



**DENCA Advisory Council Minutes
May 2, 2012
Delta County Courthouse, Delta, CO**

DE Advisory Council 5/2/2012 3pm

Those attending: Katie Steele, Oscar Massey, Mike Wilson, Bill Harris, Joe Neuhof, Steve Boyle, Terry Kimber, Doug Atchley, Tamera Minnick. **Absent:** Steve Acquafresca.

Members of the public attending: Jan Potterveld, Barbara Hawke, Eric Rechel, Terry Gray, Mark Ackerman, Conrad and Mary Tucker, Joyce Olsen, Sherry Schenk, Kaye Simonsen, Dave Upchurch.

BLM staff attending: Andy Windsor, Lynae Rogers, Marcia deChadenades, Katie Stevens

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 by chair Katie Steele. Purpose of the meeting is to discuss the input that the AC will provide to the BLM re: factors to consider in developing the preferred alternative. Discuss Lands w/wilderness characteristics, scenic values, recreation, grazing.

Bill Harris will compile the final Advisory Council resolution regarding the preferred alternative.

Katie Stevens – role of council to provide input to the RMP planning process.

Public Comment: Jan Potterveld: Thank you for attention to concerns from members of the public, being receptive to comments, quiet trail users still have additional comments. Eric Rechel: Prairie dogs = healthy ecosystems indicator, good to have around. Remember that not having access isn't necessarily a bad thing in all areas, protects natural values. Conrad Tucker: Advisory council noted when riding atv's in cactus park that what looks like spaghetti on a map looks different on the ground. Also note that experience of riding the trail is part of the point of motorized recreation.

Council Discussion

Discussion on lands with wilderness characteristics: Terry Kimber- Plenty of existing roads in Dominguez unit, does not want roads limited because it is now wilderness. Joe noted that these routes were reflected on Travel management plan, and on inventory. Discussion: Should these characteristics be protected as the stand? Bill- keep places wild/manage roads per travel management. Joe- Dry fork and

cottonwood, Gunnison slopes are wild places and would not like to see additional route development in these. Katie Steele: Advisory Council supports keeping characteristics as are, no one is trying to block access = all in agreement to leave as is. Steve-use travel management to manage future route development. Oscar: bill says no new access will be granted.

Specific areas with important Scenic Values: Joe-Gunnison slopes area for high scenic values, Katie Steele-North hunting grounds, old oxcart trails important features. Mike Wilson: why protect if people can't get to, need to balance access, be aware that travel plans too often go too far in wrong direction. Cottonwood = little existing formal access due to topography. Joe-recognize that trails are not only means of access-people can hike and ride without trails and he would like to see the untrailed nature of the Gunnison slopes protected.

Resource uses:

Hunting Grounds (Zone1): Joe, alt b, manage for both motorized/non-motorized, provide opportunity for hiking/horseback. Katie Steele-ERMA might be right here, mostly local residents, education important, would like to see multi-use trail from Delta county to mesa county, trail will increase use in area, off-site interop to save oxcart sites, provide early ERMA protection early and get ahead of curve. Tamera: SRMA would provide more protection of present values. KS: Recommendation for ERMA based on the idea that it would protect traditional uses- ERMA feels more equal-manage recreation, but provide for grazing and traditional uses. Tamera- SRMAs can be developed with specific objectives. If an SRMA is written to provide for grazing, can SRMA values be adjusted if values change?

Mike: Bean Ranch road is the only legal access, other access is through someone's backyard, big increase in traffic. BLM should look at alternative access.

Bill Harris: How does state wildlife closure (3/15 – 7/15) affect future of community connection trail, trail not that close to river?

Doug: recreation pressure will increase in future, grazing needs to be able to co-exist

Gunnison River (Zone 2)

Oscar: Can natural seasons reduce conflicts, winter grazing vs summer recreation. Cattle water where they are trained to water

Joe: Who is BLM managing for here? Camping with hiking opportunity-walk in campers don't have to sign in, take river sites. Tamera- tension between river camping and hike-in camping here, backpackers can go anywhere but river campers are limited to the river.

KS: BLM should consider eliminating campsite at big Dominguez right on bank, where boat parking area is, primary access, site always messy, makes access to wilderness look bad, should add more sites along river above and below Dominguez. Mike: Disperse the people – add campsites.

Bill: Monitoring use after the plan goes in-critical. Will need to decide how to manage use, e.g. future permits? (hard to monitor with no permit system). Tamara: In addition to use monitoring, objective statement very important – what do we want the primary use to be and who should the primary users be? Look at McInnis examples. Tamara: trigger points, need objectives first, then use trigger points to meet objectives. Joe: b vs c/d: b includes hiking/horseback. c/d “river centric”. Terry: river user totally different group than hiker users. Tamara: River based recreation opportunities are limited.

All Council members support managing to reduce noxious weeds. Mike: Noxious, non-native plants: have ruined riverbank in many places for camping and other uses.

Terry: value the elements of C/D allow for motorized use with hunting in the fall.

Katie Stevens: Gold panners want a rec area for gold panning since they can establish no new claims, Council discussion: Gold panning – leave as is (panning in river), no dredging, backhoes, bank disturbance. Concern about bank disturbance given sclera cactus.

Steve B: SRMA Designation for Gunnison river, add value for wildlife – ie bighorn, birds etc. Doug: SRMA, hybrid? Ensure livestock have access to water.

Break: 4:30

Cactus Park: Bill: Most support for SRMA, for multiple uses (motorized, non-motorized). Katie: Who are we managing for? Joe: Quiet use groups have interests in 9 mile hill, makes sense for SRMA for motorized for Cactus Park, multiple forms of rec on 9 mile hill. Nine mile hill: how do we make it work for people and wildlife (important area for desert bighorn sheep). Motorized would like to preserve two trails to lookouts (Mike)

Terry: Do we need to manage for sage grouse? Katie: If listed, we would need to manage for the birds, in the meantime, will need to keep habitat in good shape.

Katie Stevens: Recognize that 9 mile hill is a smallish area defined by topography. Will need to consider effects that multiple trails for multiple user groups in the same area would have.

Gunnison Slopes:

Joe, Leave as is, don't need to add hiking/horseback trails. Council agrees with this.

East Creek:

Climbing-Terry-Concern with bolts being left in and with drilling. Katie Stevens-If a Fixed bolt line is designated to protect resources (focusing use in acceptable areas) is that a concept that makes sense? Terry: Visual important, away from other uses, fixed line OK. Doesn't like to see holes in sandstone. Is Bouldering primary use? Lots of bouldering, but BLM is also finding fixed anchor lines in this area.

Wilderness (Zone 4)

Tamera: would like to see natural (remove structures). Terry values untrammeled in certain situations- would like emphasis on natural when considering noxious weeds however. Lower Dominguez "natural look". Council is supportive of zoning wilderness. Marcia: remember that Untrammeled = humanity attempt to control nature-doesn't necessarily equate with natural.

Escalante:

Cultural resource values may impact private land owners, (heritage tourism). Consider focusing management on local residents (don't market area as a destination?)

Doug: Delta County not in position to improve road if visitation increases. Fragile area, increased usage will change area. Bridge condition? Delta County is looking to replace. Mike: Nearing present use limit?

Bill: Two historic buildings on state land not in NCA-these need some restoration efforts.

Joe: Good resource for education opportunities for school groups and adults. Horse trailer/school bus parking options?

Sawmill Mesa/Cottonwood Canyon:

Doug, not opposing quiet use in Sawmill/cottonwood. Bill: restrictions on motorized in some areas are a concern. Doug: Old Delta road to Escalante cuts across, sheep use some, could be an option for recreation

Council supports ban on paintball, but divided on target shooting. Concern about unmanaged target shooting in areas with developed trail systems in the future, especially as use grows. Prevalent current use, however. Terry/Mike: want to see target shooting in the future. Geocaching in wilderness to be virtual, no glass containers.

Public Comment:

Mr. Tucker: Picks up trash along the way, tried hiking up Big Dominguez and found no trash along trail (Thanks to quiet users for being clean). Eric: Quiet users met, looking for Gibbler Mountain to be a place with no trails. Weeds: tamarisk in stock ponds, have seen lots of ponds with tamarisk, there should be a plan for treating ponds. Escalante road: signage improvements along hazardous portions of road. Terry Gray: Can't enforce all that many rules. Barbara Hawke: undeveloped land keeps people here in the Western US. Wilderness lands an increasing value, very valuable to community

Grazing:

Oscar: (Item 3) too much bureaucracy! Elimination of numbers of signatures needed to get things done. Permittees should answer to local range managers. We can work with users and manage changes. Must be a two way street. Don't give a lot of environmental issues that will force us off the land.

How to we plan for conflicts with increased usage? Heritage education? People value free range beef, but are concerned about public lands grazing. Cattle grazing a big part of county economy and ecosystem

Oscar- Recognize that not all ponds were built for livestock: some for erosion control etc built by BOR

Discussion: Terry: Sheep vs bighorn – ranchers shouldn't have to be affected by transplanted big horn.

Katie Steele- explore options to reach compromise. Joe: still need to keep in context-be specific/recognize how many operations are presenting the risks vs. importance of that herd. The wild sheep are an important feature of the NCA. Doug: stress to big horn with more people (recreation).

Steve: Sheep were native, transplanted to restore due to past management shortfalls. Disease thing: Big horn sheep more bothered by disease than other wildlife. Mitigate as much as possible but don't put ranchers out of business. Oscar: be careful of setting precedent, work together, we can make it work. Mismanage or disease which caused the original decline?

Joe-reminder of provision in legislation related to livestock water developments in the wilderness, can be questions about whether environmental community continues to support those developments, but it is clear that they do-made a commitment through the legislative process and believe these are important.

Transportation/Travel:

Area vs route: Area big scale hard to change, route flexible. Mike: doesn't want to see major reduction in numbers of miles of roads. Terry: we want to use the land! Oscar: important to permittees to maintain access for water hauling

Communication Facilities:

Joe: do exclusion areas and avoidance areas provide for private property access? Yes, will provide at least one way in and out, may require minimal construction standards.

Mike: Should not exclude any legal right of way for any reason (need to leave a way out for future needs).

Tamera: There is value in approaches to ROW being restrictive. (special decision is appropriate).

Joe: areas within 75 feet of US 50 – consider visual importance of this area. Good to look out and see the canyons, wouldn't want to see a major powerline in there.

ACEC's

Group that discussed ACECs-if preferred approach does not protect values, then use ACEC, if other protections available use them first. Bill: Protection for Cottonwood Creek, what options are available for protection? Katie Stevens-important, high quality, regionally important cottonwood stands/riparian vegetation. Mike: Agrees that some form of protection is needed for Cottonwood Creek. Steve: Future pressures unknown, ACECs can be good signals to future managers that an area is especially important.

Discussion of Advisory Council recommendations:

Regarding priority on riparian, sagebrush and special status species habitats: support identification of riparian areas as important, but recognize that they are dependent on private land owners, BLM has little control in some areas. Oscar: how they are managed is critical.

Sage brush: not in decline, species is doing well locally. Acknowledge range wide vs local issue, community vs individual plants. Remove emphasis on decline, add community focus.

Sensitive species: Agree these are important.

Pocket of importance Value the recognition of D-E's diversity but concern about restricting access doesn't follow. Joe: Drop Access word?

Prairie Dogs: Remove first sentence relating to expansion, just focus on BLM having tools to manage prairie dogs (both increases and decreases).

Gunnison sage grouse habitat-Doug: don't really have birds. BLM needs tools to maintain diverse habitats.

Dry fork of Escalante: cattle trailing vs drifting-Tamera can agree as long as parameters on drifting. Focus this recommendation on surface disturbance, consider if trailing would increase overall disturbance.

Limit camping in riparian areas: Agreed

Desert Big Horn 3 classifications-consider options of allotment swaps

Strong feelings against bolting:

Multiple access points to wilderness: Scale important. May be some parts of wilderness where one access point is adequate. Joe: Reasonable amount where appropriate by zone, remove "multiple", remove provide for transportation system.

Council does not want to provide input on day use in relation to Leonard's basin/palmer gulch

Geocaching: Prohibit geocaching other than virtual

Monitoring devices: Tamera: on vegetation? On Sheep as unobtrusive as possible. Allow for monitoring as big horn sheep, consider more subtle methods for monitoring

Don't remove old ranching things, retain as historic. Specific to Rambo? "add as appropriate to management objective".

Delta co – heritage tourism. Tamera: consider recreation needs of older people and non-atv users.

Doug: BLM needs to think about marketing plan for area-where we have facilities to support increased visitation. Not trying to encourage/discourage use. Focus on D-E as a working landscape.

Gunnison Gravel ACEC: Retain only, can it be done within current boundary.

Cottonwood Canyon as ACEC: Council supports special emphasis on this place.