

BLM SOUTHWEST DISTRICT Field Manager Reports



FEBRUARY 2024



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Field Manager Report

February 2024

Gunnison Field Office (GFO)

Note: Topics below are labeled either “**Status Update**” or “**New Update**” to help identify items that have changed from the previous report.

Gunnison’s New Field Office Location - Update

On March 17, 2023, The Gunnison Field Office completed its move into new quarters located just east of the City of Gunnison in the new “Gunnison Rising” development. The new facility is over nine years in the making after the previous office was consumed in an arson-caused fire in 2013.

Final preparations are underway for the addition of a hazardous materials storage unit where the field office can house its herbicides, as well as fuels, paints, solvents, etc., needed for the maintenance of GFO amenities.



Natural and Cultural Resources

Domestic Sheep Grazing EIS Proposed Decisions - Status Update

On August 27, 2021, the BLM Southwest District Office released two proposed decisions for the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Domestic Sheep Grazing Permit Renewals. Both decisions were protested by multiple groups and individuals for a variety of reasons. The project area is located in Gunnison, Hinsdale, and Ouray counties and includes nine grazing allotments on 65,710 acres of public land.

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the Southwest Resource Advisory Council (RAC) voted on September 8, 2022 to create a subcommittee to analyze domestic sheep grazing in bighorn sheep habitat on BLM-managed high alpine allotments outside of Silverton, Colorado. The Sheep Grazing Subcommittee held six public meetings at the Uncompahgre Field Office from March through August 2023, and presented their recommendations to BLM on October 11, 2024. Staff are considering those recommendations in light of the protests received and working with the new SWD planner, Katerina Hardegen, to identify a path forward.

North Powderhorn Fuels Reduction Project - Status Update

GFO is currently evaluating a programmatic hazardous fuels reduction project on public lands managed by the BLM near Powderhorn, CO. The total project area consists of 90,725 acres and includes 53,877 acres within the Powderhorn Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area (WSA). GFO would implement the project over 15 years, with a total treatment target of 20,000 acres, targeting bark beetle outbreaks, including numerous portions of the project area suffering 100% spruce mortality. Site-specific NEPA would follow for individual projects within the project area.

The North Powderhorn project planning effort is nearing completion. The GFO wildlife biologist has started formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for Canada lynx in the project area. On September 8, the project was presented to USFWS. The expected timeline for completing the Biological Assessment and receiving the Biological Order from USFWS is spring 2024.

Gunnison Weeds Treatment Project - Status Update

GFO is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to consider using integrated noxious and invasive plant management within the Gunnison Resource Area to reduce adverse impacts associated with increases in noxious and invasive plants. The EA will tier to the "Biological Assessment for Vegetation Treatments Using Aminopyralid, Fluroxypr, Rimsulfuron on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement" (PEIS)(BLM 2015), which analyzed the impacts of using Aminopyralid, Fluroxypr, Rimsulfuron herbicides (chemical control methods) to treat terrestrial noxious and invasive plants on public lands.

The GFO Weeds EA is nearing completion. The BLM has started consultation with the USFWS on the Biological Assessment (BA) for Gunnison sage grouse. By February 2024, we estimate we will have the letter of concurrence from the USFWS, adding additional herbicides in critical Gunnison sage grouse habitat.

The BLM completed a [final programmatic environmental impact statement](#) analyzing seven herbicide active ingredients that could be used for vegetation treatments to control noxious weeds and invasive species on America's public lands. The [Notice of Availability](#) was published in the *Federal Register* on Friday, Dec. 29, 2023. The BLM anticipates releasing a Record of Decision in January 2024. This will add flexibility and additional effectiveness in BLM's vegetation treatment program to combat the rapid expansion of noxious and invasive weeds.

Lake San Cristobal Fuels EA - New Update

The performance period for this contract EA was recently extended to March 2024. The BLM ID Team is currently working with the contractor, EMPSi, to refine treatment areas, alternatives, and issues for analysis. The GFO wildlife biologist, members of the fuels staff, and students from WCU are currently conducting snowshoe hare studies.

This past winter, BLM recreation and fuels staff members spent field time in the project area to determine the feasibility of incorporating backcountry ski runs as potential fuels treatments. The areas identified for joint fuels-recreation treatments are viable for backcountry skiing. The BLM received the drafts of chapters 1, 2 and 3 and recently completed internal reviews. The GFO is scheduled to have the Lake San Cristobal EA completed by March 2024.

Recreation

Alpine Loop - Status Update

GFO saw significant increases in visitor use on the Alpine Loop in the past year, particularly in July and August. Since 2018, there has been over 20% increase in visitation, with close to 400,000 people visiting the Alpine Loop annually. This has led to parking congestion at popular trailheads and stress on existing campsites and facilities. GFO is working closely with Hinsdale and San Juan counties to address these issues. We have financial agreements in place with both counties to provide law enforcement support and we piloted a wag-bag station at American Basin.

2024 will see continued work toward improving and designating dispersed campsites, modernizing the Mill Creek Campground, adding additional toilets, working with partner groups on outreach and education, and working with the counties to supplement and define parking areas. The BLM will install signage and metal fire rings at approximately 250 dispersed campsites along the Alpine Loop as described in the 2010 RAMP. GFO is working with partners to adopt and improve an existing route from the Mill Creek campground to access Sunshine Peak, a 14'er on BLM-managed lands in Hinsdale County.

The BLM is also evaluating the acquisition of up to 30 patented mining claims in Hinsdale County. These private lands are adjacent to, or within the boundaries of wilderness study areas and these acquisitions would improve access to public lands and reduce the potential for development in and about our treasured lands on the Alpine Loop.

Fee Campgrounds - Status Update

Now that the necessary consultation and analysis has been completed, GFO plans to make all campsites in the Oh-Be-Joyful Campground and a percentage of the Mill Creek campsites reservable

through Recreation.gov. GFO analyzed existing campground use fees in the Gunnison area for consistency with criteria found in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. This analysis led to the preparation of a business plan recommending a fee adjustment. The business plan was presented at the Southwest RAC meeting in Gunnison on October 11, 2023. The GFO expects the changes will be rolled out before the spring thaw.

Lands and Minerals

Mineral Point Water Right Purchase - Status Update

The purpose of the acquisition of the Mineral Point Ditch is to return the historically diverted water to Burrows Creek to maintain instream flows on Burrows Creek and the upper Animas River. The BLM's acquisition of the property rights associated with Mineral Point Ditch would benefit Burrows Creek by maintaining water supplies for wetlands adjacent to Burrows Creek, diluting heavy metals in Burrows Creek, and facilitating successful implementation of remediation actions taken by BLM's Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program within the Burrows Creek watershed. The appraisal has been completed and offers to the two holders have been accepted. Work in conjunction with partners will begin soon to monitor the effects on the environment from the reintroduction of this water.

Bonita Peak Mining District - Status Update

The Bonita Peak Mining District (BPMD) consists of historic mines and mining-related sources where ongoing releases of metal-laden water and sediments are occurring within the Mineral Creek, Cement Creek, and Upper Animas River drainages in San Juan County, Colorado. Many of these historic mines within BPMD are located on public lands managed by the BLM, and 80% of the watershed is managed by the BLM.

The BLM, USFS, and EPA signed a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) in July 2022 clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency. The goal of the MOU is improved cooperation between the agencies with respect to obligations of the EPA under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and BLM obligations under NEPA. The EPA is the lead agency for response actions on the private sites and the BLM is the lead for response actions on BLM-managed public lands.

Cleanup actions within the mining district are ongoing by multiple agencies. BLM priority actions continue to focus on remediation, characterization of sites for remedy development, and operations and maintenance throughout BPMD. The majority of these sites are in the Cement Creek drainage and the Upper Animas River near its headwaters. The BLM completed work on the Wynona and the Joe and John mine sites this summer. Work on the Lark Mine in Prospect Gulch is ongoing and will likely need to be completed in the 2024 field season.

EPA is working to install three monitoring wells in the Sunnyside Gold mine workings in the Lake Emma area. Each of the three wells will target narrow mine workings approximately 800 to 1,000 feet below the ground surface. This drilling effort is estimated to take all summer and into the fall. As part of the mobilization, EPA will need to temporarily close County Road 25 while the drill rig is driven up to Lake Emma.

These characterization activities are important to EPA's understanding of water quality and movement of groundwater within the workings and throughout the BPMD groundwater system. Specifically, they will help determine hydraulic gradient, flow direction, potential surface expression of the groundwater. The EPA is also constructing a site-wide repository located on top of the large historic tailings piles north of the town of Silverton. They plan to complete work by the end of the 2024 field season and use the repository to store solid waste material derived from the water treatment plant.

Proposed Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Conveyance for Kendall Mountain Recreation Area - Status Update

The Town of Silverton applied to the BLM to acquire public lands managed as part of the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area, under authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926 (44 Stat. 741), as amended and supplemented (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq) (R&PP Act). The purpose of the R&PP Act is to authorize acquisition or use of public lands by States, counties, municipalities, or nonprofit organizations for recreational or other public purposes.

The BLM portion of the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area, located on public lands just east of Silverton, has been operated as a community ski area and recreation area under a BLM R&PP lease since 2001. The Kendall Mountain Recreation Area includes the BLM land and the adjacent town-owned Kendall Mountain Placer and Lackawanna Placer. In March 2001, the BLM classified and withdrew the subject public lands for lease and conveyance under the R&PP Act. The purpose of the classification and application for R&PP lease and potential conveyance was to allow construction and operation of the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area.

GFO accepted and approved a Plan of Development from the Town of Silverton in summer 2020. The proposed action is to convey approximately 93 acres of public lands to the Town of Silverton.

Currently, the BLM is awaiting concurrence on potential impacts to Canada lynx habitat, and expects this to be received before Spring 2024. Once that is received and snow has melted off, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment will be completed. Because an Environmental Site Assessment report is only good for six months before an update is required, timing is essential.



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Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM)

Note: Topics below are labeled either “**Status Update**” or “**New Update**” to help identify items that have changed from the previous report.

Planning

Transportation and Access Plan (TAP2) - Status Update

The second TAP involves BLM lands located in Dolores, San Miguel, and Montrose counties. The RMP maintenance map, which established all inventoried routes for the planning area, was published on December 5, 2023. Using this inventory as the baseline for designations, the BLM interdisciplinary team (IDT) are starting the route-by-route review, and development of alternatives, this month (January 2023). Our target is to share the plan with the public in the fall of 2024. Scoping, with public meetings, will be planned to coincide with the issuance of the preliminary analysis.

Fuels and Timber

West Rim Timber Sale - Status Update

To keep ponderosa pine forests healthy, the BLM has completed a contract on 484 acres in the East Pines area, as well as 178 acres of thinning in the North Pines area. Piles from the logging sale have been burned and to date 375 acres of piles have been burned. The BLM will complete an additional 110 acres of skidding on these previously thinned areas.

Dawson

Additional units in the Dawson project were designed by Colorado State University and University of California Berkeley in conjunction with the BLM. The overarching goal is to create more research and literature on the pinyon and juniper vegetation type. Implementation of the prescription is mostly complete and the BLM is now burning piles.

Yellow Jacket Noxious Tree/Brush Removal - Status Update

The BLM completed a cut, pile, and spray of 20 acres of tamarisk and Russian olive along Yellow Jacket Creek. The piles will be burned this winter or next.

Dawson Draw Prescribed Fire - Status Update

Dawson prescribed fire units 1-3 were burned and seeded last fall totaling 912 acres. Additional units have been developed in the project area and prep and burning may start this year for 989 acres.

West Rim Prescribed Fire - Status Update

992 acres were accomplished in FY23. We are planning on burning up to 1,594 acres in FY24.

Durango Area Hazardous Fuels Projects (signed January 2021)

This project reduces hazards associated with vegetation near and around the Durango area and addresses a long-term need to manage vegetation adjacent to critical infrastructure, which includes reducing tree and shrub densities and fuel loads and protecting ecosystem heterogeneity. The BLM is implementing various treatments, including prescribed fire, manual tree removal/felling, pile burning, understory burning, and vegetative mastication.

Grassy Mountain - New Update

In Durango most of our efforts will focus on the Grassy Mountain Project for 411 acres on BLM lands in conjunction with the National Forest Foundation, Forest Service, and Colorado State Forest Service.

Animas City Mountain - Status Update

As part of the Durango Area Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, the BLM completed 495 acres of broadcast burning.

Edgemont Highlands

The BLM completed 40 acres of tree removal work at Edgemont Highlands near Durango in September. Piles generated from this work were burned in early January 2024.

Grandview - Status Update

The BLM will be looking to burn 247 acres of piles this winter. Due to unfavorable fire effects, only 30 acres were burned in early January. Attempts will be made when fuels are drier.

Sailing Hawks, Forest Lakes (Grassy Mountain), and Skyline areas

Over the next two years, the BLM will be working to complete follow-up retreatment actions on 5,638 previously treated acres and initiate treatment actions on 2,710 acres in ponderosa forest.

Wildlife

Durango Area Winter Wildlife Closures

The BLM successfully completed the installation of permanent gates at popular recreation access points within the winter wildlife closures areas around Durango. This action will help bolster enforceability of and conformance with annual winter wildlife closures in this popular recreation area. In winter 2022-2023, 231 groups and 318 individuals were caught on game cameras violating the seasonal closures for Animas City Mountain. In addition, there were 107 groups and 148 people on game cameras in the Grandview Ridge area. There were also multiple pictures of off-leash dogs chasing deer.



In summer 2023, TRFO added fencing around Sale Barn and Big Canyon trailheads to improve compliance with winter wildlife closures. The BLM also plans to install fencing between two gates on Animas City Mountain to keep individuals from walking around closure gates and improve compliance.



Summit Point Habitat Improvement Project

This project is in the planning phase. Data is being collected in 2023, with a draft EA planned for release in fall 2023. The Summit Point area has been surveyed for cultural resources, woodland raptors, and pinyon jays. The project is being designed to improve habitat for mule deer and pinyon jays. Currently, no pinyon jays have been documented to use the area. If successful, this project will provide insights into managing fuels to improve habitat for pinyon jays.

CANM Big Game Habitat Management

In 2019, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) updated big game critical winter range mapping, adding 100,000+ acres of critical winter range to CANM. The BLM is currently working to determine how to manage these areas. Funding has been requested to allow CANM to monitor wildlife and recreation use in critical winter range and identify possible actions to effectively manage the area with the intent of balancing the needs of recreation and wildlife. An RMP amendment process is presently underway to incorporate these mapping updates.

Unit	FY 19 Acres	CPW Update Acres	Increase in Acres
TRFO	181,984	230,985	49,001
CANM	0	100,846	100,846

Inventory/Monitoring Projects

TRFO, in coordination with the Fuels program, put out contracts to inventory almost 13,000 acres of habitat for forest-dwelling raptors. This would enable TRFO to improve efficiency in implementing fuels reduction projects.

The longnose leopard lizard is a BLM sensitive species and presently occupies habitat in CANM. Current monitoring efforts include refining a lizard drift fence to facilitate recording the presence and habitat of these unique desert reptiles. AIM data was collected at all sites to quantify soil and vegetation data near the trap locations. An increase in captures per day from 2021 to 2022 at both McElmo and Risley was recorded. McElmo 1 had a 92% increase and McElmo 2 had a 45% increase. Risley 1 increased by 80% from 2021 to 2022. Cannonball Mesa 1 showed a decline in 2022 of 42% and 49% at Cannonball Mesa 2. The increase in species detected is most likely due to modified camera trap design. The new design appears to increase the number of detections and image quality.



Summit Point Habitat Restoration Project

The TRFO Wildlife Program is coordinating with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on a 1,200-acre habitat improvement project for Pinyon Jays and big game. The project aims to improve habitat for Pinyon Jays using various treatment methods for thinning pinyon and juniper to provide multiple age classes.

The *Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Program* will be wrapping up a multi-year Monitoring Study Design, completing over 221 study plots. A final 53 plots will be completed this year. In winter 2023, the BLM will summarize the data and report vegetation summaries for Grassland, Mixed Conifer, Mixed Mountain Shrub, Pinyon Juniper Woodland, Ponderosa Pine, Riparian, Sagebrush Steppe, Salt Desert, and Sage-grouse habitat.

Range and Weeds Management

General Permit Administration

TRFO Range staff have completed all 2023 range permit renewals. The BLM continues to pursue and complete the land health and cultural surveys required to fully process grazing permits presently set to expire in 2024.

Weeds

The local BLM weeds crew directly treats approximately 300 acres of BLM-managed lands in TRFO and CANM annually. These acres are treated strategically to benefit functioning ecosystems and prevent new outbreaks from spreading, particularly in critical and potential habitat for Gunnison sage-grouse.

Spring Creek Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA)

The current wild horse population is 64, which is within the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the HMA. In 2023, PZP (porcine zona pellucida vaccine) contraceptive efforts focused on retreating 18 mares that were not vaccinated last season.

Gypsum Valley Grazing Decision (TRFO)

The final grazing decision was signed in August 2021 and appealed shortly thereafter by Western Watersheds Project. A petition to stay the decision was denied and the new permit was issued. The appeal is presently before the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

Recreation

TAP1 Implementation Actions

TRFO continues to implement the TAP1 decision as funding and other opportunities present. An unplanned late season funding opportunity in the final days of FY22 enabled TRFO to inject much-needed funding into TAP1 area trailheads and parking areas. As a result in FY23, three parking areas were developed, two at the Aqueduct trail system and one at Turtle Lake Bouldering area. The Southwest Conservation Corps performed trail construction on the Lupine Trail in the East Animas area, bringing the Durango portion of TAP1 closer to completion. In a continued effort to increase uniform visual presence for visitors at public lands and access points kiosks and portal signs were

also installed. Wayfinding kiosks were also installed at the Aqueduct and on East Animas Mountain in Durango. Position vacancies in Recreation were filled in FY22 and FY23 through recreation staff promotions and recruitment within the BLM. Newly promoted and hired staff are being brought up to speed on TAP1 implementation and starting to work on TAP2.

Aqueduct Trail Project

Construction on all the single-track trails within the Aqueduct Parcel has been completed. The final singletrack trail was completed in spring/summer 2023. Construction on this trail network restarted in 2022 with the lifting of the seasonal wildlife closure on May 1. Mancos-area trail construction has been an entirely volunteer effort between the Mancos Trail Group and Southwest Colorado Cycling Association. Wayfinding signs and updated maps have been finalized and installed. Construction of parking areas on County Road 39 is also being completed.

Phil's World Travel Management Cultural Mitigation

As part of our effort to protect cultural resources at Phil's World, TRFO executed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to resolve adverse effects caused by portions of the motorized trail network in the original portion of the Phil's World trail system. A future EA will address trail closures and reroutes stipulated in the MOA to enhance the preservation of cultural resources in this area.

Durango Area Trails Alliance (DATA)

TRFO continues to participate in an inter-governmental working group with the City of Durango, La Plata County, CPW, and the San Juan National Forest. The purpose of the group is to balance enhanced recreational opportunities with improved coordinated wildlife habitat management around Durango, primarily through coordinated inter-agency trail management. In 2021, DATA was successfully awarded a \$60k trail maintenance grant and pursued additional grant funding options to improve resource management and recreation user experience across land ownership boundaries. In 2022, this collaboration continued in the form of trail maintenance and trail user information campaigns. In spring 2023, trail maintenance and stabilization work was conducted by the Southwest Conservation Corps on the East Animas climbing access trail. The SCC also conducted trail construction on the undeveloped Lupine Trail on Animas City Mountain this summer.

Chutes and Ladders Dispersed Recreation Area

In 2022, TRFO staff took the SWRAC on a field trip of the Chutes and Ladders dispersed recreation area to discuss issues with neighbors in the area. The neighbors have appealed the Travel Analysis Planning decision that allows for camping and development of more formal amenities. The appeal is still unresolved and there is no estimate of when resolution might occur. TRFO planned on initiating an EA during the appeal to evaluate a more formal campground opportunity, but due to staffing shortages, the effort has yet to be started.

Cultural Resources

Uravan Mineral Belt Interpretation Loop

The TRFO archaeologist is working on route designation of an existing driving loop, accompanied by

interpretive materials at select locations, that would be known as the Yellowcake Trail. The intent of the historic interpretive loop would be to preserve and share the history of uranium mining around Radium and Wedding Bell Mountains.

National Register Nominations

The Burro Mine draft national register nomination is expected to be completed by March 1st 2024 and is anticipated to be officially listed by summer 2025.

Travel Planning and Implementation PA

In this BLM multi-office agreement, TRFO will continue to systematically complete cultural resource inventory of travel routes in the TAP2 planning area, and work towards revisitation of 183 historic properties with travel routes in their boundary and assess those sites for travel-related effects.

Minerals (Fluid)

Paradox Resources- Status Update

TRFO has been working in conjunction with the BLM Colorado State Office, Utah State Office, and Office of Natural Resource Revenue (ONRR) on a long-running compliance issue regarding royalty payment from federal units existing in both Colorado and Utah. Shut-in requests were received from ONRR in January, and the orders were translated into Incidents of Non-Compliance (INCs) and issued to Paradox in early March. 42 wells within the Andy's Mesa Unit (San Miguel County, Colorado) were issued and executed, with potential civil penalties in excess of \$38,000,000.00 to begin on June 1, 2023.

In May 2023, Paradox filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and is currently working with BLM solicitors, bankruptcy courts, and ONRR solicitors on a resolution that may or may not result in a lifting of the shut-in order. BLM Colorado submitted a proof of claim in October for \$157,916,000 for remediation and reclamation of all of Paradox and Four Corner's assets and federal interests.

On November 7, 2023, the bankruptcy court approved a proposed sale of all of Paradox and Four Corner's assets, including its federal interests. As part of the proposed plan of sale, GNG Partners agreed to pay all of the outstanding royalties and rentals to ONRR quarterly over 5 years. This comes to approximately 3 million dollars. The payment plan is backloaded with larger payments due in 2025. Typically, this is something that DOI would object to, but a decision was made by Interior leadership to not object to the sale based on the payment plan.

Leadership determined that allowing the sale to move forward with a payment plan was in the best interest of the United States because (1) the likelihood of recovery of past due rents and royalties was more likely with the new buyer than if this case converted to Chapter 7, and (2) the substantial P&A liability would transfer to GNG Partners and not come back to the United States. As long as the bankrupt debtors and any third parties (GNG) that are parties to the settlement agreement are in compliance with the settlement agreement's terms for payment of past due amounts, and are in compliance with the current monetary obligations under the leases, the lease accounts can be considered to be "in good standing" from a monetary standpoint. The BLM still has the opportunity to review the leases and decide to approve the record title assignment and/or operating rights.

Oil and Gas Development Projects - Status Update

Fluid mineral development recently has focused on tribal interests, with nearly 100% of current activity within the TRFO taking place on Southern Ute Indian Reservation surface in the northern portion of the San Juan Basin, targeting primarily Mancos Shale methane gas.

Summary of FY23 Approvals – New Notice

Operator	APD/Facility	Disposition	Date of Disposition
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE/705H	10/16/2023	APPROVED
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE/703H	10/16/2023	APPROVED
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE/701H	10/16/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/8H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/7H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/6H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/5H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/4H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/3H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/2H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
ENDURING RESOURCES LLC	SOUTHERN UTE 3309/1H	8/21/2023	APPROVED
SIMCOE LLC	SOUTHERN UTE U/3	6/7/2023	APPROVED
SIMCOE LLC	SOUTHERN UTE U/2	6/7/2023	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	NORTH CARRACAS 32-5/14E-4	3/14/2023	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	NORTH CARRACAS 32-5/14E-3	3/14/2023	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	NORTH CARRACAS 32-5/14E-2	3/14/2023	APPROVED
KINDER MORGAN CO2 COMPANY LLC	CB/4	2/22/2023	APPROVED
GUNNISON ENERGY LLC	IPU LOWER 1291/#13-24 H4	9/28/2023	APPROVED
GUNNISON ENERGY LLC	IPU LOWER 1291/#13-24 H3	9/28/2023	APPROVED
MARALEX RESOURCES INCORPORATED	MOLLIE CORYNNE 33-7-2/3C	5/5/2023	APPROVED
KINDER MORGAN CO2 COMPANY LLC	RC/4	10/26/2022	WITHDRAWN
KINDER MORGAN CO2 COMPANY LLC	RC/3	10/26/2022	WITHDRAWN

Inspection and Enforcement

Planned Inspections for FY 24

PET/PAT Workload:

Drilling: 15 (Federal- 5; Indian- 10)

Plugging: 36 (Federal- 16; Indian- 20)

Production Inspection: 314 (Federal- 6 high, 65 low; Indian- 12 high, 231 low)

Idle: 52 (Federal-13, 5 extra; Indian-34 high, 0 extra)

Workover: 100 (Federal- 0; Indian- 60 high, 40 low)

Oversight for PI: 7 (Federal- 2; Indian- 5)

Records Verification: 232 (Federal- 21 high, 70 extra; Indian- 71 high, 70 extra)

Oversight for RA/RV: 7 (Federal- 3; Indian- 4)

Surface Workload:

Environmental Surface: 255 (Federal- 125; Indian- 130)

Environmental Monitoring: 98 (Federal- 25; Indian- 68)

Coordination - New Notice

TRFO held quarterly meetings with the Southern Ute Tribe, as well as the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, to ensure our relationships and communication pathways remain open and collaborative. Quarterly meetings were also held with Kinder Morgan, which is our largest federal fluid mineral producer actively pursuing APDs.

Coordination meetings were also held with the Montezuma, Dolores, LaPlata, and San Miguel Boards of County Commissioners.

NSJB Stakeholder Meetings

TRFO is once again participating in the Northern San Juan Basin Stakeholder meetings organized by the San Juan National Forest (SJNF). These meetings serve as coordination on fluid mineral issues between the BLM, Columbine Ranger District of the SJNF, ECMC, and LaPlata and Archuleta counties, as well as representatives from local industry groups.

Proposed Methane Waste Prevention and Royalty Loss Rule Consultation- Update

In April and May of 2023, TRFO in conjunction with the BLM CO State Office and Headquarters held meetings regarding comments received from the Southern Ute Tribe on the proposed rulemaking. Substantive conversations were held and continued collaboration and consultation has taken place throughout the summer and fall as the BLM has worked to finalize language in the draft rule.

Southern Ute Community Action Programs, Inc. (SUCAP) Outreach Meetings

TRFO also participated in joint mineral outreach meetings organized by the ONRR and held in conjunction with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute agencies), as well as the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration. The June meetings were held in both Ignacio and Towaoc, CO to answer questions for individual Indian mineral owners.

Minerals (Solid)

Locatable Minerals Projects

43 CFR 3809 Claims Under General Mining Law

Summary: TRFO has active uranium/vanadium as well as copper notices as well as one plan of operations update.

Plans of Operation

Sunday Mines Plan of Operations - Status Update

TRFO is in the initial review of the Environmental Assessment prepared for the plan of operations update. Colorado State Office as well as SOL reviews are underway, a draft document for public review is anticipated late Winter 2024 or early Spring 2024.

Notices- 3809

Operator	Notice Title	Disposition	Status
Nuvemco	Blue Streak	Approved	Active
Alianza	Stateline	Approved	Active
Alianza	Klondike	Approved	Active
Standard Minerals	Section 23	Approved	Active
Standard Minerals	Groundhog	Approved	Active
Standard Minerals	Rimrock	Approved	Active
Slickrock	SlickRock	Approved	

43 CFR 3601 Mineral Materials

Summary: Multiple active Free Use Permits (FUPs) as well as one recently released competitive (COMP) pit.

FUPs and COMP- 3601

Operator	Project	Disposition	Status
San Miguel County	Klondike	Approved	Active
	Tozer		
Dolores County	Disappointment	Approved	Active
Dolores County	Black Snag	Approved	Active
San Juan County	Dry Creek	Approved	Active
LaPlata County	Montoya	Approved	Active
Robert Dougherty	Cedar Point	Released	Closed

43 CFR 3500 Solid Leasable Materials

Summary: Recent submission of potash project identical to one previously analyzed (10 years ago), currently under analysis and review at the Colorado State Office BLM.

Prospecting Permits- 3500

Operator	Project	Disposition	Status
Ranahan	CO106326175	Received	Under Analysis
Ranahan	CO106326177	Received	Under Analysis
Ranahan	CO106326178	Received	Under Analysis
Ranahan	CO106326179	Received	Under Analysis
Ranahan	CO106326181	Received	Under Analysis

43 CFR 3400 Coal Management

Summary: The King Coal Lease boundary modification was finalized in Summer 2023.

Exploration Permits-3400

Operator	Project	Disposition	Status
GCC	CO106100173	Approved	Active
GCC	CO106052020	Approved	Active
GCC	CO106093503	Approved	Active

43 CFR 3601 Mineral Materials Disposal Discussion

Disappointment Pit Expansion

TRFO is in the process of scoping an expansion for the Disappointment Gravel Pit (free use pit, permit held by Dolores County Road and Bridge) for the expansion of an additional 5 acres of disturbance associated with the continued use of the Disappointment Pit. In April 2023, TRFO approved an additional deepening of the existing pit to continue production while the field office analyzed the additional disturbance. External scoping of a draft EA is anticipated for November 2023. Currently the TRFO is working with ROW holders to move powerlines out of the area planned for expansion.

Black Snag Pit

TRFO anticipates processing an EA to expand the existing Black Snag Pit located in upper Disappointment Valley. BLM is also working with Dolores County on a possible upgrade to the Disappointment Creek crossing on the access road.

Montoya Pit

TRFO conducted an inspection of the currently operating Montoya Pit in LaPlata County. The continued production of gravel for the Four Corners Region is reliant on this pit. An additional quantity of disturbance (exact size unknown) is expected to be proposed in later 2023, recognizing the current production area will be mined out within the next 24 months. TRFO anticipates an EA for this likely beginning spring 2024.

Coordination

Western Small Miners Association

TRFO participated in regular meetings that most recently met in October of 2023. The purpose of the meetings is round table discussion with regulators, industry representatives, and interested public related to federal and state permitting processes as well as the future of mining on the western slope of Colorado.

Abandoned Mine Lands

TRFO AML Program Update

TRFO completed NEPA documents the closure of approximately 200 hazardous abandoned mine openings by DOE/DRMS and Freeport in FY2023. DOE/DRMS completed construction of approximately 145 hazardous abandoned mine openings in Spring and Fall 2023.

Northwind

Northwind completed their physical safety hazard inventory on hundreds of mine openings in western San Miguel, Montrose, Dolores, and Montezuma counties in Summer 2021 and were issued a contract for remediation work to be completed in FY2022, including surveys, NEPA analysis, and closure construction. In Fall of 2023 Northwind completed 15 closures; no more closures are anticipated from Northwind.

DOE-DRUM - Status Update

The Department of Energy survey work is almost completed on Cold War-era defense-related uranium mines (DRUM) in San Miguel, Dolores, and Montezuma counties. DOE/DRMS completed construction of approximately 145 hazardous abandoned mine openings in Spring and Fall 2023. TRFO expects to receive a draft proposed action in February 2024 for additional closures to be performed by DOE and DRMS in 2025.

Freeport McMoRan - Status Update

Freeport completed construction on a portion of what was approved in Fall 2023 (~30 features), and have additional closures pending for Spring or Fall 2024(~5-10). Freeport is almost complete with new feature closures in TRFO, and will be working with the office to address sites which were put on a wait list due to difficult conditions and continue monitoring closures which were already performed.

Lands and Reality

Program Update

TRFO is in the process of filling a critical vacancy, our realty program has been getting by without a specific realty specialist for over two years at this point. An announcement seeking new individual closed in mid-November, interviews were recently held. TRFO anticipates having a full-time realty specialist in place by mid-spring 2024.

Tri-State Line Maintenance-Goodman Point to Sand Canyon

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Inc. conducted critical maintenance on the Goodman Point to Sand Canyon portion of the CO2 Loop in October of 2023. The BLM had previously approved their maintenance request for Goodman Point-Main Switch. Tri-state was able to make resources available this year to accommodate additional required maintenance.

Hawkes Ditch

In 2018, the BLM collected money for a trespass maintenance action that took place on a historic ditch adjacent to privately held property, now in the possession of new ownership (Hawkes) in the southern portion of Montezuma County, near the town of Mancos. BLM is worked with the landowner this summer using over \$7,000 of trespass funds collected to restore the ditch to proper function.

32nd Street Parcel

The BLM is helping the city improve water quality in the Animas River and eventually plans to dispose of the land to the city of Durango. The land will be used as stormwater retention and control. The sale of the land is under the authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, 1926, *as amended*. The purpose of the Act is to provide land to local government or qualifying non-profit

organizations for the public purposes (such as community improvements, infrastructure), or recreation. The land is under lease by the City under this Act. The City must provide a plan of development that is approved by the BLM and NEPA requirements are followed. Once the City meets the plan of development through the term of the lease, the City may apply for the ownership of the land. The land gets patented and must remain compliant under the Act (the use must continue to follow the intent of the Act).

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument

Visitor Center and Museum - Status Update

Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum underwent a major floor stabilization project in spring and summer 2023. The project was completed in July and the center is open under a normal operating schedule, currently Tuesday through Saturday from 9 to 5.

New permanent visitor center exhibits were installed in August. The exhibit upgrades provide a much-improved overview of the Monument, as well as providing an opportunity to understand the opportunities available to visit public sites. The exhibits include a strong indigenous voice and visit with respect message. A new special exhibit opened in August 2023 featuring a series of landscape paintings from local artist Stanton Englehart. The title of the exhibit, "My Calendar", communicates that 12 of the paintings depict each month of the year. The exhibit will be in place through December 2024.

Yellow Jacket and Flodine Park Grazing Allotments - Status Update

CANM initiated Section 106 consultation for a proposal to reissue permits for livestock grazing on the vacant Yellow Jacket and Flodine Park allotments. Staff are developing a programmatic agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to identify potential adverse effects to cultural resources and associated mitigations. Once the agreement is complete, CANM will go through the NEPA process, with input from tribes and other interested parties to analyze other potential impacts from the proposal. Draft language for the identification portion of the agreement has been finalized. The next steps for the PA will be mitigation and resolution.

Painted Hand Road Relocation and Trailhead Improvements Project - Status Update

The road accessing the Painted Hand cultural site has been improved and relocated from private property onto nearby public lands managed by the BLM. In addition to a crowned gravel road, a developed 20-site parking area, picnic shelter, restroom, and improved trail system have also been completed. New interpretive signs will be installed along the trail by November.

Mary Austin Acquisition (CANM)

The final decision for the Mary Austin acquisition was appealed by several parties opposed to grazing in the Monument on the grounds of adjusting the percent public lands as it relates to billing the permittees on the effected allotments. A petition for stay was denied. The administrative record is presently under review by a Department of Interior Solicitor prior to submission to the IBLA.



Field Manager Report

February 2024

Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) including Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA) and the UFO portion of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-ENCA)

Note: Topics below are all Status Updates, unless noted otherwise.

Planning

UFO Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment/Environmental Impact Assessment

EMPSi was awarded the UFO RMP Amendment contract in August. The Settlement Agreements to the 2020 Approved RMP required a Notice of Intent (NOI) formally initiating the project to be published within 60 days of publication of the Notice of Availability for the Draft RMP Amendment for Gunnison sage-grouse, or big game, in the Federal Register, whichever comes later. The NOI for the UFO RMP Amendment was published January 5, opening a 45-day public scoping period that runs through February 20, 2024. The BLM will host two virtual meetings on January 23 and 24 and one in-person open house at the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose on February 1.

The EIS will include an alternative that has more acres subject to No Leasing for oil and gas compared to the most conservative alternative (Alt. B.1) in the 2019 Proposed RMP. The RMP Amendment must also carry forward Areas of Critical Environmental Concern previously considered under Alternative B.1 and management of lands with wilderness characteristics previously analyzed, for further consideration. Outreach to cooperating agencies and tribes will occur in October.

Information and documents are posted on the ePlanning project website:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2026528/510>

Grazing and Natural Resources

Personnel

Our new Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist, Ken Vicencio, started at the beginning of November. Our permanent Range Technician accept a different position in December and this position is now vacant. We are actively working through the hiring process to get both our vacant Rangeland Management Specialist and Range Technician positions filled, but do not have a timeline of when this will occur.

Grazing Permit Renewals

Meanwhile, we continue to chip away at the following complex and high visibility permits:

Crawford Area Allotments

The UFO is revising its approach to the permit renewals for Green Mountain, Grizzly Gulch, Iron Springs, Poison Spring, and Gould Reservoir Allotments within the Crawford area. The UFO will request all available monitoring data within the allotments from the interested publics and revise the land health assessments and evaluations. Once revisions are completed, the land health assessment and evaluation along with a draft determination document will be sent to the interested publics for comment. These allotments contain habitat for the Crawford satellite population of Gunnison sage-grouse and Desert Bighorn Sheep.

Cactus Park & Lower Escalante Allotment

UFO is working with new permittees on the sheep to cattle conversion overlapping bighorn habitat in the Cactus Park and Lower Escalante allotments in the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. National Wildlife Federation is spearheading the installation of water catchments in support of the livestock conversion. The UFO is working on initiating NEPA analysis on the water catchments; as well as, reaching out the CDOT to explore installing fencing along Highway 50 to prevent livestock and vehicle conflicts on the highway.

Completed Projects

Mailbox Park Allotment

The UFO issued a proposed decision in November after responding to comments received on the draft EA. Two interested parties protest the proposed decision based on concerns of interactions between domestic and bighorn sheep. Those protests were addressed, and a final decision was issued in early December. No Appeals were received on the final decision and a new permit was executed in early January.

Texas A&M Corvid Surveying Project

The BLM is partnering with Texas A&M University and Cal-Poly Humboldt State University to determine raven presence, habitat selection, and density in occupied Gunnison sage-grouse habitat in the Crawford population. Colorado BLM natural resource managers need comprehensive information about the impacts of predators in general, and ravens on Gunnison sage-grouse populations. A 36-month project was recently funded to include a fully-funded MS graduate student hire that will begin work in fall 2024.

BLM/CPW Bighorn Sheep Population Estimation

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) periodically conducts research to better understand the nature of bighorn sheep populations including, but not limited to interactions with domestic livestock, habitat selection and use, general population information, and population dynamics. This information is critical to CPW achieving its mandate of managing and conserving bighorn sheep populations. The information is also necessary for BLM to work with CPW to manage and maintain a bighorn sheep herd (the S-80 Herd) within the Gunnison Gorge NCA. Information collected during this effort will estimate and refine maps of seasonal habitats, including core herd home range (CHHR), and refine density estimates for the S-80 herd utilizing Mark-Resight Density estimation. To this end, the BLM and CPW have been conducting resight surveys on marked bighorn sheep in the GGNCA during summer and fall 2023.

Dolores River Restoration Partnership

In FY22-23, the Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) completed 22 acres of initial tamarisk removal, 18 acres of revegetation with native plants (mostly grasses and forbs in no longer connected flood plains), and 230 acres of tamarisk resprouts treated in UFO, Tres Rios FO, and Grand Junction FO. An additional 250 acres of secondary weeds were treated in TRFO and UFO. Forty-five conservation crew members were employed, contributing 588 hours, and we hosted 33 volunteers conducting cottonwood planting near the confluence with the San Miguel River.

UFO received BIL funding in FY22 for 26 acres of heavy dense tamarisk mastication on Bureau of Reclamation and BLM lands in the Dolores River Canyon WSA. The NEPA for BOR was completed in August 2023 and we are now working to procure a contractor to implement work about a quarter mile upriver from the Bedrock boat launch. We anticipate work to begin in November or early December. In early October, an 8-person hand crew (Southwest Conservation Corps) will begin a 5-acre initial tamarisk removal project a half-mile above the confluence with Mesa Creek.

Recreation

Rim Rucker/Electric Hills Trailhead

UFO staff fabricated and installed a new gate along the Shavano Loop Road to help with compliance with the wintering big game seasonal closure for the Electric Hills Trail system. The singletrack trail system is very close to being fully built.

Montrose County continues work on construction and improvements to the shared trailhead. The county holds a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) lease on 40 acres there, including the trailhead and some surrounding lands.

Regional Partnership Initiatives

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) have collaborated to fund new and existing coalitions to join a statewide initiative working to ensure that Colorado's land, water, and wildlife thrive while also providing for equitable and quality outdoor recreation experiences. UFO participates in two southwest Colorado initiative groups. Link to the Story Map: storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/393237b131b2455e9ff2fc3692c4226f

The Ouray Regional Recreation and Conservation Alliance (ORRCA) is generally focused in the Ouray County area. Most of the federally managed lands in that area are with the USFS, so most of the group's focus so far has been on those lands.

The Western Slope Outdoors Alliance (WSOA) is focused generally on Montrose, Delta, and Mesa counties within the watersheds of the Uncompahgre, Gunnison, and Colorado Rivers. The group is relatively new. UFO staff are on the steering committee for the alliance, and actively involved in the group's work on its focus and goals. The three counties, various user groups, and members of the public are actively engaged.

Jumbo Mountain Travel Management Planning

Shortly after The Jumbo Mountain Travel Management Plan went into effect last fall, BLM, the town

of Paonia, and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) held a trail work event on the trail system. Volunteers completed over a mile of maintenance on system trails, including the construction of lots of water bars. Trail enthusiasts are looking forward to doing more work when the trails open in the spring.

West End Trails (New)

The West End Trails Alliance (WETA) along with the towns of Nucla and Naturita in Montrose County's "West End" have been developing proposals for trail systems on BLM-managed lands in that area. Feeling the pain of a local economic downturn in the area following the closure of the New Horizon coal mine and Nucla Station power plant, the communities have been looking at ways to bolster the local economy and improve recreational amenities at the same time. While we are in the early stages of the process, UFO is planning to take this on as our next travel management planning project.

UFO Business Plan

The UFO Draft Business Plan was reviewed by state recreation leads, and comments have been incorporated. UFO is preparing to submit the plan to BLM Headquarters for a final review/approval before publishing in the Federal Register and implementing the plan.

Lands and Minerals

Northwinds Abandoned Mine Lands Project

Six mine features (i.e. adits, shafts) that pose a physical safety hazard to the public have been identified around UFO and the NCAs. Three have been recorded in Dominguez-Escalante NCA, two on BLM lands north of Ouray, and one in the Gunnison Gorge NCA planning area. They will be safeguarded through a variety of techniques, including backfilling, culvert installation, wire netting, and steel bars, to ensure the public can recreate safely. The contract is underway, with work expected to be performed in fall 2023.

Defense Related Uranium Mines (DRUM) Program

The Department of Energy's (DOE) Defense Related Uranium Mines (DRUM) program is a collaborative effort between the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety (DRMS) and the BLM to physically close abandoned mine features on BLM-managed lands. DRUM program goals are to reconcile and improve abandoned mine lands (AML) data, conduct and assess condition inventories, and determine physical safety hazards to both human health and environment. Currently, the program's focus is on abandoned uranium mines within UFO, Tres Rios FO, and Grand Junction FO located on Colorado's Western Slope. The proposed closures will obstruct and block access into adits, shafts, stopes, breakdown portals, subsidence portals, and unstable historical mining structures related to the uranium mining production era between 1930s-1970s. This work is needed to protect public safety by eliminating or reducing risks posed by abandoned mines while conserving wildlife habitat and preserving cultural resources.

North Fork Mancos Master Development Plan Supplemental Environmental Assessment

The Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO), with the Colorado State Office (CSO) Air Program, UFO, and the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG), have finalized a

supplemental Environmental Assessment in response to a remand of the North Fork Mancos Master Development Plan (MPD) by the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. The supplemental EA addresses the deficiencies cited by the Court, including an updated analysis of greenhouse emissions from construction, production, compression, transportation, and end-use (primarily combustion) of federal oil and gas produced by the project and the potential effects on air quality and climate change. The updated proposed action provides new estimates of air emissions, conforms with 2021 State of Colorado air quality regulations for oil and gas activities, and includes operator-committed measures to reduce air emissions further and ensure compliance with regulatory standards. The supplemental EA also discusses social costs and describes other alternatives considered.

Public comments were sought on the draft supplemental EA from May 10 through June 16, 2023. Over 250 comments were received via ePlanning from six individuals, the operator, and five organizations falling into the broad categories of policy and process; air quality/GHG/climate change; and socioeconomics/environmental justice. The final supplemental EA incorporates changes and clarifications in response to substantive comments. A FONSI and Decision Record was signed in late September. The supplemental EA and FONSI support issuance of two drilling permits on the Iron Point Unit, within the MDP planning area, which Gunnison Energy LLC applied for in March and April 2022 and the BLM delayed until updated NEPA analysis could be completed.

Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA)

Dark Sky Park Certification

In acknowledgement of the outstanding dark, starry skies of GGNCA, the BLM, CCA, and community partners including the Western Slope Conservation Center collaborated on an application with DarkSky International to certify GGNCA as a “Dark Sky Park.” If successful, the certification would make GGNCA the third federal unit in our local area with that status, along with Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area. GGNCA staff submitted the application and are working with DarkSky International to make final tweaks. A final submission is anticipated this spring.

Cottonwood Days Education Program

Last fall BLM and CCA successfully delivered our 15th annual Cottonwood Days Education event. We are glad to be back on-site and in person with the students. Other critical partners contributing to the success of the program include CPW, Gunnison Gorge Anglers (TU), and the Ute Indian Museum. About 400 sixth grade students from Delta County and Olathe schools attended learning sessions along the scenic Gunnison River within Gunnison Gorge NCA. Learning focused on the cultural importance of the river corridor, water use and conservation, fish of the Gunnison River, aquatic invertebrates and the importance of water quality, and how artificial flies imitate the various aquatic species.



UFO (southern) portion of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area

Note: Jenna Moore is the acting NCA Manager for D-E NCA and McInnis Canyons NCA.

Gunnison River Campsite Designation and Permit System

The BLM implemented a decision from the 2017 Dominguez-Escalante NCA RMP to require overnight boaters on the Lower Gunnison River, from Delta to Whitewater, to obtain a permit. BLM staff updated signage and conducted outreach regarding the change at sites like Mountain Buzz and American Whitewater. An environmental assessment was completed for the campsite designation project. The project will be implemented in 2024.

D-E NCA Business Plan

The BLM is working through the internal review process for the draft Dominguez-Escalante NCA business plan. We expect to be ready to brief the RAC(s) in FY2024. We are interested in seeking solutions to incorporate RAC input into this process efficiently given that Dominguez-Escalante NCA is split between the Southwest RAC and Northwest RAC.

Escalante Ranch Acquisition Project (new)

The BLM is proposing to acquire the 4,060-acre Escalante Ranch, an inholding of non-Federal parcels of private land and interests in land that lies within the designated boundaries of D-E NCA along Escalante Creek and the Gunnison River. It is still early in the process, with the public scoping period ending in mid-January. Details on the environmental assessment are available on the BLM ePlanning project website: eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2030404/510