

I'm not able to attend the March 21<sup>st</sup> D-E NCA Advisory Council meeting – the sun and the warmth of southern Arizona are calling – did I mention a Rockies spring training game?

Overall: Implementation of Alternative A will not provide enough protection for the natural resources in the NCA, or give the BLM the tools to respond to anticipated impacts.

#### Cultural Resources:

Cultural resources are protected by several federal laws, so any management plan must work within the framework of those laws. The development of a site stewardship program, a public education program and law enforcement monitoring plan will be a very important aspects of cultural resource protection program.

Alternative B: Emphasizes a hands-off, more restrictive approach. I think we need to be more active management addressing threatened and problem areas. Visitation to rock art sites should not be restricted unless the site is experiencing degradation. Enforcement of such restrictions would be difficult to maintain.

Alternative C: More active management is a plus with this alternative, but that could be more expensive, and harder to enforce. Avoiding impacts where development is desired would be the best option.

Alternative D: An emphasis on trail-based recreation could have a major negative impact on cultural resources. Avoiding significant cultural resources when developing new trails would be critical. I like the idea of heritage tourism, but put the emphasis should be on off-site interpretation, and a limited number of on-site interpretive sites. Interpretation of the Old Spanish Trail should be off-site. The remaining segments of the Old Spanish Trail within the NCA are very fragile and wouldn't tolerate direct use without radically changing the character of the trail. The concept of people experiencing what it was like to travel the Old Spanish Trail has very limited potential since the trail is in close proximity to highway 50. Heritage tourism in Escalante Canyon sounds good. But what sort of impact will that have on private property and the road? Landowners and Delta County should be involved in any development of tourism. Several of the well-known historic resources in Escalante Canyon are on state lands. What sort of involvement will Colorado Parks and Wildlife have in any tourism effort?

#### Mt. Biking:

General: Route closures as recommended in all the alternatives would reduce the routes mt bikers could travel. We don't have any opposition to those closures as long as there is a good reason to do so. The criteria used to recommend closures seem warranted. Mt bikers want access, but understand that other considerations such as PPSV standards, land health assessments and wildlife impacts must be part of the process. Mt. bikes should be considered as non-motorized except in wilderness and where conflicts with other muscle-powered uses are anticipated (very limited scenarios).

Alternative A: This alternative allows mt. bikes to go anywhere. Not a very good option in terms of potential impacts and management needs. Mt biking is trail-based. Mt. bikers want a defined trail system with a variety of trail challenges and scenic options.

Alternative B: Very restrictive overall, since mt. bikers use the roads as well.

Alternative C: The most restrictive of all alternatives – doesn't provide a balance between protection and access.

Alternative D: The most accommodating alternative to all uses except horse and foot only trails, although those trail uses are allowed in the wilderness, and the mileage for those trail uses aren't included in this process. The mileage recommended for mt. bike use can be used by foot and horse use as well. The designation of the purple routes will deny access to uses that are currently allowed. The mountain bike community would like to sit down with the motorized groups to see if some shared use is possible. Mt. bikers are certainly open to sharing roads and trails with other users with a good representation of motorized and non-motorized choices. As far as a need for some non-motorized trails for mountain bikers, it is a priority, since we can't just go ride in the nearest wilderness area to avoid the noise and odors associated with motorized use. For many riders it is a highly desired. The close proximity of several excellent trail systems around Grand Junction certainly provides a place for mountain bikers to ride in a non-motorized setting, but the NCA should have some non-motorized trails open to bikes especially closer to Delta. Mountain bikers' request for non-motorized trails has very little to do with conflicts with motorized users, but has a lot to do with the type of trail desired – narrow, sustainable, flowing.