



BLM White River Field Office
Travel and Transportation Management

NW RAC Briefing
Preliminary Alternatives
August 18, 2016

Briefing Objectives

- Provide a basic overview of the Travel Management RMPA's preliminary alternatives
- Explain our public outreach plans (extra step before we begin impacts analysis in the environmental assessment)
- Discuss how the NW RAC wants to review the Subgroup's recommendations on the preliminary alternatives

BLM Travel Management Planning

The BLM travel and transportation management includes two levels of planning:

❖ **Land Use Planning**
(RMP Amendment)



Areas

❖ **Implementation Planning**
(5-10 Travel Management Plans)



Route-by-Route

Comprehensive Travel Management

□ Motorized =



□ Mechanized =



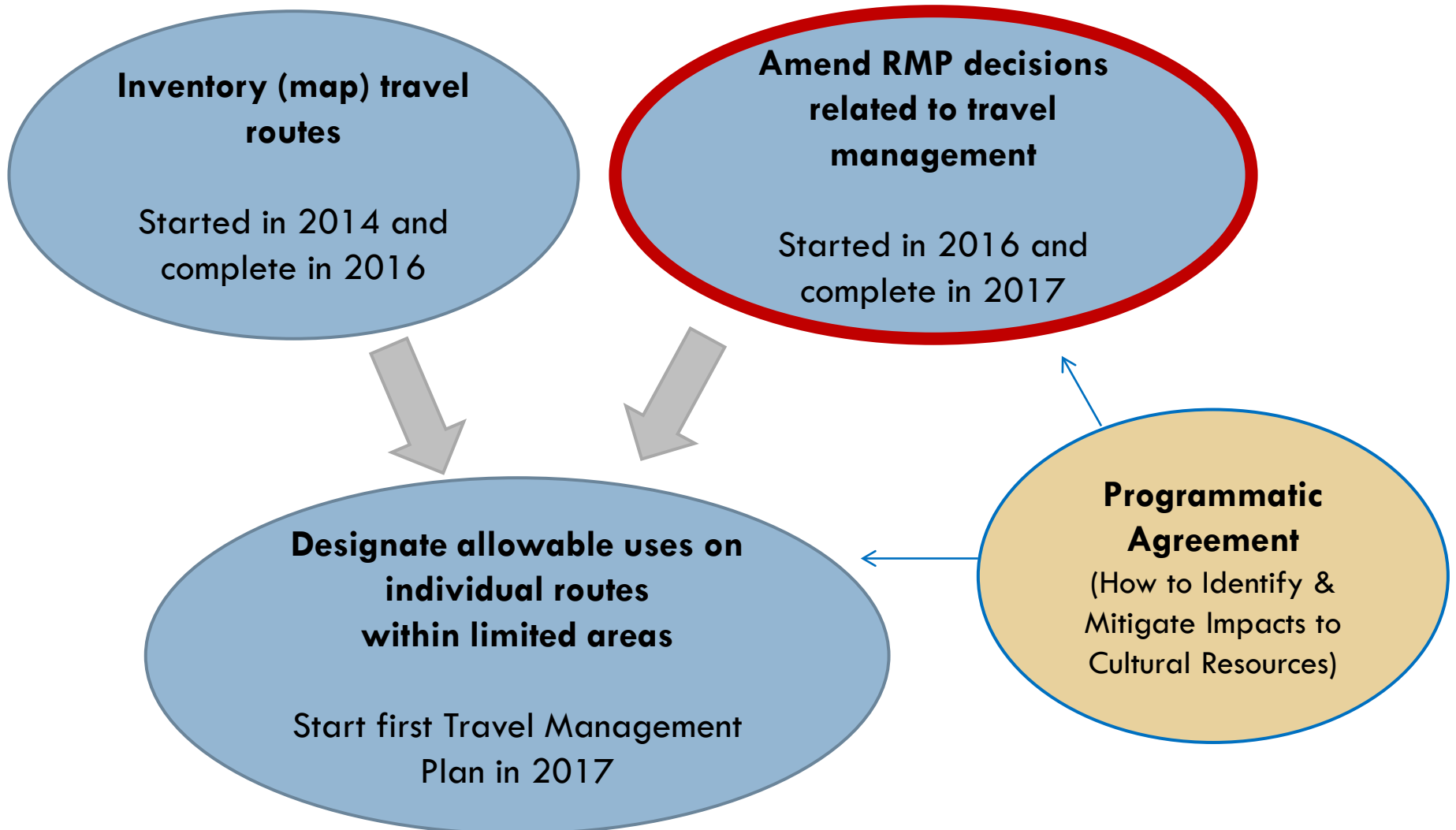
□ Non-motorized,
non-mechanized =



Why is the WRFO working on travel management planning now?

- Our goal is to develop a transportation network that meets the needs for public and administrative access while also protecting sensitive resources
- Travel decisions in most areas of the White River Field Office are almost 20 years old (from 1997 RMP)
- We need to revise some existing travel decisions to be more consistent with BLM's national policies

WRFO Strategy for Travel Management Planning



Area Designations

- **Motorized**
- **Exceptions**
- **Motorized Over the Snow**
- **Mechanized**

Area Designations

- Open to cross-country travel
- Closed to motorized and mechanized travel (but administrative use by BLM or permittees may be allowed in these areas)
- Limited to designated routes and/or season of use

Preliminary Alternatives

- Alternative A (No Action)
 - ▣ 1997 RMP as amended by 2004 Wilson Creek RMPA, 2015 Oil and Gas RMPA, and 2015 Sage-Grouse RMPA
 - ▣ Some decisions inconsistent with current terminology
- Alternative B
 - ▣ Most areas are limited to designated routes.
 - ▣ More closed areas than other alternatives.
 - ▣ Includes route density to guide route-by-route designations
- Alternative C
 - ▣ Most areas limited to designated routes.
 - ▣ Larger open areas, fewer closed areas than Alternative B.

Overview of Alternatives (Motorized)

Designation	Alt A* (acres)	Alt B (acres)	Alt C (acres)
Open (Year-Round)	0	105	211
Limited to Existing Routes	1,300,228	0	0
Limited to Designated Routes	55,107	1,288,189	1,300,623
Limited to Primitive Routes	0	0	66,282
Closed (Year-Round)	100,207	167,143	90,819
Closed (Seasonally)	1,189	0	0

Open Areas (Motorized Cross-country)

Potential Open Areas	Alt A (acres)	Alt B (acres)	Alt C (acres)
Rock slabs in Rangely Rock Crawling Park	0	39	45
North Rangely	0	11	37
North Dinosaur	0	50	89
LO7 Hill	0	5	40

Alt A - Motorized

Legend

OHV Area Designations (Motorized Travel)

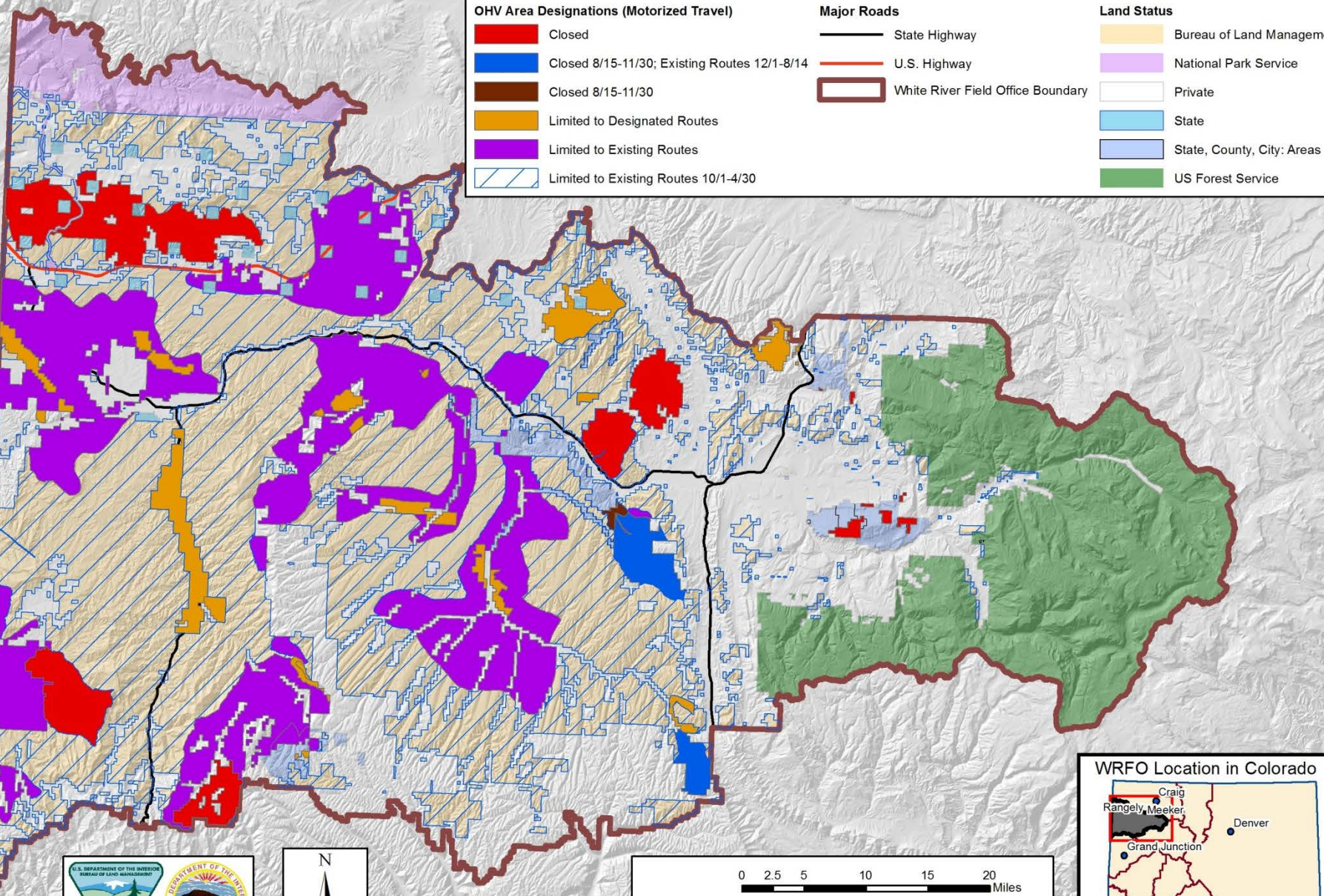
- Closed
- Closed 8/15-11/30; Existing Routes 12/1-8/14
- Closed 8/15-11/30
- Limited to Designated Routes
- Limited to Existing Routes
- Limited to Existing Routes 10/1-4/30

Major Roads

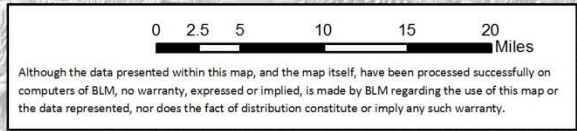
- State Highway
- U.S. Highway
- White River Field Office Boundary

Land Status

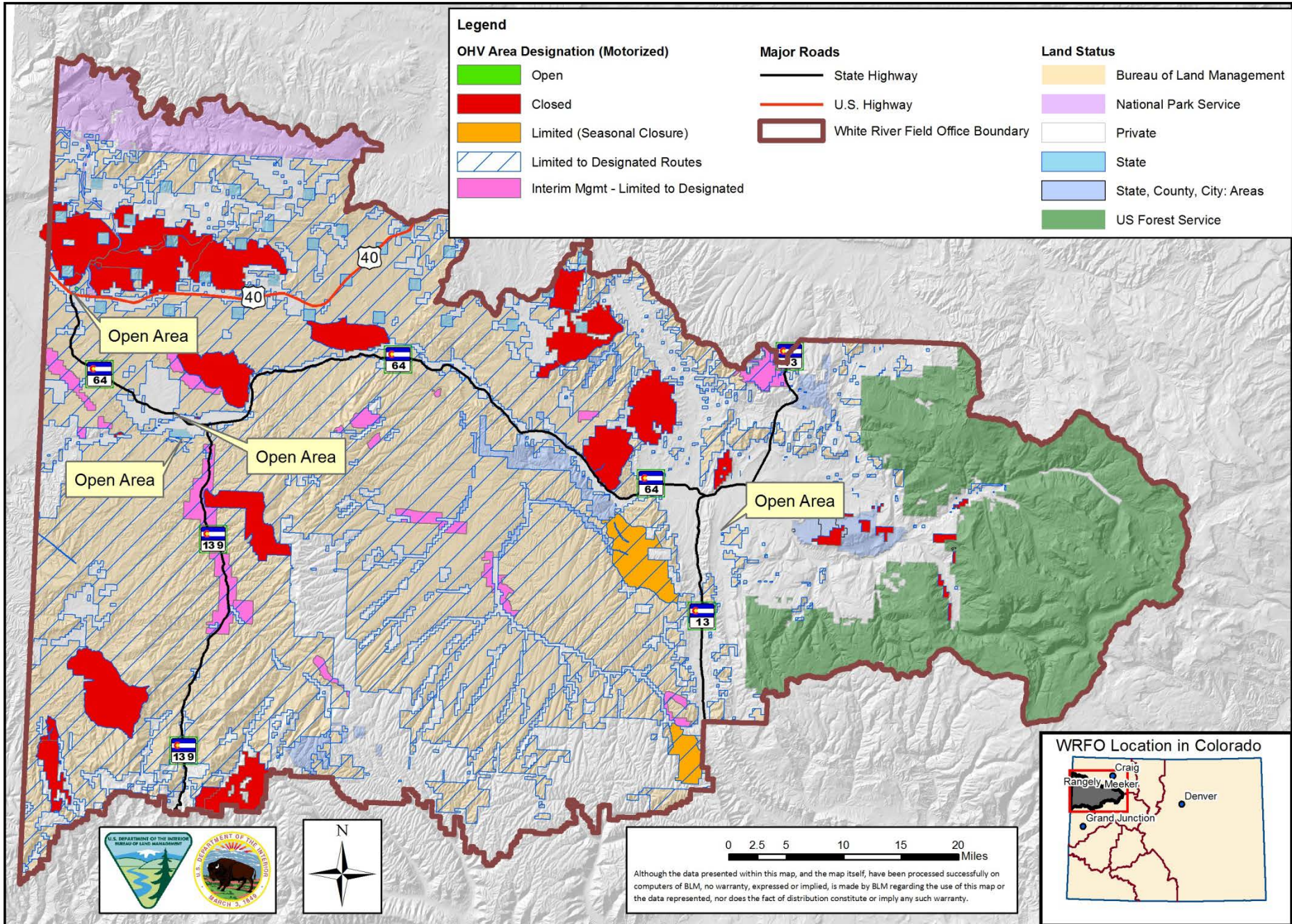
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- Private
- State
- State, County, City: Areas
- US Forest Service



WRFO Location in Colorado



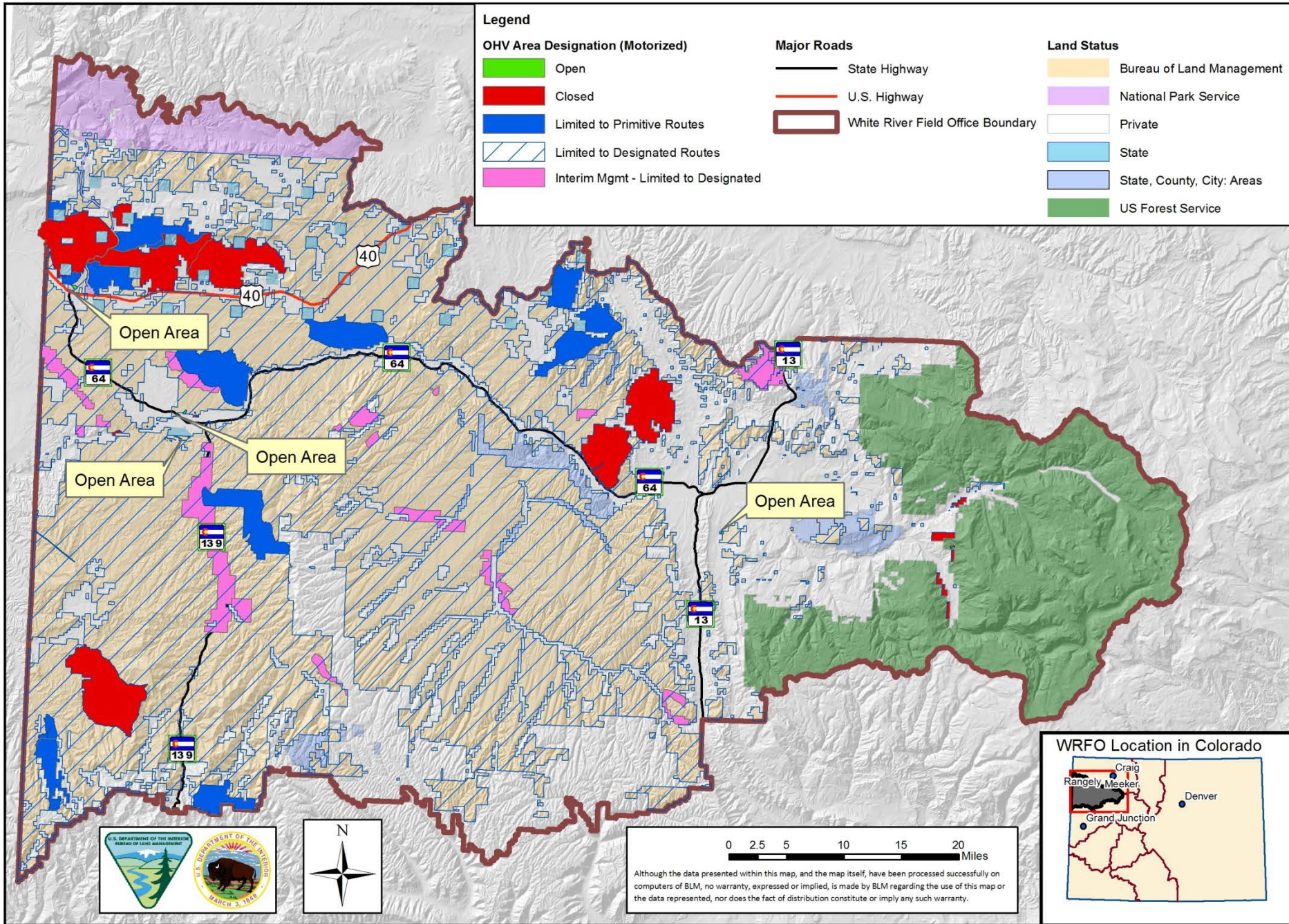
Alt B - Motorized



0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Miles

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Alt C - Motorized



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Public Exceptions to Travel Off-Road (in Areas Limited to Designated Routes)

Alt B

- Park (one vehicle length)

Alt C

- Up to 100 ft

Alt B and C

- No exceptions for physically challenged individuals
- No exceptions in closed areas

Alt A

- Up to 300 ft (camp, firewood)
- Retrieve big game (no resource damage)
- Physically challenged individuals with CPW permit

Overview of Alternatives (Over Snow Motorized)

Designation	Alt A (acres)	Alt B (acres)	Alt C (acres)
Open	0	105	211
Limited to Designated Routes	0	680,599	570,603
Limited to Primitive Routes	0	0	66,282
Off-route Travel Limited to ≥ 18 inches of Snow	0	607,590	730,017
Closed (Year-Round)	90,320	167,143	90,819

Mechanized Travel

Alt A

- 1997 RMP is silent

Alt B and C

- WSAs closed
- Limit rest of WRFO to designated routes
- No restrictions on the use of game carts
(except in WSAs)



Additional Designation Criteria

Why do we want to include additional (WRFO-specific) designation criteria?

- Remember that we intend to complete route-by-route designations by dividing the 1.5 million acre field office into 5-10 areas.
- Including additional designation criteria in the RMPA would help to provide a consistent approach to designating routes across the field office.
- See Appendix C for additional designation criteria.

Route Density - Concept

- Route density concept is based on an extensive body of peer-reviewed scientific research (including sophisticated telemetry equipment)
- Concept in the 1997 RMP but never implemented because route-by-route planning wasn't completed
- Use route density to avoid closing entire areas (seasonally)
 - Provides for public access and recreation
 - Reduces impacts to wildlife (sensitive times of the year)

What routes are counted in route density calculations?

- Routes included in density calculations
 - ▣ All motorized and mechanized routes available for public use
 - ▣ County roads
- Routes not included in density calculations
 - ▣ Administrative access routes (BLM + permitted users)
 - ▣ Routes with seasonal limitations
 - ▣ Temporary routes (such as oil and gas access routes)
 - ▣ State and US highways

Route Density in the Alternatives

Alt A (No Action)

- ≤ 1.5 miles/sq mile
 - ▣ Big game severe winter range and summer range
 - ▣ East Douglas ACEC
 - ▣ Ferret management areas

- ≤ 3 miles/sq mile
 - ▣ Big game winter conc. areas and general winter range

Alt C

- Route density not included

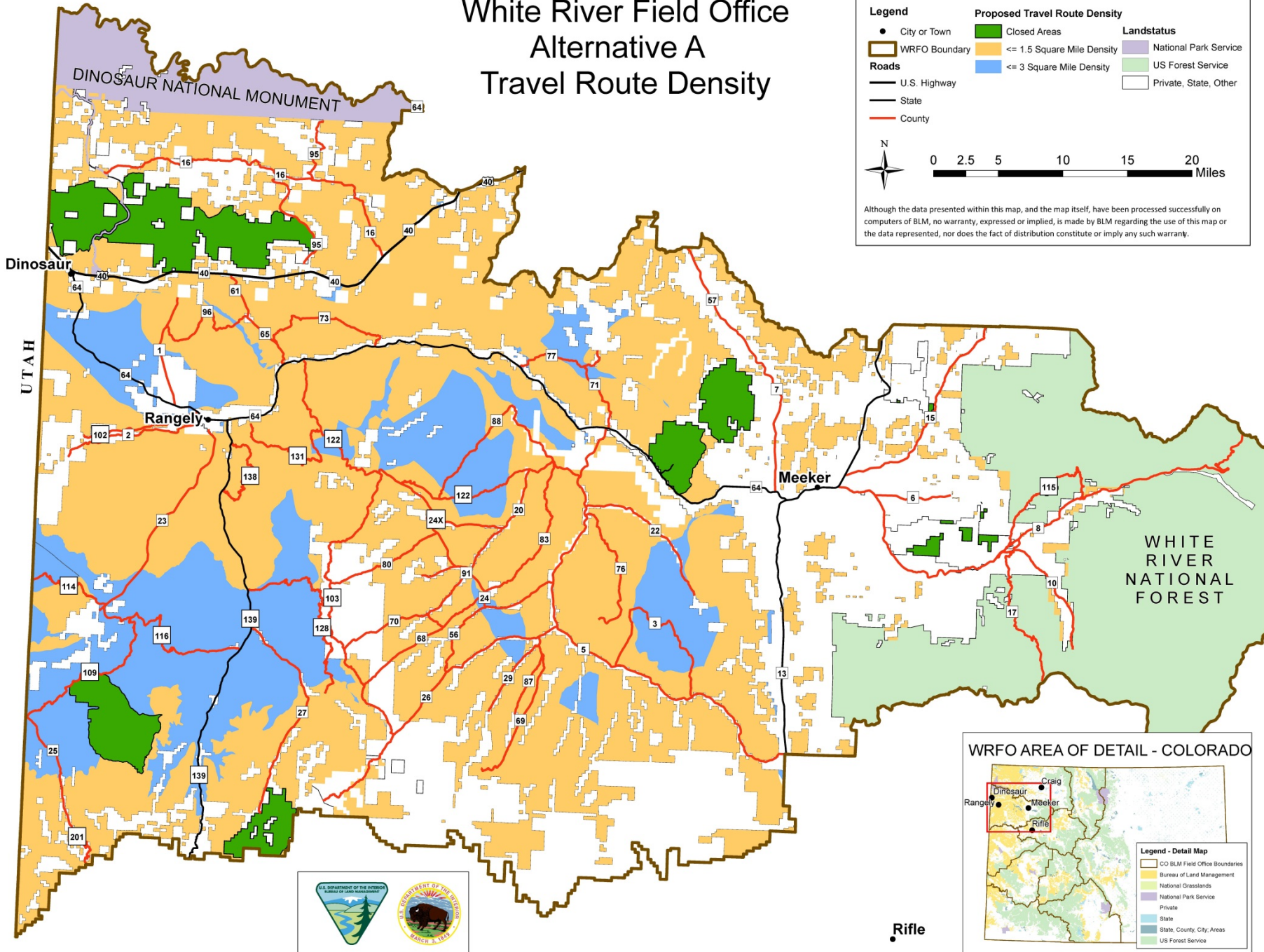
Alt B

- Exempt: Coal Oil Basin
- ≤ 1 mile/sq mile
 - ▣ LO7 Hill
 - ▣ Within 2 miles of sage-grouse leks
- ≤ 1.5 mile/sq mile
 - ▣ Big game severe winter range and summer range
 - ▣ East Douglas ACEC
 - ▣ Ferret management areas
 - ▣ CPW emphasis areas (Big Ridge, Twin Buttes, Oil Spring south)
 - ▣ Within sage-grouse priority and general habitat
- ≤ 2.5 mile/sq mile
 - ▣ Big game winter conc. areas and general winter range

How to achieve route density?

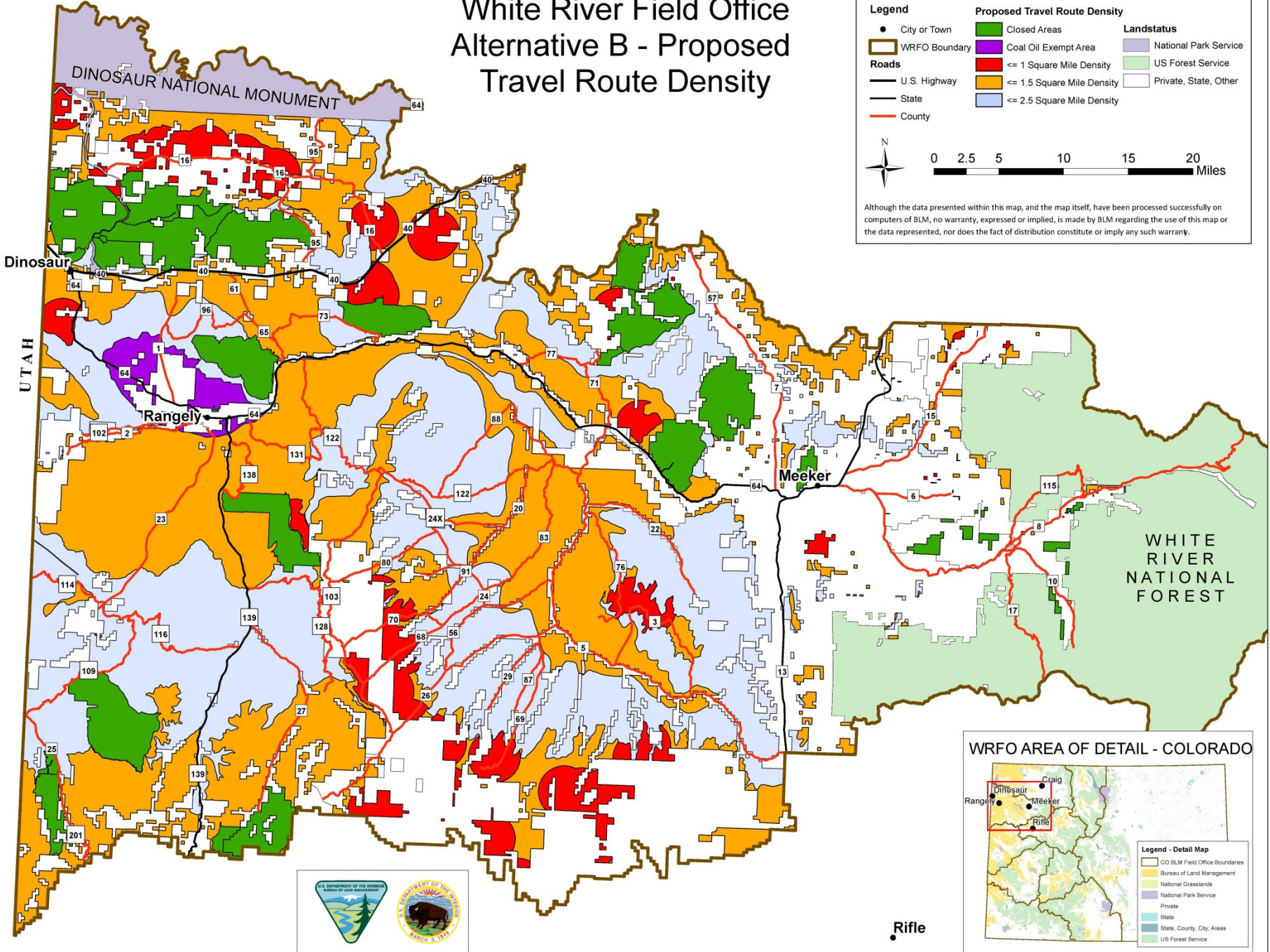
1. Consider designation criteria for other resources first to determine what closures or limitations are needed
2. If still above route density targets, then we would either:
 - ▣ Close routes
 - ▣ Limit routes to administrative access
 - ▣ Keep temporary routes (oil and gas) as administrative access
 - ▣ Apply seasonal limitations to routes during specified critical times of the year for wildlife

White River Field Office Alternative A Travel Route Density



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White River Field Office Alternative B - Proposed Travel Route Density





Public Involvement



Preferred Alternative

- A preferred alternative will be selected after...
 - ▣ Public review of the preliminary alternatives; and
 - ▣ Impacts analysis of the revised alternatives.
- The preferred alternative will likely be a blend of the alternatives. The public will have a chance to comment on the preliminary EA next summer.
- Right now it's important to look at the range of alternatives.

We are asking the public...



- Is there a reasonable range of alternatives?
- Do the alternatives adequately address the issues raised during scoping (see Scoping Report)?
- Are there alternatives that we have not considered?
- Are any of the alternatives inconsistent with local land use plans?
- Do you have any concerns with the feasibility of implementing the alternatives?

Public Involvement Schedule

- Public review of alternatives – August 8 to Sept. 30
- NW RAC Meeting – August 18 in Craig
- NW RAC Sub Group Meetings in Meeker
 - ▣ August 23 – explain alternatives
 - ▣ September 14 – discuss alternatives
- Public Meetings
 - ▣ Meeker – August 30
 - ▣ Rangely – August 31
- Public Field Tours of Open Areas – Sept. 7 and 8

Guidance needed from the NW RAC

- How do you want to provide recommendations to the BLM?
 - ▣ How should the Subgroup submit their recommendations to the NW RAC and by what deadline (by September 30)?
 - ▣ How do you want to review the Subgroup recommendations on these preliminary alternatives (by email)?
 - ▣ When will you provide your recommendations to the BLM (by October 14)?

Guidance needed from the NW RAC

- Should we discuss the future role of the Subgroup at the December NW RAC meeting?
 - ▣ The original intent of the Subgroup was to help evaluate the alternatives.
 - ▣ We said we'd evaluate whether or not to continue their involvement in the process after completing the review of the alternatives.
 - ▣ We think it would make sense for both the Subgroup and the BLM to provide feedback to the NW RAC on the Subgroup's involvement in the process.



Questions about the Travel RMPA?