

**Northwest Resource Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, August 12, 2004, 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**
CSU Cooperative Extension Office
Grand County Fairgrounds
210 North 11th Street
Kremmling, Colorado

ATTENDEES

Resource Advisory Council Members

Geoff Blakeslee, Category 2	Jon Hill, Category 1
David Cesark, Category 1	Patrick Kennedy, Category 2
Jeff Comstock, Category 3	Charles Kerr, Category 1
Ken Currey, Category 1	John Martin, Category 3
T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1	Forrest Nelson, Category 3
Wade Haerle, Category 2	Charlie Yates, Category 1

Not present: Kathy Hall-Category 3, David Bailey-Category 2, Larry McCown-Category 3

BLM Staff

John Husband	Catherine Robertson
John Arkins	Rich Rosene
Jeremy Casterson	John Ruhs
Dennis Gale	John Silence
Mel Lloyd	Kent Walter
Perry McCoy	Les Weeks

Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Steve Bonowski	Colorado Mountain Club and Republics for Environmental Protection	Golden, CO
Amanda Crysler	Sen. Campbell's office	Grand Junction, CO

Opening Remarks from Geoff Blakeslee and John Husband

Geoff Blakeslee, the Northwest Resource Advisory Council (NWRAC) chairman, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. *The attendees today constitute a quorum.* Geoff thanked the Kremmling Field Office (FO) for hosting today's meeting, as well as yesterday's field trip on the river. Geoff handed out the approved minutes from May 6 (<http://www.blm.gov/rac/co/nwrac/minutes.htm>).

John Husband introduced Melodie Lloyd, who recently joined the Western Slope Center public affairs office. Mel will be working closely with Designated Federal Officers (DFO) for both the Northwest and Southwest Resource Advisory Councils (RAC). John stated that next year's RAC appointments have not been announced but are expected soon. Those individuals whose terms expire this year are John Martin, Jeff Comstock, T. Wright Dickenson, David Bailey and Patrick Kennedy. All have reapplied for another term. John asked RAC members to please keep in mind the terms expiring next year and to begin now to recruit individuals to apply for these positions. The terms for Geoff Blakeslee, Ken Currey, Kathy Hall, Forrest Nelson and Charlie Yates expire in August 2005. The deadline for submitting nomination applications for Fiscal Year 2006 is April 2005. John indicated that elections for officers will occur during November's meeting and reminded members to bring their calendars for the purpose of scheduling FY 2005 meetings. BLM is discussing scheduling RAC training for early 2005 and this item will also be discussed.

Ken Currey reminded the group that he has served as the NWRAC representative on the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA) Advisory Council. Ken resigned earlier this year from that council and stated that another RAC member should be chosen to fill his seat. Discussions on who might best serve all RAC interests followed, and Pat Kennedy agreed to serve as the RAC representative.

Catherine Robertson, field manager for the Grand Junction FO, encouraged both field managers and RAC members who choose to not reapply for another term to recruit potential RAC members, inviting them to attend future meetings prior to the April deadline to learn about the RAC environment. Geoff announced that he will not reapply next year and agreed with Catherine's suggestion. Ken Currey indicated that he will not reapply next year as well.

Public Comment

Geoff opened public comment at 9:30 a.m. by giving the floor to Steve Bonowski, here today representing the Colorado Mountain Club and Republics for Environmental Protection. Steve spoke about concerns with increased drilling on public lands (see hand outs at http://www.bushgreenwatch.org/mt_archives/000168.php and <http://www.wilderness.org/Library/Documents/upload/Drilling-in-the-Rocky-Mountains-Not-so-Fast-An-Assessment-of-Surplus-Drilling-Permits-Leases-on-Federal-Public-Lands.pdf>). Steve referenced the South Shale Ridge Environmental Assessment (EA) and Dinosaur National Monument issue. Steve asked the RAC to look at BLM's oil and gas leasing process in a future meeting.

Field Manager Updates

John Ruhs, Field Manager, Kremmling Field Office (KFO)

John Ruhs reported on the Owl Mountain Partnership and noted that Special Recreation Permits (SRP) processing for next year is nearing completion. The Kremmling FO has

ongoing cultural resource projects with the University of Wyoming, which has performed Paleo-Indian site research on BLM lands near Kremmling for the past 14 years. The University of South Florida conducts paleo research on the Ammonite Site, and this project is in its fourth year. Three major land exchanges are still in the works; Smith Creek Mesa, Windy Gap/Gore Canyon and a ranch located on the upper Colorado River. A feasibility study has been conducted on acquiring the Blue Valley Ranch. Oil and gas activity has increased but not at the level of other offices (15 wells per year currently in the North Park area).

John Husband, Field Manager, Little Snake Field Office (LSFO)

John Husband reported that his office received concurrence on the Emerald Mountain land exchange. The Emerald Mountain Partnership has worked closely with the BLM on this project, and the process to develop a BLM plan amendment will be kicked off within the next month. There has been some controversy, but the exchange as a whole has received strong support from the surrounding communities. The RAC will discuss this plan initiative in more detail at the next meeting. A coal-bed methane assessment is being prepared for LSFO and KFO to determine potential for development. Some exploration is occurring but at a minimal level.

Jamie Connell, Field Manager, Glenwood Springs Field Office (GSFO)

Jamie reported that the Storm King Event in early July went well. Public meetings regarding the Hardscrabble area near Gypsum have been occurring. Area travel is designated as open per the current Resource Management Plan (RMP), and the meetings were held to gather public input to use in developing the area's travel management plan. It was learned that folks do not want specific route designation but do want a new resource management plan. An informational map will be developed for user groups as well. The Roan Plateau draft RMP will be completed soon, and historic Thompson Creek oil and gas leases near Carbondale have been getting some attention lately. Jamie explained that, while these leases occur on White River National Forest land, the BLM is the managing leasing party, yet the land-use stipulations are implemented by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The BLM and USFS will be working together on leasing issues, and if further information is required by any constituents, Jamie invited them to contact the GSFO. The GSFO will process about 200 applications for permits to drill (APD) this year. The GJFO and GSFO are working together in developing and potentially sharing their petroleum engineer resources. The Bair Ranch acquisition was finalized and celebrated last month with a \$1.5 million cost to the federal government. Jamie's office has not received any phone calls on oil shale development from the industry itself, but the media has been inquiring. Oil shale lands were transferred to the BLM in the early 1990s. Jamie may be going to Washington, DC on detail and would not be at the next meeting. She plans to return to her position in Glenwood Springs in December.

Catherine Robertson, Field Manager, BLM Grand Junction Field Office

Catherine handed out “The BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services,” the Agency’s updated workplan for recreation programs. She also distributed the final North Fruita Desert Management Plan (http://www.co.blm.gov/gjra/pdf/NFD_final.pdf), which was released to the public earlier this week. The public that actively participated in the planning process will have 30 days to protest the plan prior to the plan’s Record of Decision being signed by the State Director. Catherine noted some of the plan’s highlights and management changes for the area. There was a public meeting for the Bang’s Canyon Area in late May, which resulted in a large number of public comments. Dual areas are being set up now for public review, and the public will have the opportunity to submit additional comments sometime this fall. The South Shale Ridge EA has prompted several hundred faxes and thousands of e-mails to not only her e-mail inbox but the State Director’s as well. Catherine stated that misinformation is being distributed by others on this EA, causing controversy. The existing leases have stringent stipulations on them and future leases would fall under stipulations outlined in the current RMP.

Kent Walter, Field Manager-BLM White River Field Office

Kent offered to update the group during his presentation this afternoon.

Wolford Mountain Travel Management Plan

John Ruhs introduced Rich Rosene, BLM outdoor recreation planner; Les Weeks, travel management planning contractor; and Dennis Gale, BLM supervisory nonrenewable staff. The Wolford Mountain Travel Management Plan (TMP) and how the BLM arrived at decisions made were discussed in-depth. Chuck Cesar, BLM wildlife biologist, was present to answer any questions the RAC might have.

Les explained his methodology in the decision and planning process, as well as the guiding requirements and priorities that have been followed in developing the route evaluations and designations. Decision trees were used extensively in the process (see hand-outs). Les emphasized that both public and agency concerns were carefully evaluated and addressed in the TMP.

Dennis reported that a community-based group, “Friends of Wolford Mountain,” was formed and active in the planning process. Dennis explained that BLM hosted open houses to gain public input, and feedback was gathered directly from local businesses and user groups as well. The BLM also worked closely with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) in developing the TMP. Analysis of the plan’s economic impact will be ongoing. RAC member John Martin encouraged the agency to find a way to reach the users that may not be attending meetings or reading newspapers. Additional discussions will be held at a future meeting addressing on-the-ground issues involving this plan.

BLM Law Enforcement Overview

BLM Colorado Special Agent John Silence and Perry McCoy, law enforcement officer for the Grand Junction Resource Area (GJRA), were introduced by John Husband. John and Perry handed out a copy of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) pertaining to law enforcement (Title 43 USC §1733-see hand-out). John presented a brief summary and historical background on BLM's two law enforcement segments—special agents and law enforcement officers (LEO)—as well as the challenges they face. John also mentioned the various agreements and partnerships that exist with other government agencies and entities. The BLM has very few officers and agents to cover the millions of acres that must be patrolled and these partnerships are critical to BLM's LEO. Violations and citations, especially those for juveniles, are up three-fold to date from the entire year in 2000. Hazmat issues, including methamphetamine lab paraphernalia, and neglect fires are on the rise as is domestic terrorism. BLM's LEO, whose focus should be on addressing damages to natural resources, are now dealing with more serious violations normally seen by city and county law enforcement organizations.

Perry shared his everyday experiences in dealing with the challenges presented by this increased activity. John Husband noted the benefits a community receives as a result of the cooperation occurring between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. BLM law enforcement continues to request funding as a budget line item to improve and strengthen law enforcement on public lands. Perry added that the BLM will continue to work closely with local District Attorneys, and John assured the group that BLM will continue to work toward strengthening its law enforcement efforts.

The RAC offered to write the Colorado State Director encouraging action, but Perry said the resolution lies with adequate funding from Washington. The RAC invited BLM Law Enforcement to work through them to encourage increased support for law enforcement needs. Perry emphasized that, while the program needs additional resources, multiple agencies are effectively working together and it is invaluable to him in doing his job.

Introduction to Visual Resource Management

Rich Rosene gave a presentation on Visual Resource Management (VRM) (see handout). The BLM implements VRM in an effort to preserve visual qualities on public lands, and the Bureau strives to sustain the health and beauty of public land resources and follows stringent guidelines in all of its management actions. The VRM system entails inventorying visual resources and then designing activities around that inventory. Analyses are then conducted as projects that might disturb the area arise. Charlie Kerr commented on how Ted Turner's ranch had done an excellent job of balancing land use with conserving the ranch's visual qualities. Dave Cesark noted that a handbook guiding the oil and gas industry is being developed by that industry, in cooperation with the Department of Energy and BLM.

Northwest Colorado Stewardship and Little Snake FO Plan Revision, RAC Subgroup and FACA Update

Jeremy Casterson, BLM land-use planner, updated the group on the Northwest Colorado Stewardship and Little Snake FO plan revision. The Keystone Center was chosen as the group facilitator and protocols have been developed for conducting business. Outside interests and potential members now have a document that reflects the group's objectives and goals. Jeff Comstock added that other issues arose and the collaborative relationship helps identify how the group will assist in this planning process. Jeremy reported that the contractor has been chosen for developing the RMP/Environmental Impact Study (EIS), and announcements should be made soon on that. Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) issues were covered related to RAC subcommittees and Jeremy discussed in detail the options considered and agreed upon by the subgroup, as well as the various recommendations offered through legal counsel. Being chartered under the NWRAC and using a contractor to conduct subgroup business are the two options settled on by the Stewardship group.

John Husband pointed out that FACA is beneficial, but legal interpretation is sometimes confusing. John emphasized that any recommendation is made by the RAC, not subcommittees sanctioned by the RAC. Catherine stated that she feels the intent of FACA is adequately satisfied through BLM's efforts to promote Bureau activities through press releases, web site notices, etc. and requiring legal notices of subcommittee activities is redundant. Further discussions are needed in deciding what the most effective and productive way is for conducting business through subcommittees or stewardship groups. John Husband will seek some clarification in how to establish and effectively use subcommittees.

Community Stewardship Plan-Dominguez-Escalante Canyons Area

Catherine Robertson talked about the various areas managed by the Uncompahgre and Grand Junction field offices, which share jurisdiction boundaries. The two FOs are working together and requesting both the Northwest and Southwest RACs' support in their joint initiative to develop a Community Stewardship Plan for the Dominguez-Escalante Canyons area. The SWRAC held a meeting in late July, where Chairman Dave Ubell signed the Resolution after unanimous vote by that RAC to support the project. The same Resolution was presented today to the NWRAC (see handout). While this initiative is not on any project list yet and will not be an RMP, project funding no longer allocated for tabled projects may be available to assist in launching this planning initiative. Travel management, public health and safety, and cultural resource and boundary issues are just a few of the items that the stewardship plan could address. Catherine is here today to ask for the NWRAC's backing in gaining additional grassroots support for this plan. The RAC had a number of questions on funding allocations and management priorities.

T. Wright cannot support the Resolution as written and explained why. He would prefer that the RAC write a letter specifically endorsing community stewardship projects in general while also recognizing the funding needs and priorities of other important BLM resource planning projects.

Catherine emphasized that the Resolution is not asking for funding that will take away from other projects; only that the initiative be recognized and its value considered.

John Martin stated that he cannot support the initiative given that recent GJFO RMPs have not yet been implemented, and until these are signed and implemented, no other commitments should be made by the BLM GJFO.

A motion was moved by Charlie Kerr and seconded to sign the Resolution. Jon Hill motioned for an amendment that would have the letter going to the State Director, not the Secretary. Catherine explained that because the Secretary appoints the RAC members, it is appropriate that the Resolution be addressed to the Secretary, assuring the RAC that the State Director is aware of the Resolution and would receive a copy. There was further discussion on the pros and cons of supporting this initiative and setting BLM project priorities. Jon Hill rescinded his motion for amendment.

The first motion moved by Charlie Kerr was voted on and defeated. Voting was as follows: (thumbs up, down or sideways)

Geoff Blakeslee, Category 2, Up	Jon Hill, Category 1, Down
David Cesark, Category 1, Up	Patrick Kennedy, Category 2, Up
Jeff Comstock, Category 3, Down	Charles Kerr, Category 1, Up
Ken Currey, Category 1, Up	John Martin, Category 3, Down
T. Wright Dickinson, Category 1, Down	Forrest Nelson, Category 3, Up
Wade Haerle, Category 2, Up	Charlie Yates, Category 1, Up

Wade Haerle moved that a new letter be written to the State Director stating that the two RACs support community-driven stewardship planning, as well as new funding for this and other projects.

Chairman Blakeslee asked that a small group of members draft a letter encompassing all RAC concerns and present it to the RAC for endorsement later in the meeting. John Martin, T. Wright and Wade left group discussions to draft a letter, while the meeting continued with the next agenda item.

Public Comment

Steve Bonowski deferred comment to local conservationist clubs on the Community Stewardship Plan for the Dominguez-Escalante Canyons area. There was no other public comment.

Wilson Creek Travel Management Plan and West Douglas Herd Area Plan Amendment

Kent Walter suggested that the RAC consider using Mel Lloyd as a facilitator and bring note takers in from the field offices. Kent emphasized that the suggestion was not meant to be critical but rather to assist the RAC in being even more effective.

Kent then reported on field office activities as promised earlier in the day. Traute Parrie was selected recently as the White River FO Associate Field Manager. The Figure Four Gap EA is out for comment. There are approximately 327 APDs for oil and gas wells on 120 well pads. Several fire-use fires have occurred within Kent's jurisdiction this summer, and natural resources will ultimately benefit from these burns. Collocation with the USFS is moving forward with a construction site selected and move-in sometime in November 2005. Kent spoke about the West Douglas Herd project and thanked the RAC for its involvement and efforts spent on the project. Their comments have been incorporated and the protest period ends tomorrow. The Wilson Creek Travel Management Plan is also out for comment. The plan has the support of the local community as well as user groups. Kent addressed various questions on the various planning projects.

Committee Reports

The Wildlife Subcommittee canceled its meeting and has no report today.

Geoff presented Resolution No. 4-04, which recommends implementing a consistent statewide strategy for long-term treatment and containment of non-native invasive plant species on all lands managed by BLM Colorado. Discussions ensued on weed management partnerships and options currently available to the BLM. Some wording changes were suggested and made addressing concerns. A motion was made to accept the Resolution with the changes incorporated and this motion passed (see attached).

Community Stewardship Plan continued

The group returned with a draft letter addressed to the State Director with copies to the BLM Director and Secretary of the Interior. There was disagreement on whether the new draft would satisfy the original letter's intent. The RAC was unable to reach consensus on appropriate language for furthering the Dominguez-Escalante planning project, while at the same time bringing prominence to other BLM planning priorities.

Charlie Yates made a motion to build on the newly drafted letter and put it to the SWRAC for approval—that motion was seconded. John Martin, a RAC member in Category 3, withdrew from any further discussions and because there would be no quorum for his category, the motion could not be put to vote. It was suggested that discussions be tabled on this agenda item and the meeting move on.

It was also suggested that meetings start at 8:00 a.m. to make better use of time, when a field trip occurs the day prior.

Agenda items suggested for the November 10 meeting are:

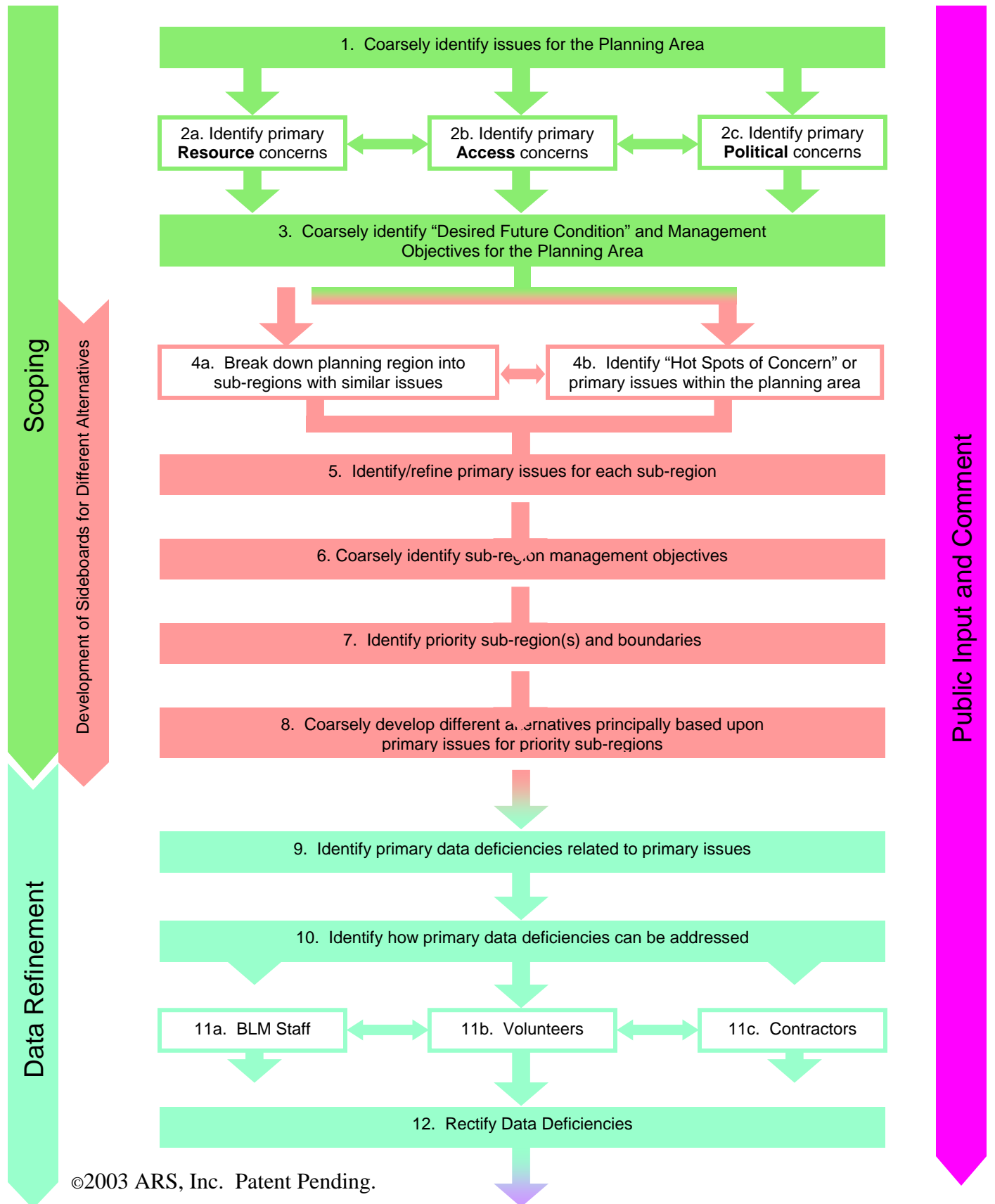
- Emerald Mountain Land Exchange
- Scheduling FY 2005 meetings

- Coal-bed methane assessment update
- LEO update
- Update on working with RAC subgroups and FACA requirements
- RAC Community Stewardship letter
- Status of implementing and monitoring BLM plans signed in the past 5 years

The meeting was adjourned at 5 p.m.

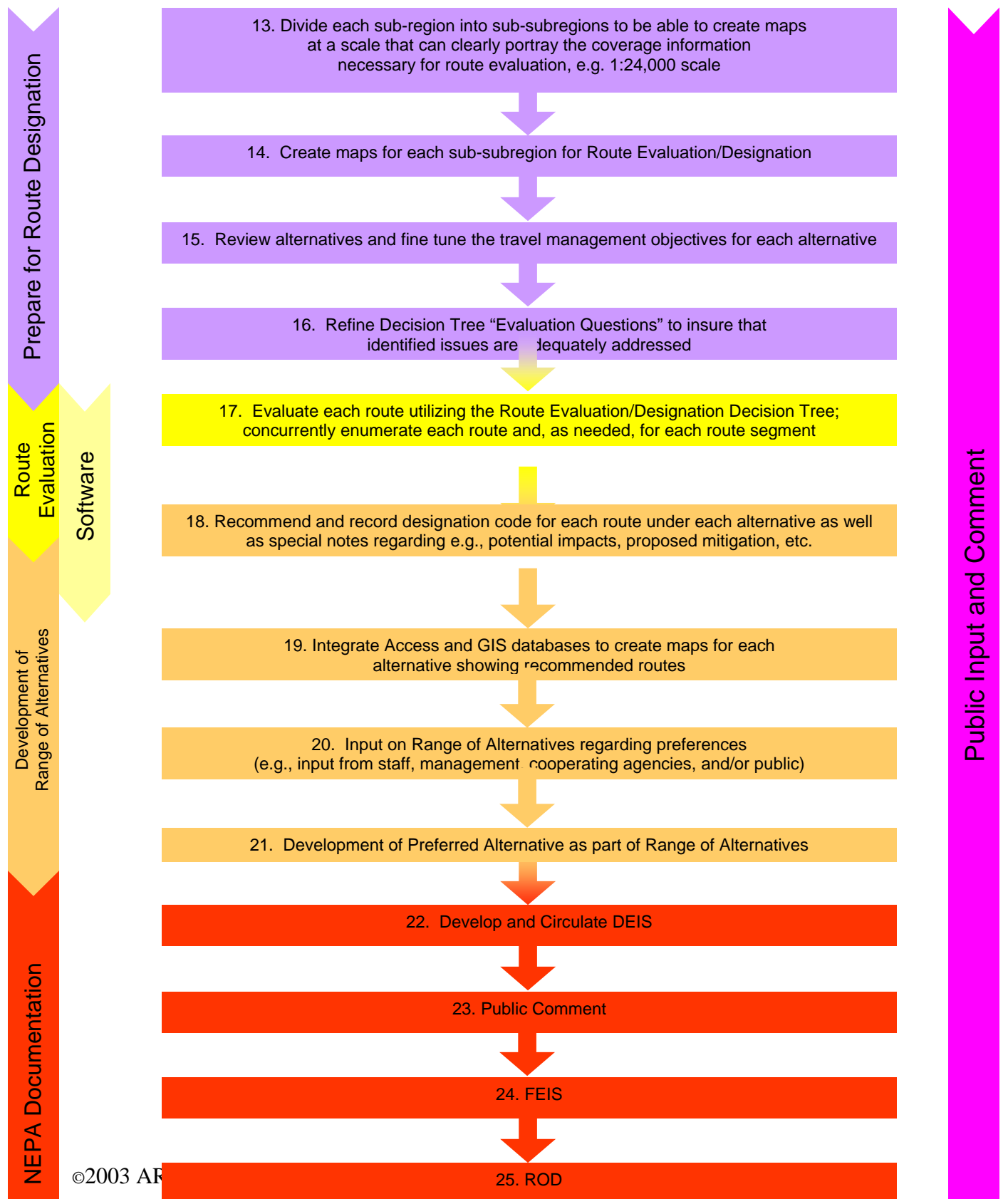
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING FLOWCHART

Utilizing Route Evaluation/Designation Decision Tree Process[®]



TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING FLOWCHART

Utilizing Route Evaluation/Designation Decision Tree Process[®]



Route Evaluation/Designation Decision Tree

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Patent Pending

Main Features Include:

1. Logical, standardized, balanced and repeatable approach to route designation.
2. Systematic questions to assess compliance with a variety of pertinent statutory requirements including:
 - Valid existing rights and other vested rights or permitted uses
 - Degree of potential impact or degradation to specially protected resources, such as species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), cultural, historic and scientific objects protected by the Historic Preservation and Antiquities Acts (e.g. Monument Proclamations, Section 106) and wilderness values as protected by the Wilderness Act.
 - Implementation of the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA) and its charge to balance the public's need/desire for access to Federal lands with resource protection through a philosophy of management for "multiple use". Such consideration includes recognizing the value of providing a range of recreational opportunities and treating those opportunities in accordance with FLPMA as a resource worthy of protection.
3. Systematic consideration of access opportunities and resource protection needs on both a narrowly focused route by route assessment, as well as a broad-based cumulative assessment of the total network's effect.
4. Systematic consideration of mitigation and/or limited designation as a means by which to ameliorate resource impacts. Designation options include a range from open to closed, and a number of intermediate actions as a means by which to balance access needs and resource protection.
5. Systematic recordation of data allowing for future retrieval and review/updating of decision information as needed (i.e. "decision pathways" are numerically coded).
6. Systematic ability to assess a route's final recommended designation status based upon the management goals of each individual alternative.

How does the Tree Work?

1. The region or management area in which the route is located is thoroughly evaluated. Resource protection, recreation and commercial access concerns pertinent to route designation are identified. The patterns of these identified uses and concerns, as well as their trends are also noted. Other related issues such as law enforcement, route maintenance and user conflicts are further identified.
2. The desired future condition and management goals of each proposed alternative are identified and reviewed.
3. Each route is systematically numbered. This both allows for tracking the designation process and enables the public to make comment on specific routes.
4. Each route is then systematically assessed by sequentially answering the questions in the Decision Tree. This is done for each alternative. Specifically, the questions are assessed and answered in the context of the regional concerns identified in step #1 and the management goals identified in step#2 for each of the alternatives.
5. The determination of a designation for each route under each alternative is dictated by addressing the management goals for that alternative.
6. The specific answers to each question for each route are recorded by the final coded answer.
7. Detailed information that may have been critical to the answer of any question(s) or in the determination of the final outcome is recorded as part of the individual route designation decision record.

Route Designations

Close
01

Close 01: A route that is recommended for permanent closure to all use. Physical closure includes restoring the travelway to the degree possible to blend with surrounding landscape, as well as installation of physical barriers and signing at the original departure point, if necessary.

Mitigate/
Limit
09

Mitigate/Limit 09: A route that is recommended for limited use by certain parties or entities with valid, vested, or implied rights of access, or to certain vehicle types, seasons of use, etc., following mitigation action(s) aimed at reducing/eliminating certain estimated impacts identified during the route designation process.

Limit
05

Limit 05: A route that is recommended for limited use by certain parties or entities with valid, vested, or implied rights of access, or to certain vehicle types, seasons of use, etc.

Mitigate/
Open
05

Mitigate/Open 05: A route that is recommended open for all uses, following mitigation action(s) aimed at reducing/eliminating certain estimated impacts identified during the route designation process.

Open
02

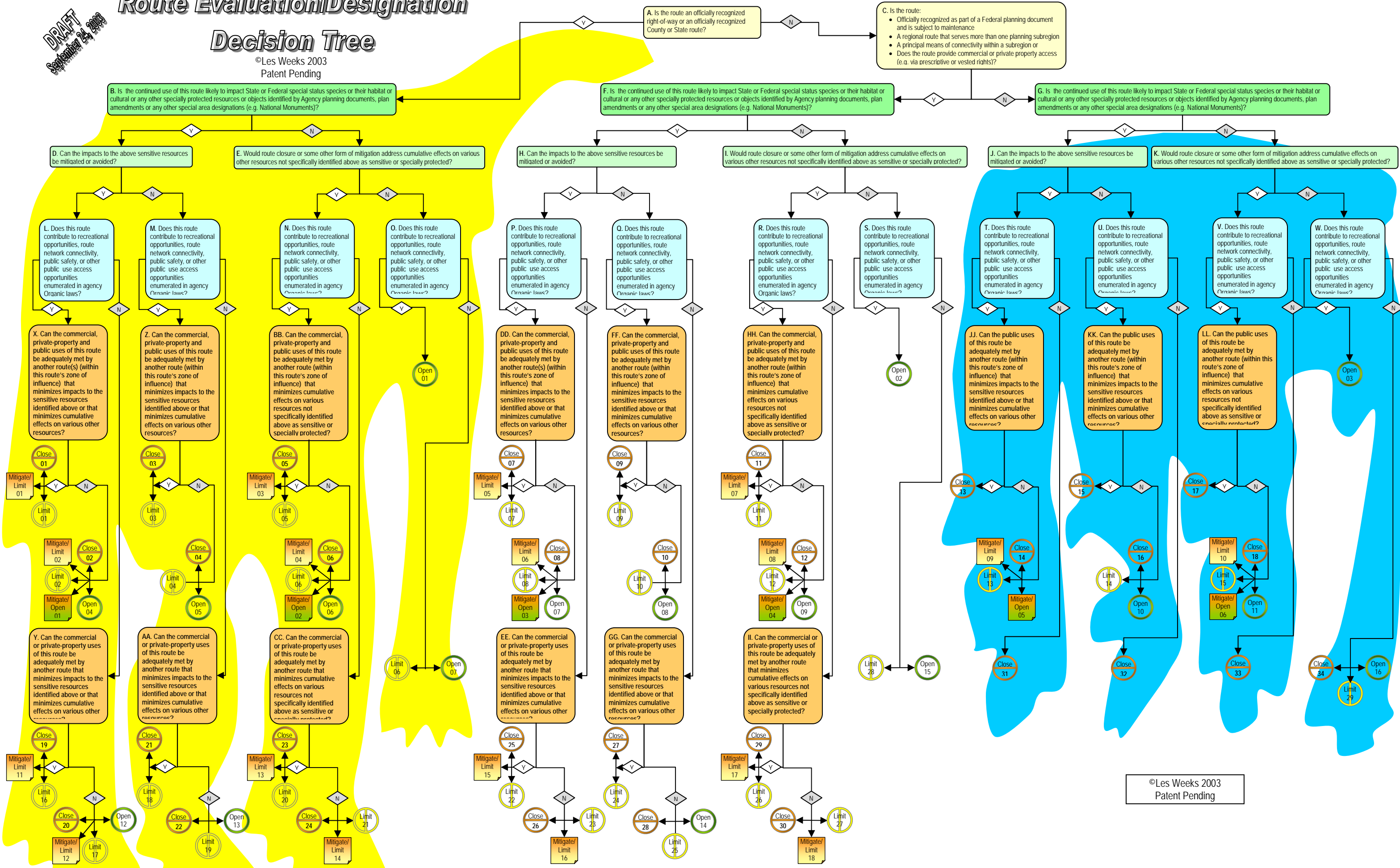
Open 02: A route that is recommended open for all uses.

DRAFT
September 24, 2003

Route Evaluation/Designation

Decision Tree

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Patent Pending



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Patent Pending

Federal Land Policy Management Act—Title 43 USC §1733

ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY

Sec. 303. [43 U.S.C. 1733] (a) The Secretary shall issue regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act with respect to the management, use, and protection of the public lands, including the property located thereon. Any person who knowingly and willfully violates any such regulation which is lawfully issued pursuant to this Act shall be fined no more than \$1,000 or imprisoned no more than twelve months, or both. Any person charged with a violation of such regulation may be tried and sentenced by any United States magistrate *judge* [P.L. 101-650, 1990] designated for that purpose by the court by which he was appointed, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions and limitations as provided for in section 3401 of title 18 of the United States Code.

(b) At the request of the Secretary, the Attorney General may institute a civil action in any United States district court for an injunction or other appropriate order to prevent any person from utilizing public lands in violation of regulations issued by the Secretary under this Act.

(c) (1) When the Secretary determines that assistance is necessary in enforcing Federal laws and regulations relating to the public lands or their resources he shall offer a contract to appropriate local officials having law enforcement authority within their respective jurisdictions with the view of achieving maximum feasible reliance upon local law enforcement officials in enforcing such laws and regulations. The Secretary shall negotiate on reasonable terms with such officials who have authority to enter into such contracts to enforce such Federal laws and regulations. In the performance of their duties under such contracts such officials and their agents are authorized to carry firearms; execute and serve any warrant or other process issued by a court or officer of competent jurisdiction; make arrests without warrant or process for a misdemeanor he has reasonable grounds to believe is being committed in his presence or view, or for a felony if he has reasonable grounds to believe that the person to be arrested has committed or is committing such felony; search without warrant or process any person, place, or conveyance according to any Federal law or rule of law; and seize without warrant or process any evidentiary item as provided by Federal law. The Secretary shall provide such law enforcement training as he deems necessary in order to carry out the contracted responsibilities. While exercising the powers and authorities provided by such contract pursuant to this section, such law enforcement officials and their agents shall have all the immunities of Federal law enforcement officials.

(2) The Secretary may authorize Federal personnel or appropriate local officials to carry out his law enforcement responsibilities with respect to the public lands and their resources.

Such designated personnel shall receive the training and have the responsibilities and authority provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(d) In connection with the administration and regulation of the use and occupancy of the public lands, the Secretary is authorized to cooperate with the regulatory and law enforcement officials of any State or political subdivision thereof in the enforcement of the laws or ordinances of such State or subdivision. Such cooperation may include reimbursement to a State or its subdivision for expenditures incurred by it in connection with activities which assist in the administration and regulation of use and occupancy of the public lands.

(e) Nothing in this section shall prevent the Secretary from promptly establishing a uniformed desert ranger force in the California Desert Conservation Area established pursuant to section 601 of this Act for the purpose of enforcing Federal laws and regulations relating to the public lands and resources managed by him in such area. The officers and members of such ranger force shall have the same responsibilities and authority as provided for in paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of this section.

(f) Nothing in this Act shall be construed as reducing or limiting the enforcement authority vested in the Secretary by any other statute.

(g) The use, occupancy, or development of any portion of the public lands contrary to any regulation of the Secretary or other responsible authority, or contrary to any order issued pursuant to any such regulation, is unlawful and prohibited.

Manual H-8410-1 - Visual Resource Inventory

V. Visual Resource Classes and Objectives.

A. Purposes of Visual Resource Classes. Visual resource classes are categories assigned to public lands which serves two purposes: (1) an inventory tool that portrays the relative value of the visual resources, and (2) a management tool that portrays the visual management objectives. There are four classes (I, II, III, and IV).

1. Visual Resource Inventory Classes. Visual resource inventory classes are assigned through the inventory process. Class I is assigned to those areas where a management decision has been made previously to maintain a natural landscape. This includes areas such as national wilderness areas, the wild section of national wild and scenic rivers, and other congressionally and administratively designated areas where decisions have been made to preserve a natural landscape. Classes II, III, and IV are assigned based on a combination of scenic quality, sensitivity level, and distance zones. This is accomplished by combining the 3 overlays for scenic quality, sensitivity levels, and distance zones and using the guidelines shown in Illustration 11 to assign the proper class. The end product is a visual resource inventory class overlay as shown in Illustration 12. Inventory classes are informational in nature and provide the basis for considering visual values in the RMP process. They do not establish management direction and should not be used as a basis for constraining or limiting surface disturbing activities.

2. Visual Resource Management Classes. Visual resource management classes are assigned through RMP's. The assignment of visual management classes is ultimately based on the management decisions made in RMP's. However, visual values must be considered throughout the RMP process. All actions proposed during the RMP process that would result in surface disturbances must consider the importance of the visual values and the impacts the project may have on these values. Management decisions in the RMP must reflect the value of visual resources. In fact, the value of the visual resource may be the driving force for some management decisions. For example, highly scenic areas which need special management attention may be designated as scenic Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and classified as VRM Class I based on the importance of the visual values. A map is developed in each RMP showing the approved visual resource management classes.

B. Objectives for Visual Resource Classes.

1. Class I Objective. The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

2. Class II Objective. The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of

form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

3. Class III Objective. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

4. Class IV Objectives. The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

C. Rehabilitation Areas. Areas in need of rehabilitation from a visual standpoint should be flagged during the inventory process. The level of rehabilitation will be determined through the RMP process by assigning the VRM class approved for that particular area.

D. Interim VRM Classes and Objectives. Interim visual management classes are established where a project is proposed and there are no RMP approved VRM objectives. These classes are developed using the guidelines in Section I to V and must conform with the land-use allocations set forth in the RMP which covers the project area. The establishment of interim VRM classes will not require a RMP amendment, unless the project that is driving the evaluation requires one.

Monitoring

The BLM will use the visual contrast rating system, described in BLM Manual 8400, where appropriate, when assessing proposals for projects on public lands or private lands with federal sub-surface minerals. Potential projects will be assessed for changes in existing form, line, color, and texture to determine their compatibility and contrast with the existing VRM class. Procedures and degrees of allowable contrast are discussed in Bureau Manual 8423. The BLM will periodically assess and, as needed, revise and implement measures of visual mitigation. Rehabilitation activities conducted for surface disturbing activities will also be assessed periodically.



BLM Resource Advisory Councils

Partners Across The West

July 20, 2004

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary of the Interior
18th and C Streets, N.W.
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Norton,

RAC Members

Northwest RAC

Geoff Blakeslee, Chairman
David Bailey
David Cesark
Jeff Comstock
Kenneth Currey
T. Wright Dickinson
Wade Haerle
Kathy Hall
Jon Hill
Patrick Kennedy
Charles Kerr
John Martin
Larry McCown
Forrest Nelson
Charles Yates

Southwest RAC

David Ubell, Chairman
Lon Abadie
Don Cardin
Mallory Dimmitt
John Field
Tony Gurzick
Ann McCoy Harold
Howard Heath
Art Goodtimes
Andy Gulliford
Nik Kendziorski
Andrea Robinsong
Alan Staehle
Kathy Welt
Kelly Wilson

The Dominguez and Escalante Canyons in Western Colorado, remote and dramatic tributaries of the Gunnison River, provide a scenic backdrop and favorite destination for people throughout the Southwest. The Colorado Northwest and Southwest Resource Advisory Councils believe the Dominguez and Escalante Canyons deserve special attention by the Bureau of Land Management.

This 238,000-acre area contains outstanding red rock canyons, perennial streams, a large herd of Desert Bighorn Sheep, prehistoric rock art, historic pioneer cabins and settlements, as well as incredible recreational opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, 4-wheeling, boating and many other types of recreation. The Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Study Area enjoys local support for official designation, and the newly commissioned Old Spanish Trail winds its way through the area.

The BLM has a tremendous opportunity to be proactive about this area's future management. Population growth on Colorado's Western Slope has been dramatic, especially in Grand Junction and Montrose, two burgeoning urban centers less than 30 minutes from this spectacular area. Impacts and the public's expectations for BLM's management of this area are sure to increase.

We believe that the BLM's Grand Junction and Uncomphagre Field Offices should undertake a Community Stewardship Plan, engaging the surrounding communities in managing these lands for future generations. Western Colorado RACs have a long history of working with local BLM Field Managers to truly build your 4-C's concept from the ground up, as evidenced by the success of the Colorado Canyons and Gunnison Gorge NCAs. The process we envision would build upon these successes by actively engaging both RACs in the planning process, providing input guidance, and sanctioning this community-based planning effort.

Secretary of the Interior
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Madame Secretary, we ask for your support and encouragement to the BLM Director and Colorado State Director to begin this critical planning process for the Dominguez and Escalante Canyons Community Stewardship Plan.

Sincerely,

Geoff Blakeslee
Chair
Northwest RAC

Dave Ubell
Chair
Southwest RAC

Distribution

Kathleen Clarke, BLM Director
Ron Wenker, Colorado State Director

RESOLUTION #4-04

Resolution of the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council summarizing its conclusions and recommendations regarding implementation of a consistent statewide strategy for long-term treatment and containment of non-native invasive plant species on all lands managed by BLM in Colorado.

Whereas in 2001 the Bureau of Land Management conducted a National Validation and Evaluation Report assessing the Colorado Invasive and Noxious Weed Program including recommendations for opportunities to improve the noxious weed program in Colorado; and

Whereas the results of a Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council informal weed management questionnaire of all BLM field offices in Northwest Colorado indicated great inconsistencies among field offices for weed control budgets, staffing, education and awareness programs, weed inventories and mapping, strategic planning for weed management and in-house staff with BLM certification for weed control; and

Whereas The Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management have agreed to participate as partners in collaborative efforts designed to carry out specific actions to implement Colorado's Strategic Plan to stop the spread of noxious weeds and to achieve its objectives;

Now therefore be it resolved by the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council that its conclusions and recommendations regarding implementation of a consistent statewide strategy for long-term treatment and containment of non-native invasive plant species on all lands managed by BLM-Colorado be described and depicted as follows:

1. BLM should use primarily BLM personnel and partners for weed spraying operations. We feel that BLM loses the continuity, control, and quality of work by using only contractors for the purpose of weed control.
2. Impacts of infestation by recreational users of public lands must be addressed in RMP's or specific use permits. We feel that permitted users, such as grazers, Oil/Gas and Mining interests are regulated for responsible weed control practices, while recreational users have not traditionally been involved in an education or implementation strategy statewide.
3. Initiate a public education program to encourage public land users to identify and report noxious weed infestations to BLM staff.
4. State BLM Weed Coordinator will administer statewide efforts to align resource area weed management programs with Colorado's Strategic Plan to stop the spread of noxious weeds. Specifically, BLM will:

- A. Actively participate in meetings to provide input for statewide noxious weed inventory and mapping.
 - B. Insure that each management area is funded to develop and consistently implement a noxious weed management plan that is aligned with the State Strategic Plan.
5. BLM RACs will maintain an invasive species sub-committee to:
- A. Monitor continued BLM progress toward statewide compliance with Colorado's Strategic Plan.
 - B. Solicit and provide feedback on effectiveness of BLM statewide weed control efforts.
 - C. Advocate for consistent financial support for BLM's statewide weed control efforts, which would be tied to clear objectives for weed control and or eradication.
6. State weed coordinator for BLM will provide annual progress updates to all three statewide RACs.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 12th day of August, 2004.

Received by Designated Federal

Officer, John E. Husband

Geoff Blakeslee, Chair, Northwest
Colorado
Resource Advisory Council