primitive roads to the east and west provide excellent mountain biking opportunities. Motorized and mechanized travel is limited to designated routes.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The cultural resource program provides support and Native American consultation to renewable and non-renewable program efforts. This includes planning efforts, lands and reality, oil and gas, coal, range, forestry, wild horse and burros, wilderness, recreation, and wildlife programs. The program consults with Moffat County Commissioners on certain projects where they may be able to provide information about historic properties. Cultural program knowledge of the prehistoric and historic archaeological resource has progressed through these support activities, especially as a result of oil and gas development. Recent work associated with large pipelines has resulted in more excavation than anywhere in Colorado. Cultural program knowledge has also progressed via partnerships with the Vermillion Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society, Dominguez Archaeological Research Group, University of Northern Colorado, and Moffat County. These partnerships

enable the BLM fiscal and research opportunities that would not be possible on our own. The program was also one of the first in the National BLM to participate in the popular Passport in Time programs, reaching out to volunteers to accomplish on-the-ground work.

Currently, archaeological work in Northwestern Colorado provides evidence of a strong Paleo-Indian presence, and extensive Archaic habitation of the area. We have further defined the presence of northern Fremont peoples through open sites, rock shelters, and rock art. Proto-Ute, Numic (Ute and Shoshone), and historic Ute peoples are evident in the archaeological record. Euro American historic archaeology is present from about 1820 A.D. to the early 21st Century and revolves around the themes of homesteading, ranching and mineral exploration.

## WILD HORSES

**Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area:** Sand Wash Basin covers about 160,000 acres of public lands between Vermillion Bluffs and Seven Mile Ridge and is home to a wild horse herd ranging in size between 163 and 362 animals. The wild horses in this herd are the size of a typical domestic horse (average size is between 14.5 and 15 hands, with horses reaching as large as 16 hands). Wild horses can easily be observed from County Road 75 North (the Seven Mile Ridge road) and from County Road 67 and 126 from Shepherder Springs north to the junction of County Road 75 North. The primary foaling season is between March and June each year with herd recruitment averaging 20 percent each year. The current population is estimated to be more than 700 horses.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The LSF0 provides habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife species. Habitat types include:

- Salt desert shrub
- Sagebrush steppe
- Pinyon and juniper woodlands
- Mountain shrub
- Aspen woodlands
- Lodgepole pine forests

Substantial populations of elk, mule deer and pronghorn exist throughout the area and the LSF0 provides crucial winter range for these species. Numerous species of

small game, non-game mammals, reptiles, raptors and songbirds are also present.

Common species include:

- White-tailed prairie dog
- Wyoming ground squirrel
- Mountain lion
- Bobcat
- Coyote
- Red fox
- Badger
- Golden eagle
- Red-tailed hawk
- Chukar partridge
- Wild turkey

Threatened or Endangered species include:

- Canada lynx
- Razorback sucker
- Colorado pike minnow
- Bonytail
- Humpback chub
- Black-footed ferret
- Yellow-billed cuckoo

Special Status species include:

- Greater Sage Grouse
- Columbian sharp-tailed grouse
- Ferruginous hawk
- Great Basin spade-foot toad
- Midget faded rattlesnake
- Mountain plover
- Northern leopard frog

BLM lands within the LSFO support approximately 50 known Greater Sage-Grouse leks. Another 60 leks are known to occupy lands in which the LSFO manages the federal mineral estate. The LSFO is actively managing Greater Sage-Grouse habitats to prevent unnecessary fragmentation and to restore degraded habitat.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

The LSFO oversees the largest BLM grazing program in Colorado with 23 percent of BLM Colorado's total AUMs (animal unit months), which includes 317 permits and leases on 325 allotments. The Axial Basin Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) was developed in 1993 by a team of specialists from various agencies and institutions, including Moffat County, Colorado State University, the Bureau of Land Management, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colowyo Coal Company and private ranchers. This plan was designed to resolve

identified conflicts between wildlife and livestock and public and private land ownership patterns. The CRMP provides a grazing management system for three permittees on two allotments covering 28,882 acres and although the plan is 17 years old, the technical team still meets at least once a year to tour the area covered by the plan to identify and resolve on-going issues and concerns.

## FLUID MINERALS

The Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario (RFD) forecasts more than 3,000 new wells could be drilled in LSFO jurisdiction over the next 20 years. The majority of these wells will be targeted at tight sand and shale formations containing natural gas. The main development areas for these new wells will be in the Hiawatha, Powderwash, and Great Divide areas.

## SOLID MINERALS

LSFO contains known economic deposits of coal, uranium, high purity limestone, and sand and gravel. Based on known occurrences and/or known favorable geologic settings, the area has the potential for other significant deposits of these commodities, as well as other mineral resources, including oil shale and associated commodities, precious and base metals, zeolites, construction stone, and clays. The LSFO has one of the largest coal programs in the state with more than 16 million tons of coal produced in FY 2009 from three coal mines.

## PALEONTOLOGY

Fossils found in the LSFO encompass the geologic time scale from the Cambrian to the most recent. Fossils found in the LSFO include Paleozoic invertebrate fossils such as stromatolites, trilobites, brachiopods, pelecypods, and a variety of ichnofossils. Fossils representing the Mesozoic and Cenozoic include vertebrate fossils representing the dinosaurs, marine reptiles and land mammals. Additionally, Mesozoic and Cenozoic invertebrates of Phylums representing Pelecypoda, (Bivalvia), Cephalopoda, Insecta, and ichnofossils can be identified in the LSFO. The LSFO is responsible for managing permits from scientists associated with several academic institutions. Among those institutes are the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Museum of Western Colorado, the University of Colorado Museum Geology/ Paleobiology Section, the University of Colorado, Colorado University

at Denver and the Denver Museum of Science and Nature.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

The Little Snake Field Office averages about 71 fires per year with an average of 6,500 acres burned. Some natural fires caused by lightning are managed, rather than quickly suppressed, to benefit a variety of resources including wildlife, range ecology, vegetative diversity and hazardous fuels. The fire management program for the LSFO also handles prescribed burn and mechanical fuels treatment projects, which focus on eliminating hazardous fuel conditions that benefit other programs such as Wildlife, Range, ecosystem health, and Oil and Gas operations.

## LANDS & REALTY

The lands and realty program manages rights-of-way (ROW) for pipelines, roads and power lines. Nearly half of those ROWs are for oil and gas. The BLM also has communication facilities, telephone and fiber optic lines, power systems, recreation and public purposes act leases, and easements. At this time, the majority of the BLM's new projects are energy-related.



**Bruce Sillitoe**

Little Snake Field Manager  
970-826-5089

Bruce has extensive work experience in natural resource management at the county and Federal levels. He came to Craig from Salt Lake City, where he had been the assistant field manager over renewable resources in the BLM Salt Lake City Field Office. Prior to coming to BLM, Bruce worked for 15 years as an environmental planner for Clark County, Nevada. He has also worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Utah State Lands, and the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory in Montana. Sillitoe is a native of Henderson, Nevada. He has a B.S. in range science from Utah State University and a master of business administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Married with 4 children and 2 dogs. Bruce enjoys outdoor activities including hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing. He enjoys spending time keeping his cars running and has become a decent mechanic over the years.

# White River Field Office

220 E. Market Street • Meeker, CO 81641 • 970-878-3800 • 970-878-3805 fax

## FACTS

- 1,456,507 surface acres
- 2,102,087 subsurface acres
- 14 recreation sites (2 developed, 2 picnic areas)
- 6 Wilderness Study Areas (81,000 acres)
- 8 Endangered, Threatened, and Candidate species (7 listed, 1 candidate)
- 122,000 acres priority habitat and 180,200 acres general habitat for Greater Sage Grouse
- 36 BLM Sensitive Species
- 17 Areas of Critical Concern
- 1 Wild horse herd management area
- 1,435,513 acres grazed by livestock
- 1 National Scenic Byway
- 1 National Historic District



Counties: Rio Blanco, Moffat, and Garfield

## RECREATION

The White River Field Office, WRFO, is known for its abundance of big game hunting opportunities. Arguably the nation's largest elk herd makes its home here as well as impressive numbers of mule deer. The area also boasts more than 50 miles of the Dinosaur Diamond National Scenic Byway, which passes the western side of the field office and bisects the Canyon Pintado National Historic District. The WRFO provides an array of dispersed recreational activities such as off-highway vehicle riding and 4x4 routes. The WRFO is undertaking an extensive travel management process that will make route-by-route decisions over the next several years. Recreational activities also include camping, horseback riding and hiking.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

The WRFO has six Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). They include Bull Canyon WSA, Willow Creek & Skull Creek WSAs, which are located north of the town of Dinosaur and south of Dinosaur National Monument. The Oil Spring Mountain WSA is located 30 miles south of the town of Rangely and Black Mountain and the Windy Gulch WSAs are located 10 miles west of Meeker. All

WSAs are open to foot and horse travel and total 81,000 acres that allow for primitive types of recreational experiences.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Canyon Pintado National Historic District:** Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Canyon Pintado is located in northwest Colorado in the Douglas Creek Valley, between Rangely and Fruita. The canyon was visited repeatedly by a variety of cultures over the last 11,000 years. One culture that left a visible mark on the canyon was the Fremont. Many of the rock art sites left behind are thought to be the handiwork of Fremont-age peoples.

## WILD HORSES

**Piceance – East Douglas Creek Herd Management Area:** This area is home to more than 200 wild horses. The area encompasses nearly 195,000 acres of rolling piñon and juniper woodlands. The best place to view the horses is from the rim of Cathedral Bluffs facing east and looking along the slopes that fall off to the east. The Piceance-East Douglas wild horse herd shares its habitat with elk, mule deer, sage grouse, eagles, hawks, coyotes, fox and an assortment of reptiles.

# WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

- Threatened and Endangered species: bald eagle, Colorado pike-minnow, Canada lynx, and reintroduced black-footed ferret
- Small game: 15 species, including 1 BLM sensitive species
- Predators: 6 species
- Non-game birds: about 240 species, 60 percent of which breeding or resident, including 14 BLM Sensitive species
- Small mammals: about 36 species, including 5 BLM
- Sensitive species
- Waterfowl: 7 nesting species
- Amphibians: 5 species, including 2 BLM Sensitive
- Reptiles: 11 species, including 2 BLM Sensitive
- Non-game fish: 12 species, including 4 BLM Sensitive

## Federally-listed Threatened plant species:

- *Lesquerella congesta* (Dudley Bluff's bladderpod)
- *Physaria obcordata* (Piceance twinpod)
- *Spiranthes diluvialis* (Ute ladies'-tresses orchid)

## BLM Sensitive species:

- *Boechera fernaldiana* (park rockcress)
- *Astragalus detritalis* (debris milkvetch)
- *Eriogonum ephedroides* (ephedra buckwheat)
- *Gentianella tortuosa* (Utah genetian)
- *Gilia stenothyrsa* (narrow-stem gilia)
- *Lesquerella parviflora* (Piceance bladderpod)
- *Oenothera aacutissima* (narrow-leaf evening primerose)
- *Oreocarya* (*Cryptantha*) *rollinsii* (Rollins cryptanth)
- *Penstemon grahamii* (Graham beardtonque)
- *Penstemon scariosus* var. *albifluvis* (White River penstemon)

## State Rare species:

- *Aquilegia barnebyi* (shale columbine)
- *Astragalus lutosus* (dragon milkvetch)
- *Bolophyta ligulata* (ligulate feverfew)
- *Festuca dasyclada* (sedge fescue)
- *Penstemon acuaulis* var. *yampaensis* (stemless penstemon)
- *Penstemon harringtonii* (Harrington beardtonque)

- *Sullivantia hapemanii* var. *purpusii* (hanging garden sullivantia)
- *Thalictrum heliophilum* (sun-loving meadowrue)

# RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Currently, the field office manages 118 grazing authorizations to graze livestock on 156 allotments. Allotments vary in size from 4 to 142,825 acres of BLM land with grazing capacities ranging from 3 to 11,550 AUMs. Total federal acres grazed is 1,435,513 acres.

# LANDS & REALTY

The WRFO manages 1,600 rights-of-way (ROW) for pipelines, roads and power lines. Nearly half of those ROWs are for oil and gas. We also have communication facilities, telephone and fiber optic lines, power systems, water projects, R&PP leases, material sites, and easements. At this time, the majority of our new projects are energy-related.

# FLUID MINERALS

The White River Field Office manages a large portion of the Piceance Basin. The Energy Conservation and Policy Act (EPCA) identified the Piceance Basin of Colorado as one of five sub-basins in the continental United States with large reserves of hydrocarbon potential. The Piceance Basin contains considerable natural gas resources, the majority attributed to the highly productive Mesaverde Gas Play. In addition, the Rangely field is the largest oil field in Colorado. The ultimate recovery of oil from this area is expected to be close to one billion barrels of oil.

The WRFO completed an Oil and Gas Resource Management Plan Amendment in 2015 that will guide oil and gas development for the 1.7 million acres of leasable federal minerals it manages for the next 20 years. The Amendment includes a number of proactive measures to allow responsible energy development in balance with other resources and uses, including the 357,800-acre Dinosaur Trail Master Leasing Plan.

In October 2014 WRFO began managing the oil and gas programs in the Little Snake and Kremmling field offices through a District-wide consolidation program. Using a dedicated energy team based in Meeker to manage the oil and gas program in the three field offices increases efficiency of the oil and gas program while freeing the non-energy teams in the three field offices to focus on other priorities.

## SOLID MINERALS

**Oil Shale:** The Piceance Basin contains one of the richest oil shale resources in the world, with 1.5 trillion barrels of oil in place. The bulk of this resource lies within the White River Field Office boundaries. The three active oil shale research design and demonstration leases in Colorado are located within WRFO boundaries. Companies holding leases continue to research whether this tremendous resource can be unlocked in an economic and environmentally sound manner.

**Sodium:** More than 100,000 acres are available for sodium leasing. Currently, there are eight federal sodium leases containing 16,620 acres in the WRFO. Natural Soda Inc., (NSI) holds five of the leases (9,542 acres) and is the only company commercially mining Nahcolite for sodium bicarbonate in the Piceance Basin. NSI's sodium solution mine is located in the Piceance basin 41 miles southwest of Meeker, Colorado.

Hot water is injected in one well and the saturated solution containing sodium bicarbonate is recovered approximately 1,500 feet from the injection well. Once recovered, the solution is piped to the processing plant where the liquid is cooled and the sodium bicarbonate crystallizes out of solution. The product is filtered, and dried and put in a storage facility. Remaining fluid is then reheated injected into the system again. There is no waste or byproduct generated. Production at WRNM started in 1991.

Original consumption of the of the sodium bicarbonate was to be for flue gas de-sulfurization (FGD) in power plants, however, the majority of the product is currently being sold as a cattle feed additive. A plant expansion in 1993 enabled WRNM to enter the food grade market. Other uses for sodium bicarbonate include waste treatment, pulp and paper making, and refineries.

**Coal:** About 172,700 acres are suitable for coal mining. Blue Mountain Energy Inc. (BME) operates an

underground coal mine, the Deserado Mine, on eight federal coal leases in Rio Blanco County, Colorado. The mine portals and coal cleaning facilities are located seven miles east of Rangely, Colorado. About 9,266 acres in the eight federal leases and 11,029 surface acres are permitted. Currently, 145 people are employed at the mine with the majority living in Vernal, Utah and Rangely, Colorado. Modern mining equipment and longwall mining techniques are used in the production of the coal. A coal wash plant maximizes the recovery of the coal resources. Recoverable reserves within the leases are in two mineable coal seams and are estimated to be 52 million tons. Annual production is approximately 2 million tons of clean coal. The mine's output is committed to the 400 mega-watt Bonanza Power Plant owned and operated by Deseret Generation and Transmission Cooperative of Sandy, Utah. Construction of the Deserado Mine began in 1981 and coal production began in late 1982. Life expectancy of the Bonanza Power Plant is 40 to 50 years.



**Kent E. Walter**  
White River Field Manager  
970-878-3800

Kent Walter has been the White River Field Manager in Meeker, Colorado, since October 2001. Walter has been a public servant with the BLM for more than 30 years. He began his career with the BLM in 1982 as a Land Surveyor (in training) at the Colorado State Office. In 1990, he became a Project Manager at the Utah State Office. He stayed in Utah as a Field Manager from 1996 until 2001, when he accepted his current position in Colorado. He has a bachelor's degree in land surveying and is a Professional Land Surveyor. He is also qualified as a Wildland Firefighter, a Serious Accident Investigator and a Diversity Change Agent. Walter is married and has three children. This year, he will compete in his first triathlon. He also enjoys wine and beer making, participating in community choir, big game hunting and the outdoors.

# Colorado River Valley Field Office

2300 River Frontage Rd. • Silt, CO 81652 • 970-876-9000 • 970-876-9090 fax

## FACTS

- 567,086 surface acres
- 2,188,028 subsurface acres
- 5 special recreation management areas
- 6 extensive recreation management areas
- 14 developed recreation sites, which include six river access sites to the Colorado and Eagle rivers
- 4 wilderness study areas
- 5 areas managed to protect wilderness characteristics
- 15 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Hubbard Mesa Off-Highway Vehicle Riding Area
- Approximately 90 outfitters and guides permitted for a variety of upland and river activities
- 192 grazing allotments with 145 grazing permits
- Nearly 200 rights-of-way and 24 communication sites
- Administers nearly 2,300 producing federal natural gas wells more than all other Colorado Field Offices combined—and has production accountability responsibility on approximately 4,700 gas wells



Counties: Garfield, Mesa, Eagle, Pitkin, Routt and Rio Blanco

## RECREATION

The Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) maintains recreation settings and important scenic corridors, and provides opportunities for numerous recreation activities on public lands adjacent to two world-class resorts (Vail and Aspen); 11 communities; the Colorado, Eagle, and Roaring Fork rivers; I-70; and the nation's busiest National Forest for recreation, the White River National Forest.

Activities in this area include:

- Jeeping
- Wildlife watching
- Fishing
- Ballooning
- White water rafting
- Kayaking
- Hunting
- Hiking
- Biking
- Horseback riding
- OHV riding
- Cross-country skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Camping

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Prehistoric archaeological sites include temporary hunting camps, seasonal campsites, rock sheltered camps, vision circles, eagle traps, rock art, game drives, trails, and quarries. Historic period sites include Ute wickiup villages, possible traces of Spanish explorers, Euro-American trading camps, homesteads and ranches, logging camps, mines, aspen art, towns, railroads and toll roads. Hundreds of these sites contain a wealth of information and are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

**Castle Peak Wilderness Study Area:** The 11,940-acre area is located eight miles north of the Town of Eagle. Castle Peak is a prominent peak with steep rugged slopes and rolling hills, basins, and meadows. Many springs, small lakes and perennial streams are found in the area, some providing aquatic habitat and supporting trout. The vegetation is diverse and includes expanses of Douglas fir, Englemann spruce, aspen and grassy meadows, sagebrush, and mixed mountain brush.



**Bull Gulch:** The 14,364-acre area is located in Eagle County. The terrain is rugged with steep-sided canyons and gulches draining into the Colorado River. The WSA includes colorful sandstone cliff formations with outstanding stratification. Landslide deposits and volcanic instructions are also found in the WSA.

**Hack Lake:** The 10-acre area is located in Garfield County 22 miles northeast of Glenwood Springs. The WSA consists of two small parcels adjacent to the Flat Tops Wilderness. It sits on the points of two flat-to-rolling ridges flanked by steep, rugged cliffs with rocky outcrops and rock slides. Deer and elk hunting, horseback riding, and camping are available in the area.

**Eagle Mountain:** The 330-acre area is located in Pitkin County eight miles west of Aspen. It is recommended for wilderness designation primarily because it is adjacent to the existing Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness on national forest lands. Eagle Mountain is the eastern terminus of a mountainous ridge extending from the high peaks in the core of the existing wilderness. The WSA is on rugged, steep mountain slopes and includes Eagle Mountain, a 9,937-foot peak.

## FISH, WILDLIFE, & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The CRVFO contains a wide array of diverse vegetation and ecosystems that provide habitats for fish and wildlife species.

Those species include:

- Mule deer
- Elk
- Black bear
- Coyote
- Mountain lion
- Red fox
- Rainbow, brown, brook, and cutthroat trout
- Songbird and raptor species
- Greater sage grouse
- Waterfowl

Threatened, Endangered or Special Status species include:

- Canada lynx
- Razorback sucker
- Colorado pike minnow
- Mexican spotted owl
- Black-footed ferret.
- Yellow-billed cuckoo

- Colorado River cutthroat trout
- Greater Sage-Grouse
- Northern leopard frog
- Great Basin spade-foot toad
- Midget faded rattlesnake
- Utah milk snake
- Peregrine falcon
- Roundtail chub
- Bluehead sucker
- Flannelmouth sucker
- Bat species

Additionally, the CRVFO has a variety of vegetative communities and unique geologic formations that are home to four threatened plant species: Uinta Basin hookless cactus, Parachute penstemon, DeBeque phacelia and Ute lady's-tresses; and four BLM Sensitive plants: DeBeque milkvetch, Roan Cliffs blazing star, Adobe thistle and Harrington's penstemon.

## GRAZING

The CRVFO administers 192 grazing allotments with 145 grazing permits. Cattle and sheep graze on allotments from salt bush to aspen /fir-dominated rangeland. Each year, 20 to 30 grazing permits are renewed or transferred, and about 200 grazing licenses are issued to grazing permittees.

## LANDS & REALTY

The recent surge in natural gas drilling and production has resulted in the need for many new large and small energy related pipelines and access roads. These off-lease facilities are authorized as rights-of-way. Rights-of-way related to the substantial CRVFO rural-urban interface are a major part of the CRVFO lands program. Municipal water tanks, utilities installations, driveways and access roads to subdivisions are commonly requested. The CRVFO receives multiple proposals for land exchanges every year.

## FLUID & SOLID MINERALS

The CRVFO manages a number of fluid and solid mineral operations including oil and gas, gypsum, cinders, limestone, decorative stone, sand and gravel. Oil and gas development has increased significantly in the CRVFO since 1999 because of better technology and higher demand for natural gas. CRVFO contains approximately 2,300 producing federal oil and gas wells – more than all the other Field Offices in Colorado combined. It typically processes more applications for

permit to drill than all the other Field Offices in Colorado combined as well. The vast majority of oil and gas development within the CRVFO boundaries (about 80 percent) is actually on private land and minerals, where BLM has no jurisdiction. About 200,000 acres of the 773,000 acres of federal minerals within CRVFO is leased for oil and gas. CRVFO does not expect much new land to be leased over the next 20 years, but it does expect continued development in the areas that are already leased.

## ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 called for this field office to be one of seven interagency “pilot offices” for oil and gas permitting in the Rocky Mountain States. This led to more than 20 new BLM positions in the field office, along with co-locating five U.S. Forest Service positions

and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife position. The CRVFO energy team now manages the oil and gas programs in the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices. Having an experienced team focused on oil and gas permitting and inspections increases efficiency of the oil and gas programs while allowing the non-energy ID Teams in the three offices to focus on non-energy projects. The CRVFO energy team can be reached at 970 876-9000.

**Vacant**  
Colorado River Valley Field  
Manager



# Southwest District

2505 S. Townsend Avenue • Montrose, CO 81401 • 970-240-5300 • 970-240-5367 fax



Office and the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range is located in the Grand Junction Field Office.

The district includes some of the most spectacular scenery in Colorado, from the adobe badlands and Gold Medal trout fisheries in the Gunnison Gorge to the canyons of the Colorado Plateau. The District is rich in cultural resources and has numerous recreational opportunities.

The Southwest Colorado District manages 2.7 million surface acres. The district is comprised of the Uncompahgre, Grand Junction and Tres Rios field offices, and encompasses 7.3 million acres of subsurface minerals, including the natural gas wells of the Northern San Juan and Paradox basins and coal leases in the valley of the North Fork of the Gunnison River.

The BLM's Southwest District includes several specially designated areas, including the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and Wilderness; McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness; Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (along with its associated Visitor Center and Museum); Powderhorn Wilderness; and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyons Wilderness. The Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area is located within the Tres Rios Field

**Stephanie Connolly**  
Southwest District Manager  
970-240-5300



Connolly has been the BLM Wyoming High Plains District Manager since 2009, and has performed a number of high profile temporary assignments, including acting Wyoming associate state director, acting deputy assistant director and senior advisor to the BLM director. She began her career in the U.S. Forest Service in 1991, working in a variety of positions in Utah and Nevada. She also worked for Washoe County, Nevada, as a project coordinator before joining the BLM in 2003 as an associate district manager. She served as the Cottonwood Field Manager in Idaho in 2007 before making the move to Casper in 2009.

# Grand Junction Field Office

2815 H Road • Grand Junction, CO 81506 • 970-244-3000 • 970-244-3083 fax

## FACTS

- 1,278,010 surface acres
- 1,818,177 subsurface acres
- 31 recreation sites (3 picnic areas, 2 developed campgrounds, 3 river access sites)
- 5 Special Recreation Management Areas - Bangs Canyon, Dolores River Canyon, Grand Valley OHV, North Fruita Desert and Palisade Rim
- 6 Extensive Recreation Management Areas - Barrel Springs, Gateway, Grand Valley Shooting Range, Gunnison River Bluffs, Horse Mountain and North Desert
- 4 Wilderness Study Areas (98,347 acres)
- 2 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways: Unaweep-Tabeguache and Grand Mesa
- 1 National Scenic Byway: Dinosaur Diamond
- 575,000 acres of woodlands
- 10 endangered, threatened, and candidate species (7 listed, 2 candidates)
- 5,600 acres priority habitat and 8,900 acres general habitat for Greater Sage Grouse
- 290 miles of perennial streams and rivers
- Shale Ridges and Canyons Master Leasing Plan (outlines oil and gas development in the northern portion of the field office)
- 935,594 acres open to fluid mineral leasing
- 513,913 acres currently leased
- 1 million acres of big game habitat
- 1,184,781 million acres grazed by livestock
- 1 wild horse range



Counties: Mesa, Rio Blanco, Garfield and Montrose

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## RECREATION

The Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) offers numerous recreational opportunities to the western slope's largest population center. Its recreation areas have experienced dramatic increases in use over the last few years. Urban interface and desire for recreation opportunities close to home for the communities in the Grand Valley (Grand Junction, Palisade and Fruita) add to the importance of recreation on BLM lands. The quality of the recreation opportunities also draws a significant tourism base. Public lands are marketed by the local tourism boards and are important to the economic viability of the local communities and businesses. Increased use adds to the complexity of managing these areas. The field office manages five Special Recreation Management Areas where user

experience considerations are emphasized in management decisions. The field office also manages six Extensive Recreation Management Areas where the focus is recreation without specific user experience goals.

**The North Fruita Desert:** This area is used primarily by mountain bikers, motorcyclists and target shooters. There is a fee area, a 35-unit campground at the base of the Book Cliffs at the end of 18 Road. The SRMA includes an extensive multiple-use designated trail system with specific emphasis trails for motorcycle, bicycle, foot, and horse travel. Target shooting is restricted in some of the emphasis areas. Hunting is allowed throughout the field office.

### **The Grand Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area:**

Consists of 17-square miles of desert-like terrain. The barren hills of Mancos shale offer challenging rides for all types of vehicles and all skill levels. Cross-country travel is permitted within the Grand Valley OHV Area boundaries.

**Bangs Canyon:** Consists of 57,000 acres south of Grand Junction. The Bangs Canyon area ranges in elevation from 4,500 to 7,250 feet. The area contains opportunities for mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, backpacking, big game hunting, motorcycling, rock crawling and jeep touring. The combination of slickrock surfaces, sand and bentonite clay soils provide a diversity of travel surfaces and trail riding challenges. Ecological zones range from sagebrush and bunchgrass, to piñon-juniper forests, to ponderosa pine at higher elevations.

**Gateway Area:** Located along the Dolores River, this area is primarily accessed via the Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic byway. Recreation interest in the Gateway area is growing due to the presence of the newly constructed destination property, Gateway Canyons Resort. Dispersed recreation use, including jeep touring, motorized activities, big-game hunting, backpacking, rafting, hiking and camping occurs throughout the area. Emerging uses include climbing and mountain biking. This spectacular valley contains a history rich in mining and prospecting.

## WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

**Demaree Canyon (WSA):** Located in Garfield County about 25 miles northwest of Grand Junction, is characterized by four large, north-south canyons dissecting the high-desert terrain between East and West Salt Creeks. At 22,500 acres, visitors enjoy the solitude along with scenic vistas of the La Sal Mountains in Utah and Grand Mesa to the southeast at the higher elevations of 7,500 feet. Vegetation includes piñon-juniper and dense mountain brush.

**Palisade (WSA):** The 57,000-acre area is located just north of the town of Gateway. The Palisade is characterized by vertical cliffs, deep rugged canyons, and rolling-to-flat desert valley bottoms dissected by gulches. Higher elevations consist of open, sloping-to-flat grasslands with moderate-to-heavy stands of intermixed piñon-juniper and oak brush.

**Sewemup Mesa (WSA):** The 19,400-acre area is located south of the town of Gateway along the Dolores River.

Access to the top of the mesa is difficult, leaving it virtually untouched by humans. There are outstanding opportunities for solitude when hiking or horseback riding inside this WSA.

**The Little Book Cliffs (WSA):** Portions of the 29,000-acre area lie in the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range. This area contains opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as well as wild horse viewing. Canyons in the Book Cliffs are characterized by steep cliff walls on both sides that are up to 1,000 feet deep. The WSA represents the geology, flora and fauna of the Book Cliffs, which extend from the Grand Junction area west to Price, Utah.

## WILD HORSES

**Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range:** This area encompasses more than 36,000 acres of rugged canyons and plateaus. There are many hiking, horseback and 4X4 trails in the area. The best places for viewing horses are near the Coal Canyon Trailhead entrance, in the North Soda Area and around Indian Park. Wintering mule deer, elk, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, bald eagles, hawks, owls, Peregrine falcons and golden eagles also inhabit the Little Book Cliffs.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

Red rock canyons, piñon-juniper woodlands, sagebrush parks, desert and mountain shrub lands, small stands of ponderosa pines, subalpine fir, aspen and Douglas fir pockets typify the public lands managed by the GJFO.

These provide habitat for:

- Mule deer
- Elk
- Pronghorn antelope
- Bighorn sheep (both desert and Rocky Mountain)
- Black bears
- Mountain lions
- White-tailed prairie dogs
- Green-winged teal
- Common goldeneye ducks
- Peregrine falcons
- Wild turkeys
- Chukar partridges
- Blue grouse
- Sandhill cranes
- Gray vireos

- Scott's orioles
- Diminutive night snake
- Grace's warblers
- Sagebrush voles
- Greater Sage-Grouse
- Gunnison Sage-Grouse

Threatened And Endangered Species include:

- Sclerocactus glaucus (Colorado hookless cactus)
- Penstemon deilis (Parachute beardtongue)
- Phacelia submutica (DeBeque phacelia)
- Greenback Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*)
- Colorado Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus Lucius*)
- Razorback Sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*)
- Humpback Chub (*Gila cypha*)
- Bonytail Chub (*Gila elegans*)
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)
- Gunnison Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*)

## GRAZING

The area is divided into 212 allotments used by 123 livestock operators. There are 64,840 active Animal Unit Months (AUM) associated with these allotments.

## LANDS & REALTY

Currently, there are about 1000 rights-of-way in the Grand Junction Planning Area. The office processes about 35 new applications a year and several dozen assignments (transfers to new holders) and renewals. The program also handles land ownership adjustments through land exchanges, acquisitions and disposals.

## WEED MANAGEMENT

The GJFO has an aggressive weed program utilizing mechanical, biological and chemical control of weeds. Each year 1,900 weed infestations are treated by both BLM and contract personnel. Primary species of concern are: Russian, spotted and diffuse knapweeds; scotch, musk, bull and Canada thistles; houndstongue; black henbane; tamarisk; hoary cress; perennial pepperweed; dalmation toadflax and yellow starthistle.

The Dolores River Riparian Restoration Partnership remains the GJFO's primary weed control focus. Partnering with other groups, the BLM is targeting tamarisk, Siberian elm, Russian knapweed, Russian thistle, and kochia along the riparian areas of the

Dolores River. The project is scheduled to proceed for another two years.

## FLUID MINERALS

The majority of acres open to oil and gas leasing in the field office are already leased, with the highest production areas north and east of Grand Junction. Approximately 513,913 acres are leased for oil and gas within the GJFO. The office is currently processing several development plans for oil and gas development, reflecting increased interest in shale gas. The office conducts about 400 inspections each year to assure compliance with federal regulations and conditions of approval.



**Katie Stevens**  
Grand Junction Field  
Manager  
970-244-3070

Katie Stevens has worked as the Grand Junction Field Manager since 2013. She began working with the BLM as a volunteer in 2000, and was hired in 2002 when she finished college. Before becoming a Field Manager, Stevens worked as a Planning and Environmental Coordinator and an NCA Manager. Stevens has a range of field experience with the BLM and has served on national and statewide review and project teams. She has also trained other BLM employees in lands and realty and planning. Stevens and her family enjoy outdoor activities like camping, fishing, mountain biking, canoeing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and exploring the nearby mountains and canyon count.

# Uncompahgre Field Office

2505 S. Townsend Avenue • Montrose, CO 81401 • 970-240-5300 • 970-240-5367 fax

## FACTS

- 881,441 surface acres
- 2,362,650 subsurface acres
- 35 recreation sites (7 developed camping areas, 9 staging/trailheads, 5 developed day-use areas, 1 developed living classroom site and 1 historical site)
- 2 Special Recreation Management Areas
- 6 areas managed for wilderness values [4 Wilderness Study Areas, 1 Instant Study Area/Outstanding Natural Area, and the Tabeguache Area (53,307 acres)]
- 5 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways
- 465,151 acres of woodlands
- 431,970 acres (Woodland Pinyon, Juniper, and Gambel Oak)
- 33,181 acres (Ponderosa, Douglas fir, etc.)
- 11 endangered, threatened, and candidate species (9 listed, 2 candidates)
- 3,120 miles of perennial streams and rivers
- 658,540 acres grazed by livestock



Counties: Montrose, Ouray, Delta, Gunnison, San Miguel and Mesa

Twenty-five distinct and diverse communities exist within the Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) with different economic bases, values and resources. They also include high-end resort communities, farm and ranching communities, coal mining towns, and others.

The UFO manages public lands within two ecologic provinces; the Southern Rocky Mountain province, and the Colorado Plateau province. BLM lands within the planning area range from salt-desert shrub (4,701 ft.) to alpine forest (11,449 ft.). The area exhibits varied topography, geology, soil, and flora and fauna components of both provinces including desert scrub, riparian, sagebrush parks, pinyon-juniper woodlands, mountain shrub, ponderosa pine, and spruce-fir forests.

The Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park all exist within the UFO boundary in addition to four Colorado State Parks.

## RECREATION

The UFO manages many of the premier recreation attractions in southwest Colorado.

Recreation opportunities include:

- white water rafting
- canoeing
- kayaking
- hiking
- mountain biking
- horseback riding
- fishing
- hunting
- motorcycle riding
- ATV trail riding
- four-wheel driving
- rock crawling
- rock climbing
- wildlife viewing
- picnicking
- photography

Portions of two All American Roads are found in the UFO, including the San Juan Skyway and the Grand

Mesa Scenic Byway. In addition, there are three Colorado Scenic Byways including the Unaweep/Tabeguache Scenic Byway and a portion of the West Elk Loop, as well a portion of the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway.

**San Miguel Special Recreation Management Area and Area of Critical Environmental Concern:** This area encompasses public lands adjacent to the San Miguel River – a spectacular free-flowing and highly scenic river system. Flowing out of the resort town of Telluride, commercial and private white water boating, fishing and scenic driving are the main recreational activities associated with this special river.

**Hanging Flume:** The Hanging Flume is located in the remote stretch of western Colorado above the San Miguel and Dolores rivers. The Hanging Flume begins at the former town site of Uravan, Colorado, and ends about 10 miles downstream. While the most spectacular elements of the flume structure are the “hanging” portions attached to the sandstone cliffs high above the rivers, other flume segments included earthen ditches and a wooden flume box mounted on trestles in areas of irregular terrain.

The hanging portions are visible from two roadways. The Unaweep Tabeguache Scenic Byway follows Colorado State Highway 141 and provides a few spectacular views from above the Hanging Flume. A graded Montrose County road (Y11) following the San Miguel River to the confluence with the Dolores River offers close up views of the Hanging Flume from below.

The Hanging Flume has been the subject of three recognition programs: it was listed as a historic site on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980; in 1999, Colorado Preservation Inc. placed the structure on its annual list of most endangered historic places in Colorado; and it was nominated to and placed on the World Monuments Fund 2005 Watch List of most endangered sites.

**Ridgway Area:** This area encompasses 1,066 acres of public lands and is becoming a destination site with more than 25 miles of multi-use single-track non-motorized trails right outside the town of Ridgway, Colorado.

**Dry Creek:** This area encompasses 115,000 acres of public lands and is a destination site for many recreational users who use motorized and mechanized vehicles. Uses include sightseeing, photography,

hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, horseback riding, mountain bike riding, ATV riding, technical four-wheel driving, motorcycle riding, snowmobiling, and many other uses.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

**The Tabeguache Area:** The Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 designated the Tabeguache Area, and directs BLM to protect its wilderness character. It is important to note that that even though this area was designated to protect its wilderness character, it is not congressionally designated wilderness, not a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and not covered under the Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended. The 17,240-acre area is located on BLM and the U.S. Forest Service land on the south slopes of the Uncompahgre Plateau about four miles north of Nucla, Colorado. Elevations range from 5,600 feet to 8,800 feet, and the central feature of the Tabeguache Area is the 400-800 foot deep canyon of Tabeguache Creek. Recreational opportunities include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing.

**Camel Back Wilderness Study Area (WSA):** The 10,402-acre area is located on the north slopes of the Uncompahgre Plateau and is contiguous to the U.S. Forest Service’s Roubideau Area. Elevations range from 5,400 feet to 7,000 feet, and the WSA is characterized by steep canyons and extensive mesas. Recreational opportunities include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing.

**Adobe Badlands WSA:** The 10,425-acre area is located three miles northwest of the city of Delta at elevations ranging from 5,200 feet to 8,000 feet. The WSA is characterized by abrupt sloping hills of Mancos shale dissected by rugged serpentine canyons. It overlaps with the Adobe Badlands ACEC.

**Dolores River Canyon WSA:** This WSA is shared between the UFO and the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO). The UFO manages 13,354 acres of the 30,119 -acre the WSA. The WSA is characterized by deep, serpentine, sandstone canyons carved by the Dolores River and its tributaries. Recreational opportunities include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting and wildlife viewing. Multi-day whitewater float trips were one of the major recreational uses of this area in the past; however, with construction of McPhee Dam upriver from the WSA and associated irrigation use of the



water, this opportunity is only available in rare high spring run-off years.

**Sewemup Mesa WSA:** This WSA is shared between the GJFO and the UFO. The UFO manages 1,803 acres of the 19,656-acre WSA. The UFO portion of the WSA is characterized by broken, rocky slopes above Roc Creek.

**Needle Rock Instant Study Area (ISA):** Originally a designated “Outstanding Natural Area,” this area was automatically carried forward for wilderness study when FLPMA was passed in 1976. It is under interim protection the same as a WSA. At 83 acres, and bisected by a county road, Needle Rock has an insufficient roadless size to possess wilderness characteristics. The area is dominated by the Needle Rock geologic feature, a dramatic, vertical, igneous rock core—likely the remnants of an ancient now-extinct volcano. Recreational opportunities include hiking, climbing, picnicking and photography.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The UFO contains a number of prehistoric and historic sites including rock art, cabins, campsites, mines, etc. A number of these sites are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The UFO supports a wide range of wildlife, plants and habitats. Common species include:

- mule deer
- elk
- mountain lion
- coyote
- desert bighorn sheep (BLM sensitive species)
- ringtail cats
- jackrabbit
- cottontail rabbit
- ground squirrels
- neo-tropical birds
- raptors
- chukar
- river otter
- waterfowl
- fox
- bobcat
- mourning dove
- lizards and snakes

The UFO also provides habitat for several Threatened, Endangered or Candidate plant and animal species, including the Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Colorado hookless cactus, and clay-loving buckwheat.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Currently 619,500 acres (97 percent) of BLM-administered land within the UFO are allocated for livestock grazing. Approximately 17,260 acres (3 percent) of BLM-administered land within the UFO are not managed under an active grazing permit. Some of this area may be unsuitable for grazing and some may be vacant grazing areas due to no permittee in place.

The UFO has 203 allotments and 135 permittees. The allotments vary in size from 40 to 92,198 acres, with grazing allocations ranging from 1 to 4,800 AUMs in each allotment. The public range is permitted at a level of 35,519 AUMs of forage. Grazing occurs throughout the year, with much of the use concentrated during spring and fall months. Spring and fall allotments are typically located adjacent to National Forest System land, and are used for short periods prior to “on” dates and after “off” dates for higher elevation summer allotments on National Forest System land. The U.S. Forest Service and BLM coordinate grazing management when a permittee uses lands managed by both agencies.

The UFO contains grazing allotments on a wide range of elevation levels – from approximately 4000 ft. to 9000 ft. Summer use allotments are commonly found at higher elevations in the North Fork of the Gunnison River area. Winter use allotments are primarily at lower elevations associated with a semi-arid climate.

All grazing permits include terms and conditions regarding management of the allotment. In some cases, allotment management plans have been developed, which provide details about the location, amount, and timing of permitted grazing use, and incorporate allotment-specific planned grazing systems. Rangeland improvement projects, water developments in particular, have been implemented within the UFO to aid in livestock grazing systems.

The UFO is continually working on noxious weed and non-native plants. The UFO has ramped up our program to include a BLM seasonal weed crew and is continuing to partner, contract and work with the surrounding counties and other partners in the fight against noxious weeds. The UFO has worked with the Palisade Insectary

to release biological controls and monitor tamarisk beetles. The UFO continues to remove tamarisk and Russian olive along the banks of the Gunnison and Dolores rivers with the help of partners.

## LANDS & REALTY

The UFO focuses primarily on issuing and administering rights-of-way for land uses such as roads, power lines, natural gas pipelines, water lines, telephone lines, communication sites, and ditches and canals on public land. Utility corridors cross the UFO along major transmission lines including the TransColorado natural gas pipeline and Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and Western Area Power Administration power lines. They provide a grid that follows but is not necessarily adjacent to transportation routes. The lands and realty program also handles land ownership adjustments through land exchanges, acquisitions and disposals.

## FLUID MINERALS

Within the UFO, mineral development typically occurs in sedimentary strata associated with the Mancos shale and within coal seams in rock formations of the Mesa Verde Group. These fluid mineral resources (primarily natural gas) are found in the same general locations as coal resources in the North Fork of the Gunnison River near Paonia in Delta and Gunnison Counties. To a lesser extent, development of fluid mineral resources is also present in the west end of Montrose County. Overall, a low level of fluid mineral development has occurred in the UFO in the past five years with an average of one Application for Permit to Drill (APD) per year; however, this number is expected to rise.

## SOLID MINERALS

The UFO manages two active federal coal leases held by one mining company and provides inspection and enforcement for one active coal lease held by one mining company in the Tres Rios Field Office. The mine in the UFO is located in the valley of the North Fork of the Gunnison River near Paonia, Colorado. The royalty revenue paid to the federal treasury by these two mining companies varies from \$6-9 million each year depending on production levels and sales price. Half of the revenue is returned to the State of Colorado.

The UFO manages the surface use of uranium/vanadium minerals exploration and mining activities on its public lands either as a mining notice or a mining plan of operation. Presently there are four mining notices and five mining plans of operation all in the west end of Montrose County. None of these projects have ongoing underground exploratory and development mining at this time. The Department of Energy manages nine uranium lease tracts on lands withdrawn to them for this activity in the same area. The BLM coordinates closely with them.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

The UFO is part of the Montrose Interagency Fire Management Unit which also includes the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests; the Black Canyon National Park; and Curecanti National Recreation Area. The UFO averages about 85 fires a year with 95 percent of them caused by lightning. There are only about five fires per year that are human caused. There are eight fire engines and one five-person hand crew in the fire unit that are available to respond to fires in the UFO. On average, three prescribed fires totaling 600 acres are implemented within the UFO annually.



**Greg Larson**  
Uncompahgre Field  
Manager  
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Greg Larson's background includes management and supervision experience as a Field Office Planning and Environmental Coordinator as well as acting Branch Chief for Planning and Assessment for the BLM Colorado. He obtained a Master's degree in Watershed Science from Utah State University and prior to joining the BLM has served as a Senior Project Manager and Operations Lead for Great Basin Natural Resources at a private consulting firm and as the Education and Land Manager for Swaner Nature Preserve in Utah. Larson and his wife enjoy skiing, biking and are particularly looking forward to floating the rivers within the Uncompahgre Field Office.

# Tres Rios Field Office

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## FACTS

- 634,654 surface acres
- 2,686,994 subsurface mineral acres
- 13 Recreation Management Areas: 3 within the field office (Cortez, Durango, and Dolores River); 10 within Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum, Lowry Pueblo, Painted Hand Pueblo, Sand Canyon Pueblo, Squaw/Cross Canyons, Mockingbird Mesa, Rincon, Sand Canyon, Rock Creek and Goodman Point)
- 7 Wilderness Study Areas: 4 within the field office totaling 50,512 acres (Weber Mountain, Dolores River Canyon, Menefee Mountain and McKenna Peak); 3 within CANM totaling 37,391 acres (Cahone Canyon, Cross Canyon and Squaw/Papoose Canyon)
- 1 National Historic Trail: Old Spanish Trail
- 1 Wild horse Herd Management Area: Spring Creek
- 10 Endangered, Threatened and Candidate species
- 628 miles of streams and rivers
- 500,000 acres grazed by livestock



Counties: Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Montrose and San Miguel

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## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The TRFO has a long and rich prehistoric and historic record, with human settlement of the area spanning approximately 11,500 years. The archaeological record within the area contains some of the earliest agricultural societies in the region. The historic period brought Spanish and Euro-American explorers, trappers, miners, and settlers into the area. This long record of human occupation has left one of the highest densities of prehistoric and historic heritage and cultural resources found in the United States. These sites have national, international, and Native American tribal significance.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

County Operations Plans are in place to work with local and state governments, fire prevention districts as well as other federal agencies including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service.

The interagency fire management organization is responsible for 1.3 million acres of BLM and USFS lands and averages 106 wildland fires per year. They also conduct prescribed fire activities on 3,000-4,000 acres per year. Suppression activity averages 49 fires per year.

## FLUID & SOLID MINERALS

The Tres Rios Field Office manages approximately 2.1 million acres of federal mineral estate. The field office also has tribal trust responsibilities for the mineral resources of the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Indian Reservations.

The existing oil and gas operations managed by the Tres Rios Field Office's Fluid Minerals Program include approximately 2,500 coal-bed methane wells, 2,000 conventional oil and gas wells, and 100 carbon dioxide wells located in the Northern San Juan and Paradox geologic basins of southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico. During fiscal year 2016, the field office approved 38 Applications for Permits to Drill (APDs) for new oil and gas wells, and new oil and gas

leases were issued on approximately 6,147 acres of federal mineral estate. Oil and gas leasing within the Tres Rios Field Office produced more than \$5.2 million in revenue from bonus bids and rental payments during fiscal year 2016.

The Tres Rios Field Office's Solid Minerals Program is responsible for managing exploration, extraction and reclamation activities that fall within the locatable minerals, salable minerals (common variety mineral materials), non-energy solid leasable minerals and coal programs. The field office area includes a portion of the UraVan Belt, a major district for uranium resources in the United States. Coal deposits in the southern portion of the field office are relatively small, but considered to be economically valuable due to the high heating value and low sulfur and ash content of bituminous coal. The existing operations managed by the Tres Rios Field Office's Solid Minerals Program include three plans of operation and six notice level authorizations within the locatable minerals program (includes uranium and "precious metals" such as gold and silver); three sales contracts and four free use permits (issued to three different counties) for the extraction of common variety mineral materials (includes sand, gravel, and ornamental and building stone); five prospecting permits (for potash) within the non-energy solid leasable minerals program; and one authorized lease and an exploration license within the coal program.

## LANDS & REALTY

The Tres Rios Field Office's Lands and Realty Program is responsible for authorizing and administering rights-of-way for roads, power lines; telephone lines; gas and water pipelines; communication sites; commercial film permits; Recreation and Public Purposes Act leases for such uses as community recreation areas, a storm water treatment facility and a fire station; and various other land use authorizations involving public lands. The program is also responsible for land tenure actions, such as land exchanges, acquisition and disposals, and the resolution of trespass cases involving public lands.

## ABANDONED MINE LANDS

The Tres Rios Field Office's AML Program enhances public safety and improves water and environmental quality by inventorying, characterizing, and conducting environmental remediation and physical safety closures for abandoned hard-rock mining operations within the field office. Securing and completing physical safety closures for open mine shafts, adits and other

abandoned mine features that present immediate and potentially fatal safety hazards is the highest priority for the field office's AML Program. During Fiscal Year 2016, the Tres Rios Field Office's AML Program oversaw the completion of physical safety closures for 46 abandoned mine features.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

The TRFO (including Canyons of the Ancients National Monument) manages seven Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).

**Dolores River Canyon WSA:** The Dolores River Canyon WSA (28,668 acres) is located approximately 17 miles west of Naturita and 28 miles north of Dove Creek. Elevations range from 5,000 feet to 5,300 feet. The dominant topographic feature of the WSA is the 30 mile long, deeply cut, meandering canyon of the Dolores River. The canyon rim and adjacent mesas support pinon-juniper woodlands with mixed desert shrubs on the slopes. The canyon bottoms support thick desert riparian vegetation and scattered enclaves of cottonwood, ponderosa pine, aspen and spruce/fir occur with the WSA. Desert bighorn sheep and river otter have been re-introduced to the WSA. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are excellent and include backpacking, hiking, photography, rock climbing and whitewater rafting.

**McKenna Peak WSA:** The McKenna Peak WSA (19,398 acres) is located in San Miguel and Dolores Counties approximately 45 miles northeast of Dove Creek. Elevations range from 6,300 feet to 8,600 feet. The major topographic feature of the WSA is McKenna Peak, which rises 1,000 vertical feet from the Disappointment Valley. The WSA contains a wide variety of topographic features including Mancos shale badlands, Mesa Verde sandstone cliffs, canyons, mesas and rolling hills. This wide variety of topography provides for a diverse vegetation complex within the WSA; barren areas, salt desert shrubs, pinon juniper woodlands and Douglas fir, oakbrush and mountain mahogany can all be found within the WSA. The diversity of the topography and vegetation provide for outstanding recreation opportunities including hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife viewing, nature and scenic photography and rock-climbing. The western third of the WSA is located within the Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area.

**Menefee Mountain WSA:** The Menefee Mountain WSA (7,089) acres) is located approximately about 2 miles south of Mancos and 3 miles east of Mesa Verde National Park. Elevations range from 6,500 feet, 8,600 feet on Menefee Peak with steep canyons radiating out from the 6-mile long ridge of Menefee Mountain. Pinon-juniper woodland is the dominant vegetation type at the lower elevations, with oakbrush and pockets of ponderosa pine and spruce/fir at the higher elevations. The WSA provides outstanding recreation opportunities for the hiker, backpacker and rock climber.

**Weber Mountain WSA:** The Weber Mountain WSA (6,303 acres) is located just east of Mesa Verde National Park and is separated from Menefee Mountain, WSA by Weber Canyon. Elevations range from 6,600 feet to 8,200 feet with short, steep canyons radiating out from the 5 mile long ridge of Weber Mountain. Like its “twin WSA,” Menefee Mountain, the Weber Mountain WSA is characterized by pinon-juniper woodland at the lower elevations, with oakbrush and pockets of ponderosa pine and spruce/fir at the higher elevations. The WSA provides outstanding recreation opportunities for the hiker, backpacker and rock climber.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Rangelands comprise about 85 percent of the public land in the field office. Currently, the Tres Rios Field Office manages 85 active allotments providing around 23,000 Animal Unit Months of forage for domestic cattle and sheep.

## RECREATION

The Four Corners region is a land of great diversity. From the spectacular San Juan Mountains to the thousands of ancestral Puebloan ruins to the breathtaking Dolores River Canyon. The Tres Rios Field Office is the steward for many of the premier recreation attractions in southwest Colorado, connecting locals and travelers with grand vistas and craggy peaks of the Rocky Mountains and sandstone rimmed canyons.

Recreation opportunities include whitewater rafting, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, motorcycle riding, photography, wildlife viewing, picnicking, skiing, jeeping or just enjoying a drive along one of southwestern Colorado’s many scenic routes. Motorized and non-motorized routes offer access to remote and more primitive areas.

Special management areas include:

- Dolores River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)
- Durango Urban Interface SRMA
- Cortez SRMA

**The Dolores River:** The river flows for more than 200 miles through southwestern Colorado, starting high in the San Juan Mountains and descending to the Colorado River near the Colorado-Utah border. The Dolores flows through five major western life zones, from the alpine life zone at its headwaters to the Upper Sonoran life zone along much of its lower reaches (6,400 feet - 5,000 feet elevation). Private permits are not required for boating on the Dolores River within Colorado. The BLM requires all boaters to register at the access points. Bradfield Campground, Big Gypsum Valley and the Dove Creek Pump Station are popular launch sites for rafting trips on the lower Dolores River. There are 16 barrier-free campsites, fully accessible toilets and five barrier-free picnic sites.

**Durango Urban Interface:** This area encompasses Animas City Mountain, East Animas Climbing Area, Grandview, Horse Gulch, Skyline and Perins Peak. These locations afford residents and visitors the opportunities to bike, hike, climb, ski and snowshoe.

**Cortez:** The Cortez SRMA is comprised of two Recreation Management Zones. The Montezuma Triangle RMZ is managed to primarily target local hikers, runners, and mountain bikers wanting to participate in human-powered recreation activities with a short commuting distance of town. The cornerstone of this RMZ is Phil’s World, a nationally recognized mountain biking trail system located three miles from Cortez. The BLM approved a 22 mile addition to the Phil’s World trail system in January, 2018. The remaining three parcels of public land in this RMZ are Aqueduct, Chutes and Ladders, and Summit, all of which have yet to be developed with trails or trailhead facilities to date. The Mudsprings zone is also managed for non-motorized trails, but includes greater emphasis on motorized recreation. There are opportunities for both UTV/ATV use as well as rock crawling in the designated “open: area.

**Gypsum Gap Rock Art Site:** The Gypsum Gap shelter is located in a shallow canyon within a few hundred feet of Highway 141 between Disappointment Valley and Big Gypsum Valley. This rock shelter contains 11 rock art panels. The site was determined to have a consistent occupation from Archaic (5500 B.C.) to historic times.

Archaeologists identified a number of rock carving features that resemble deer, elk, mountain sheep, corn stalks, deer hooves and possibly bear paws. Although the images might resemble these items, their actual meaning is not known.

## WILD HORSES

**Spring Creek Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA):** Located just north of Disappointment Creek, the 22,000 acre HMA is open to a variety of multiple uses. We maintain a minimum of 35 adult horses and generally gather the excess when their numbers exceed 65. The Spring Creek Basin HMA is a great example of a successful fertility control program made possible in part by partnerships with local organizations. According to local lore the horses are descendants of those brought to the Disappointment Creek area in the late 1800s by a horse rancher from Montana. DNA and blood testing have indicated that Thoroughbred and Morgan are the primary breed influences in this herd. Travel in the area is restricted to existing roads. This is a remote area and none of the roads in the herd area are graveled.

**San Juan Mountains Association:** SJMA's Wilderness Study Area Monitoring and Herd Monitoring Program train's volunteers to monitor gates, grasses, water, fences and count horses within the Spring Creek Herd Management Area. The HMA overlaps with the McKenna Peak Wilderness Study Area. SJMA coordinates the Alternative Spring Break Program, which hosts 10 University of Missouri students each year. The students have repaired and maintained boundary fences, removed an old hazardous fence, built grass monitoring enclosures and provided weed control.

**National Mustang Association:** Reduced grazing conflicts through the acquirement and retirement of grazing privileges, installation of a water catchment system, fence removal, repair and replacement, weed control, seed plot experiments. Provide assistance with adoptions, including advertising and hiring a wild horse trainer.

**Four Corners Back Country Horsemen (Durango) and Mesa Verde Back Country Horsemen (Cortez):** Offer support to the Alternative Spring Break Program. In addition, they financed gate closure signs. The Four Corners group assist with the official annual herd count held in May each year.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

TRFO has a wide diversity of vegetation, which provides habitats for several species including:

- Black bear
- Elk
- Mule Deer
- Turkey
- Desert bighorn sheep
- Peregrine Falcon
- Cottontail rabbit
- Mountain goat
- Gunnison sage-grouse
- Blue grouse
- Southwestern willow flycatcher
- Fringed myotis bat
- Yuma myotis bas
- Big free-tailed bat
- Spotted bat
- Big-eared bat

Habitat for Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive and Candidate Species:

- Mexican Spotted Owl
- Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
- Bonytail Chub
- Colorado Pikeminnow
- Humpback Chub
- Razorback Sucker
- Gunnison Sage-Grouse
- Pediocactus knowltonii

The Tres Rios Field Office includes 40,308 acres of Gunnison Sage-Grouse occupied habitat and 30,106 acres of Gunnison Sage-Grouse unoccupied habitat on public lands managed by the BLM. These areas have also been designated as Critical Habitat for Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Gunnison Sage-Grouse in the Tres Rios Field Office are part of two distinct satellite populations, the Monticello-Dove Creek population and the San Miguel Basin population.



**Connie Clementson**  
Tres Rios Field Manager  
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Connie Clementson is the Tres Rios Field Manager stationed in Dolores. Prior to accepting the position, Clementson served as the district ranger for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, a 568,000-acre unit, in Grand Junction. She also completed a short-term assignment as the acting field

manager/district ranger for the San Juan Public Lands Center. She began her career 25 years ago as a range technician at the Routt National Forest in Craig and went on to become the Range Conservationist within the same forest. Her previous experience also includes serving as the Lands Minerals, Range, Wildlife and Special Use staff for the Routt National Forests in Yampa, Colorado. Then she gained management experience by supervising the Routt National Forest employees as the acting district ranger and then became the district ranger in 1999 for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest. Clementson has a Bachelor of Science in Range Science from Utah State University.

# National Conservation Lands

The BLM's National Conservation Lands, also known as the National Landscape Conservation System, contain some of the West's most spectacular landscapes. These wild and often remote places provide exceptional opportunities for scientific study, recreation and wildlife viewing. BLM Colorado is home to 65 areas encompassing more than one million acres – about 1/8 of all the BLM land in the state. Colorado's National Conservation Lands include national monuments, national conservation areas, national scenic and historic trails, wilderness and wilderness study areas.

BLM Colorado manages two national monuments: Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Browns Canyon National Monument. Canyons of the Ancients has the highest known density of archaeological sites and is one of the most studied archaeological landscapes in the nation. More than 6,000 archaeological sites have been recorded so far, with up to 100 per square mile in some places. Browns Canyon National Monument includes 21,500 acres of rugged cliffs, colorful rock outcroppings and stunning mountain vistas in Chaffee County near the town of Salida, Colorado.

National Conservation Areas (NCA) are designated by Congress to conserve, protect, enhance and manage public lands for the enjoyment of present and future generations. NCAs offer landscapes with exceptional natural, recreational, cultural, wildlife, aquatic, archaeological, paleontological, historical, educational or scientific resources. Colorado is home to three NCAs: Gunnison Gorge NCA, McInnis Canyons NCA and Dominguez-Escalante NCA.

BLM Colorado manages portions of two National Scenic and Historic Trails, both established through acts of Congress. The Old Spanish National Historic Trail runs through New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and California. In Colorado, various branches of the Trail pass through the San Luis, Gunnison, Grand Junction and Tres Rios field offices. The Old Spanish National Historic Trail recognizes the land route traveled by traders between 19th-century Mexico and California. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail provides spectacular backcountry travel for the length of the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to Canada. The purpose of this trail is to provide for high-quality scenic, primitive hiking and horseback riding opportunities and to conserve natural, historic, and cultural resources along the Trail's corridor.

In 1964, Congress established the National Wilderness Preservation System. Wilderness areas have long been used by the public for science, education and recreation. Wilderness also provides areas as places of solitude. BLM Colorado manages five wilderness: Black Ridge Canyons, Dominguez Canyon, Gunnison Gorge, Powderhorn and Uncompahgre.

As required by FLPMA, local BLM field offices identified relatively undeveloped areas with special ecological, geological, educational, historical, scientific, or scenic values that may be suitable for wilderness designation. These areas are known as Wilderness Study Areas. Until Congress makes a determination on an area's suitability, the BLM is tasked with managing each area to a standard that will not impair its eligibility for future wilderness designation. BLM Colorado currently manages 53 Wilderness Study Areas.



# Canyons of the Ancients National Monument

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## FACTS

- 176,000 surface acres
- 3 developed recreation sites and 3 picnic areas
- 3 wilderness study areas (25,549 acres): Cross Canyon, Cahone Canyon, and Squaw-Papoose
- 2 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways: Trail of the Ancients and San Juan Skyway
- 127,895 acres leased for fluid minerals
- 23 grazing allotments

Counties: Montezuma and Dolores



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM) and its associated Visitor Center and Museum are located in the Four Corners region of southwest Colorado. The Visitor Center is 10 miles north of Cortez and 3 miles west of Dolores. The Monument was designated on June 9, 2000, by Presidential Proclamation to protect cultural and natural resources on a landscape scale. CANM is about 45 miles west of Durango, 3 miles west of Cortez and 12 miles west of Mesa Verde National Park.

## RECREATION

Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum is southwest Colorado's premier visitor center and archaeology museum, featuring permanent and changing exhibits on ancestral puebloan archaeology, regional history, Native American cultures and natural resources. It serves as administrative headquarters for CANM, providing visitors with information, maps and publications about CANM and the Four Corners region, along with a theater that shows two films on the cultural history of the region. The museum complex is contained on an 80-acre parcel that includes a 40,000-square foot facility; a ½-mile accessible interpretive trail with shaded picnic tables; and two archaeological sites available for public visitation (Escalante and Dominguez pueblos). The area is closed to off-road motorized and mechanized travel.

Four areas in the Monument are minimally developed for visitors: Painted Hand Pueblo, Lowry Pueblo, Sand Canyon Pueblo, and the Sand Canyon Trail.

**Lowry Pueblo** is the most accessible of all the archaeological sites in the Monument with a parking area, universally accessible trail, interpretive signs, picnic tables and restrooms. The site has about 40 rooms, 8 kivas and a great kiva.

**Painted Hand Pueblo** consists of a standing tower, some room blocks, and kivas that are in the condition to give you the feel of life here a millennia ago. The site gets its name from two pictographs that are in the rock shelter beneath the tower.

**Sand Canyon Trail** includes elevation gains and drops along its 6 ½-mile path. Several small cliff dwellings are visible from the trail. The Sand Canyon/East Rock Special Management Area also includes the adjacent Rock Creek and East Rock Trails.

**Sand Canyon Pueblo** was excavated by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center from 1984 to 1989 and 1991 to 1993, but the majority was left untouched to preserve the fragile structure. Access to Sand Canyon Pueblo is easiest from the northern end.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Highest density of cultural resources in the United States

- 10 sites and one Archaeological District (Sand Canyon) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, along with one National Historic Landmark (Lowry Pueblo)
- 130 years of archaeological research
- 3.8 million artifacts curated at the Visitor Center & Museum
- 26 Native American tribes have strong cultural ties with the Monument

The Monument contains the highest known cultural resource site density in the United States, with rich, well-preserved remnants of native cultures. More than 11,000 recorded sites reflect all the physical components of past human life: villages, field houses, check dams, reservoirs, great kivas, cliff dwellings, shrines, sacred springs, agricultural fields, petroglyphs and sweat lodges. Some areas have more than 100 sites per square mile. The number of sites is estimated to be 20,000 to 30,000 total, with 33 percent of the Monument covered by cultural resource surveys.

The Visitor Center and Museum, opened to the public in 1988, was developed and built as the Anasazi Heritage Center in a partnership between the BLM and the Bureau of Reclamation. Cultural resource management activities at the museum include curation of and access to 3.8 million artifacts and associated records, interpretation of the history and cultures of the Four Corners region, including CANM. Outreach activities include development and distribution of educational curricula, workshops, and regular free community lectures, events, and permanent and traveling exhibits related to Four Corners and Southwest history and culture. In addition, the museum hosts activities for the public such as educational programs for school groups, craft demonstrations by local artisans, and interpretive tours for visitors. The museum also features a variety of resources for teachers, changing special exhibits, a research library, a traveling exhibit program and archaeological sites within walking distance.

Partnership and volunteer programs at the Monument and museum are nationally recognized for their excellence and have received the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on the Historic Preservation Federal Partnerships in Historic Preservation awards.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Monument is home to a wide variety of wildlife species including:

- Long-nosed leopard lizard
- Twin-spotted spiny lizard
- Mesa Verde nightsnake
- Peregrine falcons
- Golden eagles
- American kestrels
- Red-tailed hawks
- Northern harriers
- Gambel's quail
- Mourning dove

## WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

There are three Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in the Monument: Cross Canyon, Squaw/ Papoose Canyon and Cahone Canyon. Volunteers visit these WSAs monthly from different access points and record/report activities observed, such as types of recreational activities occurring, and also report on the condition of WSA access signs. The WSAs are managed to provide visitors the opportunity to experience remoteness and a natural setting. The types of recreational uses within the WSAs include hiking, hunting, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, visiting archaeological sites, and dispersed camping.

## LANDS & REALTY

More than 9,000 acres have been acquired since June 2000. Resources include a National Register-listed site and about 100 archaeological sites dating from the Archaic (3000 B.C.) to Pueblo III (A.D. 1300) periods. Purchases have been funded by emergency and congressionally appropriated Land and Water Conservation Funds and Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act funds.

## FLUID MINERALS

About 77 percent of the Monument, which is part of the Paradox Basin, is leased for oil and gas. Production comes primarily from the McElmo Dome field (containing carbon dioxide reserves) and the overlying Island Butte II, Cutthroat, and Canyon units (producing natural gas, condensate, and oil).

**Marietta Eaton**  
Monument Manager &  
Museum Director  
970-88-5616



Marietta Eaton holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Northern Arizona University, where

she also completed course work on a Master's in Anthropology/Archaeology. Her career spans both the BLM and USFS. From 1997 to 2008, she worked in several capacities at the BLM Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, including Science Program Administrator, Assistant Monument Manager for Cultural and Earth Sciences, Acting Science Program Administrator, Acting Public Affairs Officer and Planning Team Lead for Cultural and Earth Sciences. From 1979 to 1997, Eaton worked as an archaeologist on the Coconino, Kaibab and Sequoia National Forests.

# McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area

2815 H Road • Grand Junction, CO 81506 • 970-244-3000 • 970-244-3083 fax

## FACTS

- 123,430 acres
- 19 recreation sites (14 trailheads, 3 primitive campgrounds, 3 picnic areas, 3 interpretive trails)
- 6 Recreation Management Zones
- 1 Wilderness Area (75,500 acres, 5,200 acres in Utah)
- 4 endangered, threatened, and candidate species (4 listed)
- 114,000 acres grazed by livestock
- 1 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway
- 1 National Historic Trail
- 14 grazing allotments



## Mesa County



The McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (NCA) was created in 2000 by the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Act. The name was changed through congressional legislation to McInnis Canyons NCA in 2005.

Management in the area is guided by the McInnis Canyons NCA Resource Management Plan, which was completed in 2004. Visitors can enjoy the primitive solitude of the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness, view scientists at work in paleontological quarries, engage in motorized recreation in Rabbit Valley, and mountain bike on internationally known technical trails on Mack Ridge. The NCA also provides qualified institutions and individuals with opportunities to conduct paleontological and land restoration research.

## RECREATION

**Front Country/Urban Interface:** This area provides more than 25 miles of loop trails managed exclusively for foot travel and horse use. Due to its proximity to Fruita and Grand Junction, the area is heavily used, and is highly valued for its access to the canyon systems and views of the Grand Valley. Motorized and mechanized use, camping, and recreational shooting are not allowed in the Front Country.

**Rabbit Valley:** This area spans 24 square miles of high desert terrain. Recreational opportunities in Rabbit

Valley include camping, hiking, biking, motorized recreation, and hunting. More than 25 miles of trail wind through unique sandstone formations and overhangs, and provide access to additional trails in the Moab Rims area in Utah. Although there is no vehicle access to the Colorado River, there are many scenic overlooks.

**Mack Ridge:** An internationally-known mountain biking destination, Mack Ridge offers opportunities for mountain bikers of all skill levels. The Kokopelli Loops are comprised of 35 miles of technical trails and include the origin of the Kokopelli Trail. The Kokopelli Trail is a system of single tracks, two tracks, and county roads that winds through 142 miles of remote desert sandstone and shale canyons before reaching its end in Moab, Utah.

**Hunting:** McInnis Canyons NCA provides outstanding hunting opportunities. Hunters pursue numerous game species including elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, turkey, waterfowl, chukar and quail. Most notably, the NCA and wilderness provides an amazing experience for those lucky enough to draw one of Colorado's 11 once-in-a-lifetime desert bighorn ram tags.

## WILDERNESS

**Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness:** This area is named for the high, east-west trending Black Ridge, which lies

on the northwestern flank of the Uncompahgre Plateau. It is dissected by seven major red rock canyon systems draining the plateau into the Colorado River. Canyons run 12 miles or more in length and reach depths of almost 1,000 feet. Geological features include side canyons, spires, windows, giant alcoves, desert patina, as well as the second largest concentration of natural arches in the country in Rattlesnake Canyon. Spring runoff and summer thunderstorms create glistening waterfalls and plunging pools. Vegetation in the meandering canyon bottoms includes pinyon-juniper, grasses, cottonwoods, willow and box elder; transitioning to pinyon-juniper and sagebrush parks at higher elevations. Mechanized and motorized travel is not allowed within the wilderness boundary - except where specifically authorized.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

**McDonald Creek:** McDonald Creek Cultural Resource Management Area lies within Rabbit Valley, and was designated by BLM to protect the fragile, prehistoric archaeological sites found here. Native Americans chose McDonald Creek as home because it provided them with everything they needed to survive. The cliffs provided shelter, McDonald Creek provided water, and the many different native plant species provided food and medicine. An abundance of berries grow here, from the fragrant barberry to serviceberry and skunkberry bushes. Pigweed, the first to green in the spring, provides seeds that may have been used for flours or in soups. Other favorites include pinyon nuts, yucca and prickly pear cactus. The variety of plants is also attractive to mice, rabbit, deer and desert bighorn sheep, which were also part of the Native American diet. You will not find trails or even signs pointing you toward the Fremont and Ute rock art in the area. Instead, McDonald Creek offers the chance to explore and experience the excitement of individual discovery.

The Rabbit Valley area also includes the Mygatt-Moore paleontological quarry and the Trail Through Time paleontological interpretive trail. The quarry is believed to have been an ancient watering hole for dinosaur species including Apatosaurus, Diplodocus, Brachiosaurus, Camarasaurus, Ceratosaurus, Allosaurus, and Nodosaurus, among others. May through August, visitors may find paleontologists at work in the quarry. The Fruita Paleontological Area and the Dinosaur Hill historic quarry just outside Fruita offer additional paleontological interpretation.

## EDUCATION

Each year, the BLM provides outdoor education for hundreds of school children in coordination with the Colorado Canyons Association friends group. The Devil's Canyon 3rd grade Nature Knowledge Days and Grand Junction Central High School river trip are among the annual events that use McInnis Canyons NCA as an outdoor classroom.

## WILDLIFE

The NCA provides habitat for deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, antelope, desert bighorn sheep, peregrine falcons, bald eagles, sage sparrows and Gunnison Sage-Grouse. The diversity of bird species is especially high. Rabbit Valley was identified as an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society.

Other Special Status species found within the NCA include:

- humpback chub
- long nosed leopard lizard
- snowy plover
- long-billed curlew
- Wilson's phalarope
- gray vireo
- river otter
- canyon tree frog
- Yellow-billed cuckoo



**Collin Ewing**  
NCA Manager  
970-244-3049

Collin Ewing previously served as the Planning and Environmental Coordinator for the BLM Grand Junction Field Office. Collin is a northern Colorado native graduating from Colorado State University with a BS in Rangeland Ecology. Collin began working for the BLM in 2010, but his resource management career spans multiple agencies. He has a background as a rangeland management specialist, and with threatened and endangered species consultation. Collin is an accomplished fisherman and enjoys hiking, rafting and hunting on public lands.

# Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area

Grand Junction Field Office • 2815 H Road • Grand Junction, Colorado 81506 • 970-244-3000  
Uncompahgre Field Office • 2465 S. Townsend Avenue • Montrose, Colorado 81401 • 970-240-5300  
• 970-240-5367 fax

## FACTS

- 210,172 surface acres
- 1 wilderness (66,280 acres make up the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Area)
- 3 Special Recreation Management Areas (34,032 acres): Cactus Park, Gunnison River, Escalante Canyon
- 4 Extensive Recreation Management Areas (94,072 acres): Sawmill Mesa, Hunting Grounds, Ninemile Hill, East Creek
- 9 recreation sites (1 primitive campground, 1 day-use/picnic area, 5 trail heads, and 3 primitive boat launches)
- 17 grazing allotments



Counties: Mesa, Delta and Montrose

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Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area was designated by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. The newest NCA in Colorado, its designation was supported by local, regional and national interests in recognition of the outstanding resources in the area.

In January 2017, the BLM Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices completed a new resource management plan (RMP) for the NCA and Wilderness. The RMP provides long term protection for and management of the values and resources identified in the legislation. The plan addresses important geographic areas within the NCA, including Dominguez Canyon Wilderness, Cactus Park, Escalante Canyon, Sawmill Mesa, Hunting Grounds, and the Gunnison River from Delta to Whitewater, and addresses issues including:

- Wilderness Management
- Multiple Use Recreation
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Landscape Restoration
- Traditional Land Use, Including Ranching
- Travel Management

## RECREATION

Lands within the NCA are popular for experiencing the spectacular canyon country of the Uncompahgre Plateau. From hiking to boating to horseback and off-highway vehicle riding, areas within the NCA provide a variety of recreational opportunities to the public.

The canyons of the Gunnison River and Dominguez and Escalante Creeks provide visitors outstanding opportunities to explore and learn about geologic, archaeological, paleontological, and historical resources set amidst visually stunning red-rock desert scenery. The Bridgeport Bridge provides non-motorized access to the cascading waterfalls, historic areas, and Native American rock art sites in the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness.

Other activities in this area include:

- Fishing
- Hunting
- Sightseeing
- Wildlife photography
- Backpacking
- Mountain Biking
- Visiting historic and archeological sites

- ATV, motorcycle, and four-wheel driving

**Cactus Park:** This area provides rich opportunities for motorized vehicle enthusiasts to experience the backcountry. Miles of trails wind within the NCA and provide access to the Uncompahgre National Forest, which manages a successful multi-recreational trail system. The 142-mile Tabeguache Mountain Bike Trail, which connects Grand Junction to Montrose, goes from Cactus Park on its ascent from Grand Junction to the top of the Uncompahgre Plateau. Visitors interested in the geology of the area can stop at the Gunnison Gravels ACEC, which contains geologic evidence of the ancestral route of the Gunnison River through Unaweep Canyon.

**Gunnison River:** The relatively flat stretch of river between Escalante Canyon and the mouth of Dominguez Canyon is attracting increasing numbers of commercial and private boaters, with its unprecedented views of stunning red-rock canyons and wildlife viewing opportunities. Nearly 30 miles of the river flow through the NCA. Campsites are marked and available along the river.

**Escalante Canyon:** Escalante Canyon includes the Potholes Recreation Area, popular with extreme kayakers in the spring and picnickers in the summer. Restrooms and picnic tables are available for day-use recreation as well. The Escalante Canyon ACEC contains sensitive plant species, natural seeps, and several globally-unique plant associations including beautiful hanging gardens of small-flowered columbine and Eastwood's monkeyflower. A 15-mile county road offers visitors a trip back to pioneer days through Escalante Canyon's "Red Hole in Time" (popularized by local author Muriel Marshall). The road provides easy vehicle and viewing access to historic cabins and trails, rock walls with early settler and Native American inscriptions, and spectacular geologic formations.

**Sawmill Mesa:** Immediately adjacent to the town of Delta, this area provides critical motorized links to the Uncompahgre National Forest. The Delta-Nucla/25-Mesa Road borders the NCA on the southeast and connects Delta to Nucla and the Divide Road, which follows the spine of the Uncompahgre Plateau. Sawmill Mesa Road and Dry Mesa Road provide Forest Service access to hunting in the fall and 4-wheel-drive, ATV, and mountain bike access in the spring, summer and fall. This area is rich in history, providing the only access route for settlers in Escalante Creek to Delta in the 1800s and early 1900s.

**Hunting Grounds:** West of Hwy 50 and east of the Gunnison River, this area is rich in cultural heritage resources and a popular location for dispersed recreation. The area was the traditional hunting area for Ute and Fremont Indians that migrated and hunted through the area. The area provides valuable opportunities for many different forms of recreation, particularly OHV and horseback riding.

**Ninemile Hill:** As a result of its close proximity to the Grand Valley, this area is valued for its easily available recreation opportunities for non-motorized recreation. This is a popular area for relatively unimproved exploration via hiking and horseback riding. The Tabeguache Trail, a long-distance, mixed-use trail popular with mountain bikers, motorcycle riders and jeep enthusiasts, also runs through the Ninemile Hill area. Ninemile Hill is easily identifiable by its communication towers along the crest.

**East Creek:** Unaweep Canyon is on the northern boundary of the NCA. The canyon is unique because it has drainages running east and west out of the canyon. East Creek is the eastern drainage that runs along Hwy 141, which is designated by the state of Colorado as the Unaweep-Tabaguache Scenic Byway. Scenic auto touring, bouldering and multi pitch climbing occur along East Creek.

**Hunting:** Dominguez-Escalante NCA provides outstanding hunting and fishing opportunities. Sportsmen and women pursue numerous fish and game species including rainbow trout, greenback cutthroat trout, elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, turkey, waterfowl, chukar and quail. Most notably, the NCA and wilderness provides an amazing experience for those lucky enough to draw one of Colorado's 11 once-in-a-lifetime desert bighorn ram tags.

## WILDERNESS

The sandstone canyons and pinyon-juniper covered mesas of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness offer excellent hiking opportunities. The Little Dominguez Creek creates habitat for birds, mammals and reptiles. Desert bighorn sheep have been reintroduced to the area and often graze at the base of the cliffs in the wilderness. Hikers along the Big Dominguez Creek pass historic structures, traces of the early miners and settlers who lived and worked throughout the area. Rock art on the canyon walls and wickiups on the mesas are evidence of the thousands of years that

Native Americans used the area for hunting, shelter and as a travel corridor from the Gunnison River Valley to the Uncompahgre Plateau. The legislation designating the Wilderness took a unique approach to water rights that, when successful, could become a template for other water rights language in lower elevation areas where there are perennial streams.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The red-rock canyons and sandstone bluffs in the NCA contain geological and paleontological resources spanning 600 million years. Ute Tribes today consider these pinyon-juniper covered lands an important connection to their ancestral past. Cultural and historic sites showcase the homesteading and agricultural history of the area. The Old Spanish National Historic Trail, a 19th Century land trade route, passes through the NCA.

## WILDLIFE

Common species include:

- desert bighorn sheep
- mule deer
- golden eagle
- turkey
- elk

- mountain lion
- black bear
- collared lizard

BLM Sensitive Species include:

- Colorado hookless cactus
- Peregrine falcon

## EDUCATION

Each year, the BLM provides outdoor education for hundreds of school children in coordination with the Colorado Canyons Association friends group. The Escalante Canyon 3rd Nature Knowledge Days and Delta High School river trip are among the annual events that use Dominguez-Escalante NCA as an outdoor classroom.

**Collin Ewing**  
NCA Manager  
970-244-3049





# Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area

2465 S. Townsend Avenue • Montrose, CO 81401 • 970-240-5300 • 970-240-5367 fax

## FACTS

- 63,294 surface acres
- 17,784 acre Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area
- 10,000 acres of woodlands (pinyon-juniper); 20,000 acres - saltbush; 16,000 acres sagebrush community, 18,000 acres grass/forb rangeland
- 21 recreation sites (6 developed, 3 picnic areas, 3 campgrounds, 5 primitive boat ramps, 3 river overlook sites)
- 3 Special Recreation Management Areas
- 14 miles of designated Gold Medal waters of the Gunnison River
- 3 listed endangered and threatened species
- 24,000 acres of small game habitat
- 22,000 acres of big game habitat
- 46,000 acres grazed by livestock (5,644 AUMS, 11 allotments)
- 1 Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway: West Elk Byway
- 1 Wilderness Area; Gunnison Gorge Wilderness (17,784 acres)
- 2 OHV open play areas



Counties: Montrose and Delta

Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA) was designated in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999. GGNCA is part of the Uncompahgre Field Office in Montrose, Colorado.

## RECREATION

GGNCA encompasses a diverse landscape including adobe badlands, rugged piñon-juniper covered slopes, and a double canyon system within the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area.

Activities in this area include:

- Wilderness whitewater boating
- Gold Medal trout fishing
- Big-game hunting
- Motorized and non-motorized trail use
- Domestic sheep and livestock grazing
- Sightseeing
- Wildlife photography
- Hiking
- Backpacking

Flat Top-Peach Valley OHV Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA):

- Picnic areas
- Three OHV staging areas
- A motorcycle/ATV training site
- Award-winning OHV skills course
- 2,700 acres of "open" riding areas
- Beginner riding area
- 7,000 acres with 75+ miles of designated trails
- Southern terminus of 20-mile multi-use, single-track Sidewinder Trail

Gunnison River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA):

- A campground with a universally accessible fishing pier and campsite
- A picnic/day use area
- A staging area and trailhead for the multi-use, single-track Sidewinder Trail
- Four boat ramp sites
- Designated river campsites
- Eagle Rock Shelter -- a paradigm-changing archaeological site revealing nearly 13,000 years of human occupation
- A interpretive trail (rock art site)
- Two river trails leading into the wilderness
- A walk/wade angler access trailhead on the main-stem of the Gunnison River

- Four trails with trailhead parking
- One dinosaur track site
- Jeep trails

Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA):

- Five Wilderness trailheads
- Bobcat-Duncan loop equestrian/hiking trail (BighornTrail)
- 20 designated Wilderness river campsites

## WILDERNESS

The Gunnison Gorge Wilderness is located in the heart of the NCA within the unique black granite and red sandstone double canyon system of the Gunnison River. It encompasses 17,784 acres of public lands, including 12 miles of the river, extending from the northwestern boundary of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park to one mile north of the confluence of the Smith Fork and the main stem of the Gunnison River.

The Gunnison Gorge Wilderness is managed to preserve and protect its wilderness character. The wilderness offers Gold Medal trout fishing in a technical (Class III-IV) whitewater setting. The technical nature of the boating varies with the river's flow and is dependent on winter snowpack.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

GGNCA contains a number of prehistoric and historic sites including rock art, cabins, campsites, mines, etc. Many of these sites are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Findings from the Eagle Rock Shelter site shows continuous human occupation dating back nearly 13,000 years making this a nationally significant site. A major goal of the GGNCA plan is to provide users enhanced interpretation of the area's outstanding cultural resources to increase their awareness and understanding of the need to protect these areas.

## WILDLIFE & THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES

GGNCA contains a variety of upland, riparian, and aquatic wildlife species and habitats. The Gunnison River is designated as a Gold Medal trout fishery by Colorado Division of Wildlife because of its robust trout

population, including rainbow, brown, and cutthroat trout.

Common species include:

- mule deer
- elk
- bighorn sheep
- mountain lion
- coyote
- ringtail cats
- small mammals
- migratory birds
- raptors
- chukar
- river otter

Sensitive species in the NCA include:

- clay-loving buckwheat (endangered)
- Montrose penstemon
- Rocky Mountain thistle
- Delta lomatium
- Colorado hookless cactus (endangered)
- Gunnison Sage-Grouse (threatened)
- wintering bald eagles
- spotted bats
- river otters
- kit foxes
- flannelmouth sucker
- bluehead sucker
- roundtail chub

The east side of the GGNCA contains a small population of 100-300 federally threatened Gunnison Sage-Grouse that are managed under the 1998 Crawford Sage-Grouse Partnership Conservation Plan.

The 2004 GGNCA Resource Management Plan designated three Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC): the Native Plant Community ACEC, Fairview ACEC (sensitive Mancos shale plant species) and the Gunnison Sage Grouse ACEC/Important Bird Area.

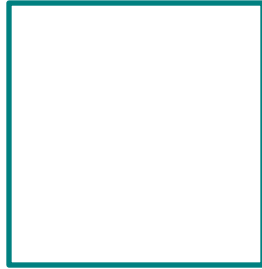
## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing permits in the GGNCA contain special stipulations requiring a visual setback for livestock grazing activities (bedding grounds, water sites, supplemental feed sites, etc.) of 500 feet from established recreational sites such as roads, trailheads, user areas, and fee collection sites.

## LANDS & REALTY

All forms of entry, appropriation, and disposal are prohibited in GGNCA and Wilderness. Rights-of-way applications in the NCA are decided on a case-by-case basis. Acquisitions are addressed as opportunities arise on a case-by-case basis with willing sellers.

**VACANT**  
NCA Manager



# Browns Canyon National Monument

Rocky Mountain District Office: 3028 E. Main Street • Canon City, CO 81212 • 719-269-8500 (BLM)

USFS Salida Ranger District: 5575 Cleora Road • Salida, CO 81201 • 719-539-3591 (USFS)

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area: 307 W. Sackett Ave, Salida, CO 81201 • 719-539-7289 (CPW)

## FACTS

- 21,589 acres (9,783 acres managed by BLM, 11,805 acres managed by USFS)
- 2 developed campgrounds, boat ramps (managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife as a part of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area)
- 1 wilderness study area (6,614 acres)

Chaffee County



Browns Canyon National Monument is located in southcentral Colorado in the upper Arkansas River Valley. The Monument is approximately 11 miles north of Salida and approximately 10 miles south of Buena Vista. The Monument was designated on February 19, 2015, by Presidential Proclamation to protect cultural and natural resources. Browns Canyon is located approximately 2 ½ hours south and west of Denver. The 21,589-acre Monument is jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. Colorado Parks and Wildlife, through the Arkansas Headwaters recreation Area, manages river-based recreation on the Arkansas River through Browns Canyon.

## RECREATION

For centuries, the rugged granite cliffs, colorful rock outcroppings and stunning mountain vistas of Browns Canyon National Monument have attracted visitors from around the world. The area's unusual geology and roughly 3,000-foot range in elevation support a diversity of life and a wealth of geological, ecological, riparian, cultural and historic resources.

**Facilities:** The Ruby Mountain Recreation Site features a campground with restrooms, changing facilities, a boat ramp and picnic sites. The Hecla Junction Recreation Site is the primary location for taking boats out after floating through Browns Canyon. The area features a newly renovated campground with restrooms, changing facilities, a boat ramp and picnic

sites. Both sites are managed by Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area and require either a Colorado Parks and Wildlife annual or daily parks pass.

**Hiking:** The geology of Browns Canyon is spectacular, with steep gulches cutting through pink granite and metamorphic rock. Hiking in the monument is a great way to experience the solitude and naturalness of the monument. Hiking opportunities range from short walks to day-long or multi-day adventures. Some parts of the monument are rugged and difficult to access due to a lack of developed trails. The monument provides excellent opportunities for wildlife observation, hunting, fishing and horse-back riding.

**Boating:** Whitewater boating is technically challenging within the National Monument, therefore less experienced boaters should consider going with a commercial outfitter; while boaters with more experience and the proper equipment can enjoy a whitewater trip through the canyon on their own. Private boaters can put in at either Fisherman's Bridge or the Ruby Mountain Recreation Site and take out at either the Hecla Junction or Stone Bridge Recreation Site. A private boat permit system is currently not in effect within the National Monument. Depending upon flow conditions, the river is Class III-V through the National Monument; boaters are encouraged to consider using a commercial outfitter if they have any concerns about their skills and/or equipment.

**Motorized:** The Turret Road (FS Rd. #184) off Aspen Ridge Road (FS Rd. #185) provides a rugged 4x4 experience into the heart of the Monument while traveling through open meadows and granite spires with the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness serving as the backdrop. The road is open to all vehicles; however, high clearance 4x4 vehicles are recommended.

FS Rd. #1434A is an ATV route that traverses the northern boundary of the Monument. There is a seasonal gate closure December 1 – April 15 every year. Aspen Ridge Road (FS Rd. #185) comprises the northern boundary of the Monument. High clearance 4x4 vehicles are highly recommended.

## PLANTS & WILDLIFE

The Monument is home to a wide variety of plant and wildlife species including:

- Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep
- Black bear
- Mountain lion
- Rocky Mountain Elk
- Mule Deer
- American Peregrine Falcon
- Golden eagle
- Northern Goshawk
- Boreal Owl
- Flammulated Owl
- Boreal Toad
- Northern Leopard Frog
- Colorado tansyaster
- Ute Lady tresses
- Fendler's Townsend-daisy
- Fendler's false cloak-fern
- Bill's Neparryi
- Pale blue-eyed grass

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

The story of the people living in the upper Arkansas River valley is told through sites and artifacts dating back 11,000 years. Within the monument, evidence of aboriginal hunting and gathering abounds, including campsites, cooking facilities, stone architecture and rock art, among other artifacts and features. These sites range in age from the Paleoindian Period (11,000 years before present) to the time of contact with Europeans.

The discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858 brought an influx of people to the area, along with the need for transportation. While the Old Stage Road provided a route to Leadville for many years; it was very rugged and the trip was long. The arrival of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in 1880 allowed for much easier access to the booming mining area around Leadville. Many interesting historic mining sites can still be found throughout the monument.

Browns Canyon has a rich cultural history that is still being discovered, studied and understood. The cultural resources within Browns Canyon provide future generations with the opportunity to learn from those who preceded us in exploring this beautiful area. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 prohibits removing, disturbing or defacing archaeological sites or artifacts on federal public lands and Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act promotes the study and stewardship of those sites and artifacts.