



**DENCA Advisory Council Minutes  
March 7, 2012  
Mesa County Courthouse, Grand Junction, CO**

Those attending:

- Chair Katie Steele of Grand Junction
- Joe Neuhof of Grand Junction
- Oscar Massey of Whitewater
- Neil "Mike" Wilson of Eckert
- Vice-chair Bill Harris of Montrose
- Steve Boyle, of Montrose, representing wildlife interests
- Doug Atchley of Delta, representing Delta County
- Terry Kimber of Delta
- Steve Acquafresca of Grand Junction

Absent:

- Tamara Minnick of Grand Junction

**BLM staff attending:** Katie Stevens, Andy Windsor, and Brodie Farquhar.

**50+ members of the public attending:** Pat Gilliam, Rich Phillips, Steve Chapel, Bill Thompson, Terry Gray, Mark Aklerman, Jeff Bates, Del Martin, Lee Waggoner, Thomas Panter, Sherry Schenk, Rachel McCarty, Michael Shambra, Tom DerryBerry Sr., Kate Green, Jerry Smith, Roy and Linda Joseph, Jan Potterveld, Ruth and Lester Sendicki, Mary Tucker, Joe Oliverson, Ken Sanders, Ferris McCollum, Jan Burch, Steve Ganthig, Richard Frantz, Tracey Rohde, Larry Bullard, Dave Upchurch, Darby Sackett, Pat Thompson, Lee Gelatt, Linda Weller, Jeff Prinster, Eric Rechel, Bob and Lydia Herron, Tim Ross, David Rohde, Bob and Doris Janowski, Kent Davis, Dick Miller.

**Katie Steele** noted the presence of a quorum. Continued focus on the travel management plan from last month. The preferred alternative and preferred travel management plan have not been developed yet, so the Advisory Council is focused on the travel management plan as reflected in four draft alternative management plans. BLM is making decisions at an area planning level, and route decisions at a plan implementation level, which does not require a plan amendment process. The Council seeks public comment and there will be two public comment periods during this meeting. Joe Neuhof will report on a

subcommittee's findings (from studying large travel management maps of each alternative) as well as lead a discussion on how to manage conflicts.

### **Where we are now**

**Katie Stevens** reminded the Council and audience about where BLM is in the process to produce a resource management plan for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. Discussion between BLM and Advisory Council is not about the preferred alternative, but is focused on the alternative management plans and whether they encompass the full range of ways to manage the NCA. Congress created D-E NCA in 2009. The resource management plan now taking shape will guide how BLM manages the NCA for the next 15-20 years.

The Advisory Council role is to provide input on development of the RMP, established by the law that created the NCA. BLM has listened to public comment and the Council over the past year and now is asking for Council feedback on whether the range of alternatives is sufficient. Analysis of the alternative plans will help BLM understand the environmental impact of any particular plan. A draft RMP/EIS should be ready this fall, complete with all the alternative plans and a preferred alternative plan that will be written by the BLM this spring.

### **Review of Travel Management Planning Process**

**Katie Stevens** reviewed the process that BLM is using to plan travel management. (The February edition of "*Canyon Clarion*" also covered the planning process.) Emphasized that resource objectives will help the BLM decide what to do about individual routes, whether some should be open, closed, closed seasonally or re-routed. Wants to avoid false expectations about building new trails, since all new projects need archeological clearances.

Asked Council how BLM can provide a mix of trails and trail use to prioritize and improve sensitive resources, while still providing access to important areas?

**Steve Acquafresca** reminded Council and audience that travel through the Dominguez Wilderness Area is governed by federal law, not the resource management plan now under development.

### **Public Comment**

Over 50 citizens attended the meeting, including members of the Hunting Ground Community Access Group, Western Slope ATV Association, Grand Mesa Back Country Horsemen, Quiet Trails, Western Slope 4 Wheelers, and Grand Mesa Jeep Club.

**Thomas Panter**, a property owner in Mesa County: endorsed Alternative A, which represents current management of the NCA. **Jeff Bates**, a jeep club member said the wilderness area is a quiet use area and no more quiet use areas are needed. **Lee Gelatt**, of Quiet Trails: his group would like just a few trails for quiet trail users and multiple use elsewhere. **Steve Chapel**, SWATVA: closing damaged trails should only be done after user groups are asked if they can be repaired. **Bill Janowski** (Hunting Grounds Community Access Group): has total of 395 signatures asking that Hunting Ground trails be managed to support and return historic access and recreation use.

**Jeff Princeter**, landowner in Hunting Grounds area: recommended the no-action Alternative A, which would allow residents to do what they do now. **Eric Rechel** (Sierra Club): requested no trail along Cottonwood Creek. Wants BLM to expand vision so that when BLM decisions are made, wildlife habitat is considered. **Mike Shambra**, Western Slope 4-Wheelers: have plenty of wilderness. Don't cut off public access with more wilderness. **Walter Rickett**, Kannah Creek landowner: obtain input from emergency medical services on Hunting Grounds access. **Kent Davis**, ranch manager: fears that if routes can be closed to horses, cattle would be next. (Katie Stevens clarified that some routes are limited to foot and horse traffic, not closed to them. Horse and foot traffic allowed in wilderness under all alternatives.)

Todd ?: suggested it would be nice if public could vote on NCA plan this fall. Nate Green: leave NCA as is. Convinced BLM is fixing something that isn't broke. **Joe Oliverson**: quiet users should just get used to noise.

### **Travel Management Sub-Group**

Convened by **Joe Neuhof** a few weeks ago, Council members invited discussed travel management options with horseback, motorized, quiet use representatives and mountain . The group approached the project on the basis of zones.

**Zone 1**, Hunting Grounds. Consensus that it should remain open to motorized use. If heritage tourism (Old Spanish Trail) is pursued for auto tours, why not also allow ATVs? Equestrians would like a dedicated trail to the rim above the Gunnison River.

**Zone 2** Gunnison River Corridor: Consensus on need for more designated campgrounds and allow some motorized boat use during waterfowl season.

**Zone 3**: Cactus Park: Thought a few dedicated horse and foot trails would be beneficial. Mountain bike representative focused on need for trails in rim area. East Creek provides for rock climbing and auto touring. Quiet users would like a route in area. For Sawmill Mesa, a single track trail for motorcycle use should be added.

**Zone 4**, Escalante Canyon. No additional options needed.

**Zone 5**, Cottonwood Canyon: has pristine quality. **Steve Boyle** cited the pristine quality of the canyon. He also said Alternative C protects biological resources the best.

Discussion included idea that mountain biking can be considered a quiet use. Can separate mountain bike and equestrian users to avoid conflicts in heavy use areas.

### **BREAK**

#### **How to manage conflicts**

**Joe Neuhof**: How does BLM think about conflicts when lots of different users in the same zone? Andy Windsor: most common solution to user conflict is to separate the users.

ERMAs not concerned with quality of experience – only with providing the opportunity for a recreational experience. SRMAs are concerned with the quality of the experience, often dedicate areas and trails and define use types, settings and recreational experiences.

Other themes: Public education as a way to prevent conflicts. Example given of ATVers pulling off trail and turning off motors so as not to spook an approaching horse and rider. Marketing can be used to manage expectations. Council consensus that marketing designed to bring in more visitors should be avoided. Highest risk is to try and managed for all recreational activities in the same area.

#### **Public Comment**

**Bob Janowski**: Courtesy, has to do with attitude, education, promotion of courtesy to others – avoid 95 percent of the conflicts. **Mike Wilson**: ATV clubs work on trails for horsemen. **Doris Janowski**: signage is education and marketing. **Jan Potterveld**: Conflict is less than BLM might think. Had only one conflict experience with an ATV rider in eight years. A matter of education, she didn't know better. Different user clubs should invite people from other groups to our meetings, educate each other. Education is best, separation is a last resort. Separation is desired for the experience, not to resolve conflict. Mixed trails work when people are educated and volume isn't high.

**Roy Joseph**, jeep club: hate to see jeep roads closed and not multiple-use. Every travel plan, seems like full-size vehicles lose. Like to see new trails in Cactus Park. Warned that when agency closes trails, people go elsewhere and create outlaw trails. **Tom Derryberry**, WSATVA: Doesn't like cultural site directives, but doesn't blame BLM. Congress must change those rules and regulations. Warned that

McInnis Canyon's Rabbit Valley uses designated areas, and has generated lots of hard feelings. Claimed that the more trails kept open for multiple use, means less conflict. **Steve Chapel**: we have few conflicts. More conflicts around mountain bike area around 18-mile road. Conflict even when ATV riders are on search and rescue missions. **Sherry Schenk** of Quiet Trails urged recreation user groups to learn more about each other.

#### **Next meeting**

The next meeting for the Advisory Council is Wednesday, 3 p.m., March 22, Room 234, Delta County Courthouse in Delta. Focus will be on key tradeoffs, main impacts of alternatives to things Advisory Council cares about? Not line by line, but main ideas.