



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

# Joint Northwest and Southwest Resource Advisory Council Meeting

May 2, 2024 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Delta, Colorado





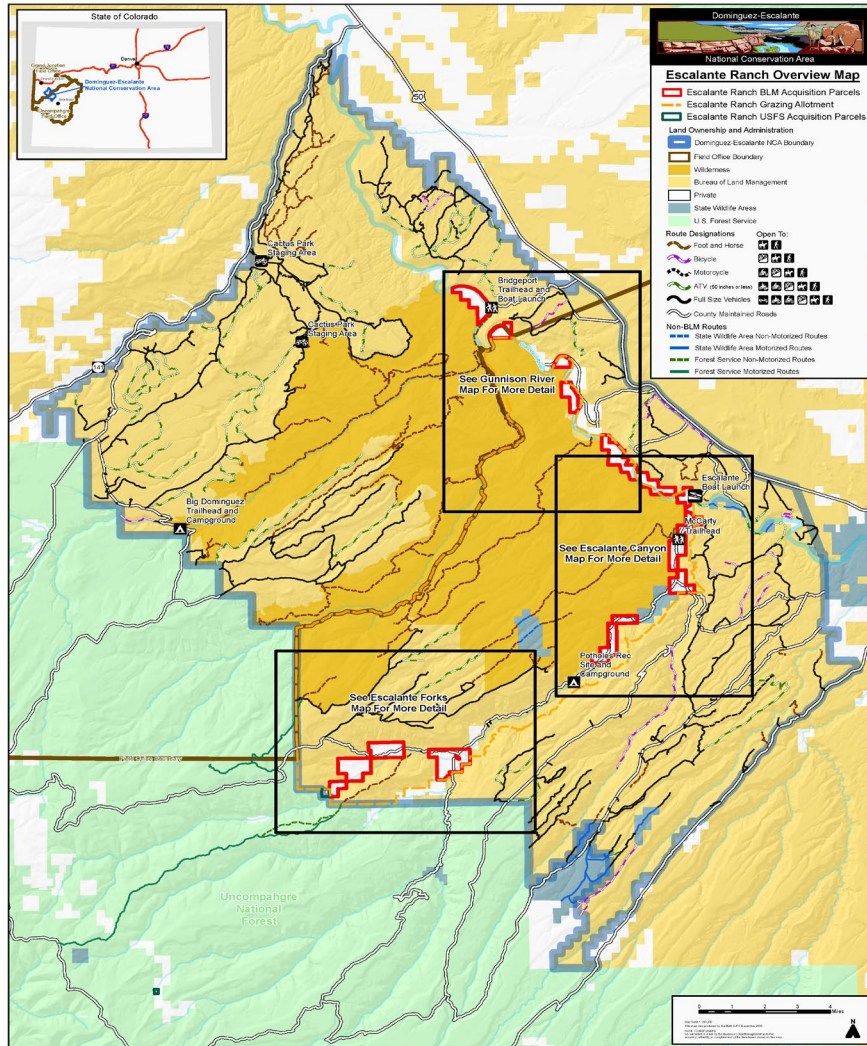


# AGENDA

<b>09:00-10:00 a.m.</b>	Opening Remarks and Introductions
<b>10:00-10:30 a.m.</b>	Review and Discuss Field Tour
<b>10:30 a.m.-Noon</b>	Discussion: Dominguez-Escalante NCA Business Plan and Fee Schedule for the Gunnison River
<b>Noon-1:10 p.m.</b>	Lunch On Your Own
<b>1:15-2:30 p.m.</b>	Discussion: Land Tenure, Escalante Ranch Acquisition
<b>2:30-3:00 p.m.</b>	Public Comment Period
<b>3:00-4:00 p.m.</b>	Field Manager Updates: Separate breakout sessions for Northwest and Southwest RACs
<b>4:00-4:30 p.m.</b>	Open Discussion and Closing Remarks
<b>4:30 p.m.</b>	Adjourn



# Review and Discuss Field Tour



- Escalante Overlook
- Ranch Headquarters/Escalante Boat Launch
- McCarty Trailhead
- Walker Cabin
- Captain Smith's Cabin
- Potholes Rec Site
- Escalante Forks





**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Dominguez – Escalante National Conservation Area Business Plan and Implementation Schedule







# Dominguez-Escalante NCA Discussion Topics

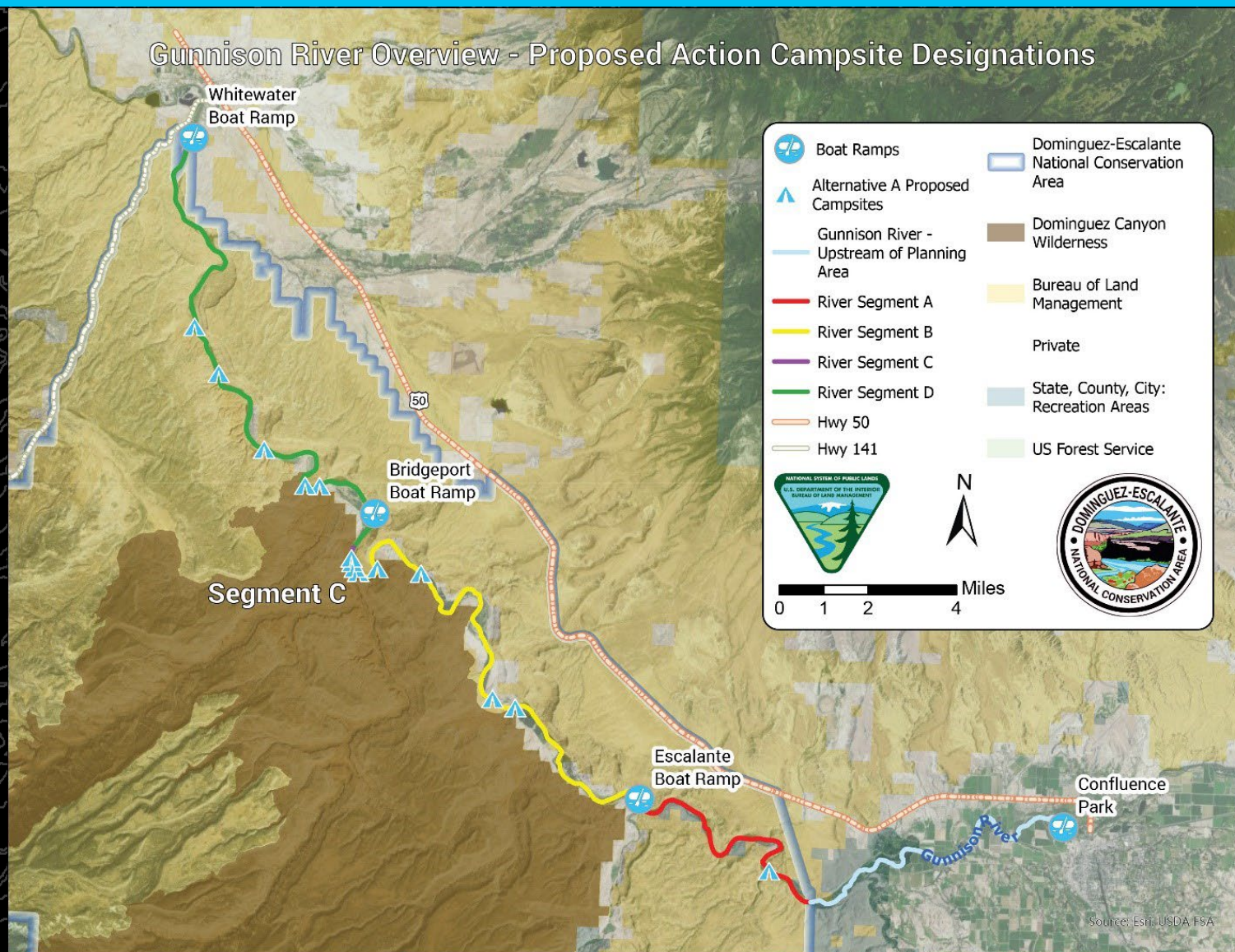
1. Update on the Gunnison River Campsite Designation, Reservation System, and Commercial Allocation System Environmental Assessment
2. Update on the Dominguez-Escalante NCA Draft Business Plan







## Gunnison River Overview - Proposed Action Campsite Designations







## Timeline of Lower Gunnison River Campsites EA

January 2019 – Internal scoping with the BLM Interdisciplinary Team.

Spring 2020 – Project concept posted to ePlanning to solicit public feedback. The BLM received comments from commercial outfitters, community members, individual recreationists, and non-profit organizations.

Spring 2021 – Project concept presented to the Southwest District RAC.

January 2023 – Project presented to the Northwest District RAC.

March 2023 – Discussed the need to develop a Business Plan.

June-July 2023 – Public comment period on draft EA.

November 3, 2023 – FONSI signed.

2024 - Campsite designation implementation planned for 2024 season.

2025 - Reservation and fee implementation planned for 2025 season (pending Business Plan).







**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Questions? Comments?



**DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE**  
NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA





## Update on the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Business Plan



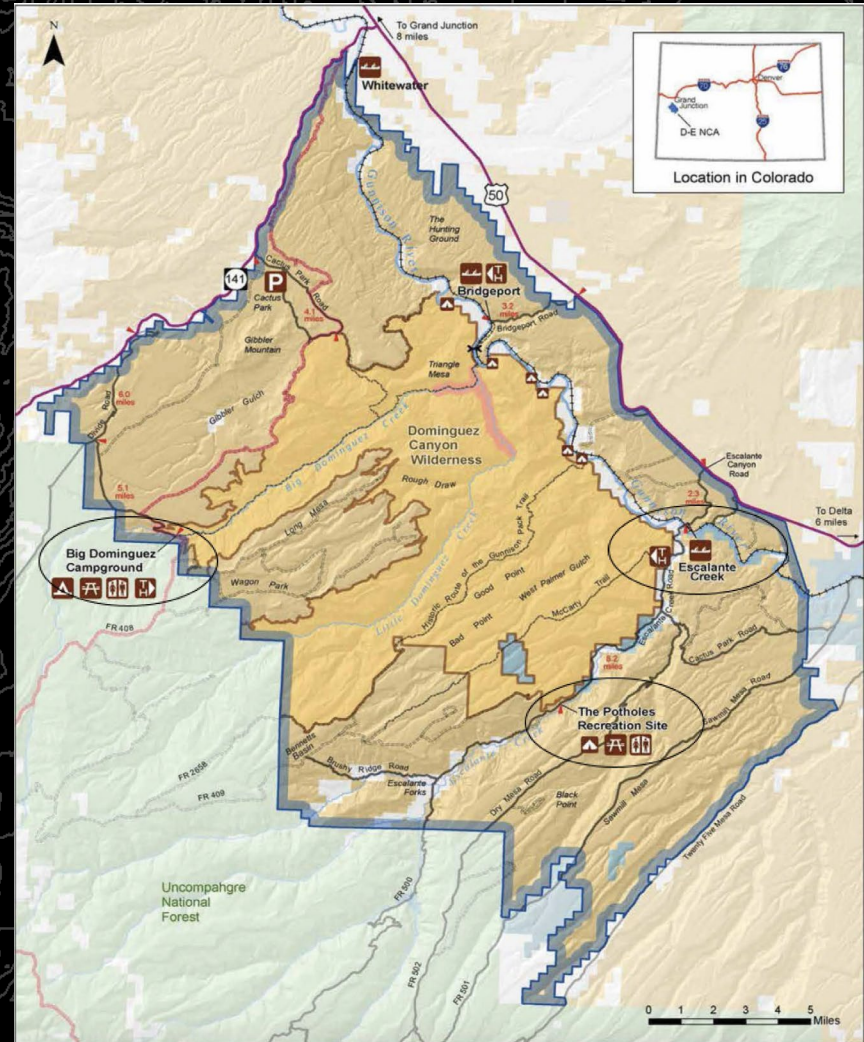
NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS



### Draft Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Business Plan

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

Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices







## Dominguez-Escalante NCA Business Plan (Review)

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004

1. Expanded Amenity Fees
  2. Special Area Fee
- Proposed campsite fee = \$20/night (two vehicles included). If a site can accommodate it, additional vehicles would be charged \$10/vehicle (up to five).
  - Special Area fee for campsites along the Gunnison River:
    - \$20/night for a small group (1-5 people)
    - \$50/night for a medium group (6-14 people)
    - \$100/night for a large group (15-25 people)
  - Recreation.gov service fee of \$6-8 per reservation (future)
  - Any future fee increases will be based on the Western US Consumer Price Index (CPI)







## Dominguez-Escalante NCA Business Plan – Use of Recreation Fees

Facilities				
Expanded amenity Sites	Quantity	Item Price	Total Price	20-year amortization
Vault Toilet	3	\$50,000/each	\$150,000	\$7,500
Picnic Table	61	\$500/each	\$30,500	\$1,525
Fire Rings	61	\$800/each	\$48,800	\$2,440
Site Engineering	3	\$35,000/site	\$105,000	\$5,250
Vehicle	0.5	\$6,000/year	\$3,000	\$150
Site Delineation (90 ft/ site)	61	\$100/ft	\$549,000	\$27,450
<b>Total over Time</b>			<b>\$886,300</b>	<b>\$44,315</b>





## Dominguez-Escalante NCA Business Plan – Operating Costs

Operating Costs			
Service/Item Provided	Current Cost (FY 22)	Projected Cost (expanded amenity Sites)	Projected Cost (Special Area)
Visitor Information (kiosks, brochures, and other signage)	\$1,300	\$2,400	\$600
Cleaning Supplies (toilet paper, PPE, etc.)	\$1,200	\$2,000	\$500
Weed Control	\$1,900	\$2,000	\$500
Repairs	\$1,500	\$2,400	\$600
Toilets (pumping and service)	\$11,600	\$12,000	\$3,000
Equipment	\$1,100	\$2,000	\$500
Vehicle and gas	\$6,300	\$10,400	\$2,600
GS-7 Seasonal Park Ranger (80% in expanded amenity sites, 20% in Special Area)	\$30,000 (6 months)	\$50,405 (10 months)	\$12,601 (10 months)
GS-7 Full-time Park Ranger (80% in expanded amenity sites, 20% in Special Area)	\$44,000 (6 months)	\$53,451 (10 months)	\$13,363 (10 months)
Law Enforcement Support	\$13,350	\$16,000	\$4,000
Overhead/Admin (Outdoor Recreation Planner, NCA Manager, fee collection and processing* etc.)	\$6,950	\$11,200	\$2,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$119,200</b>	<b>\$164,255</b>	<b>\$41,064</b>





## Dominguez-Escalante NCA Business Plan

**March 30, 2023** – Presented the proposed D-E NCA business plan to the joint NW/SW RACs.

- Fee structure and CPI adjustments were incorporated into final business plan.

**June 22, 2023** – Provided updates about the proposed D-E NCA business plan and the Lower Gunnison River Campsite Designation, Reservations and Commercial Use Allocations Environmental Assessment (EA) to the NW RAC.







**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Questions? Comments?



**DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE**  
NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA





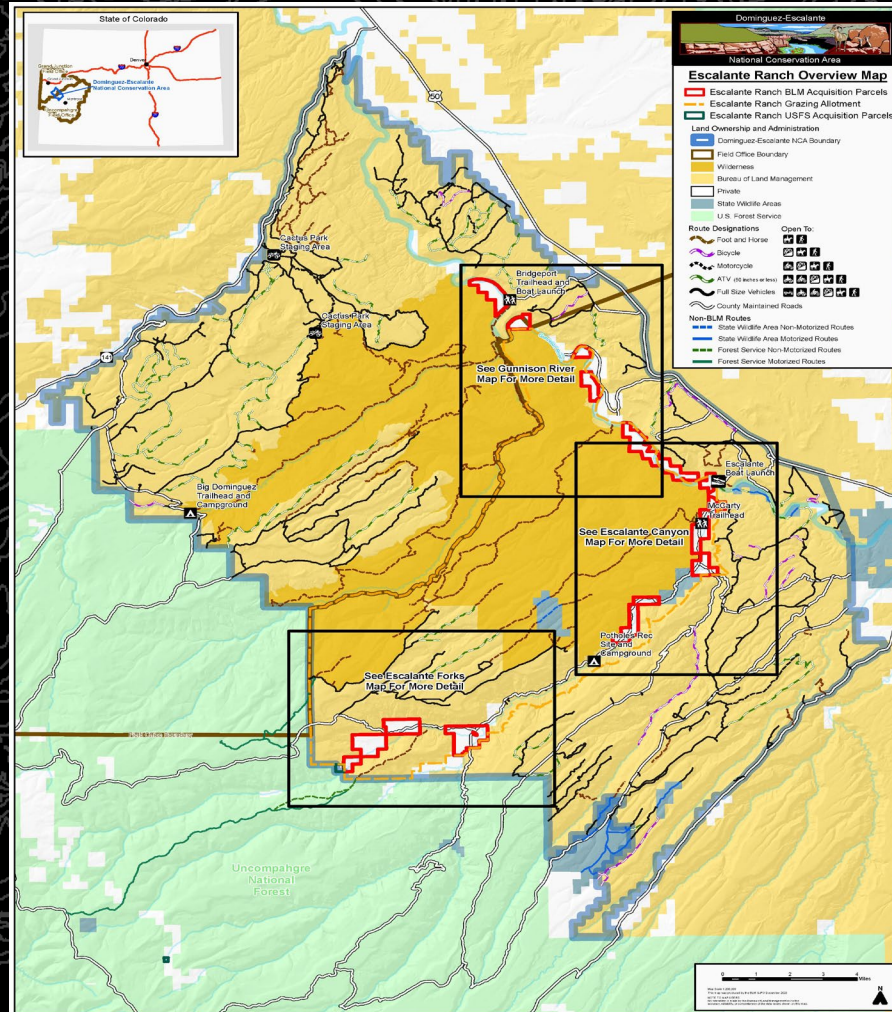
**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Land Tenure – Escalante Ranch Acquisition











# OVERVIEW Escalante Ranch Acquisition:

- 100+ year history of cattle ranching in Escalante Canyon and along the Gunnison River
- 4,012 acres of non-Federal lands and interests in lands, including water rights
- Approximately 900 of the acres are irrigated (pasture and hay fields)
- 70 cfs of water rights from the Gunnison River and Escalante Creek
- Escalante Ranch is a conglomeration of smaller homestead parcels
- Multiple homes on the property

## WHY ?

- Surrounded by the Dominguez-Escalante NCA
- Willing Seller
- Purpose of acquisition is to protect natural and cultural resources, consolidate public land ownership, improve management efficiency, enhance conservation stewardship goals, increase outdoor recreation, and expand upon environmental education opportunities within D-E NCA.



## Process:

- BLM issued a decision record for the Escalante Ranch Acquisition (Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-CO-G030-2024-0001-EA) on February 29, 2024.
- Escalante Ranch would be purchased using funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- The Conservation Fund (TCF) - third-party assistance, anticipated purchase summer 2024
- TCF would sell the property to BLM in early 2025.
- BLM is committed to engaging with cooperative agencies and the public for the subsequent planning efforts associated with this project.

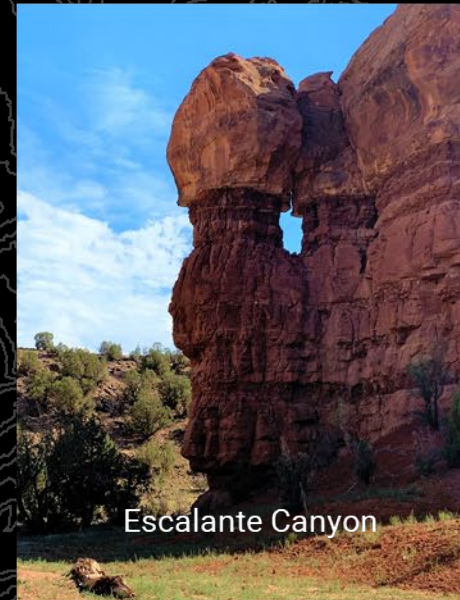




# Ranch Overview



Gunnison River



Escalante Canyon



Escalante Forks



Escalante Creek





# Resource Opportunities



Habitat Restoration



Wilderness Access



Rock Climbing Access



Historic Resources



Gunnison River Access





**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Water Rights & Irrigated Lands



Irrigated Orchard



Irrigated Fields



Irrigation Infrastructure







# House Structures



Escalante Canyon Houses



Main Ranch Headquarters



Bridgeport House



Escalante Forks House







# Other Structures



Bridges



Range Improvements



Farm Equipment



# Opportunities & Challenges

- Consolidate federal ownership
- Eliminate resource degradation or development
- Provide new and/or improved recreational access (land and river)
- Restore wildlife and riparian habitat
- Protect cultural and natural resources
- Resolve 22 encroachments
- Expand environmental education

- Large amount of staff time both during and post-acquisition
- Unique property with many assets such as structures and water rights
- Management of Historically Irrigated Lands
- Sizeable funding request
- Dual-agency acquisition
- Partner organizations both during and post-acquisition
- Vision and communication of long-term management





# Land Tenure – Escalante Ranch Acquisition

BLM is considering forming a RAC Subcommittee to advise the BLM if Escalante Ranch is acquired

## Considerations:

- ✓ Is a Land Use Plan amendment required?
- ✓ What issues would benefit from a subcommittee's consideration?
- ✓ What RAC members may want to serve on a subcommittee?
- ✓ Who might BLM consider for subcommittee service?
- ✓ How often does the subcommittee need to meet?
- ✓ How long does the subcommittee need to meet?
- ✓ What products will the subcommittee be producing? (reports, recommendations, etc.)



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Questions? Comments?



**DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE**  
NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA





**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**



# Draft Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Business Plan

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

Grand Junction and Uncompahgre Field Offices





## Table of Contents

Recommendations, Reviews, and Approvals.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	4
BACKGROUND AND AUTHORITIES.....	6
Background.....	6
Authorities .....	6
LAND USE PLAN GUIDANCE.....	8
DESCRIPTION OF THE DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA .....	8
Administrative Unit .....	8
Overview of D-E NCA Recreation Program .....	8
Stakeholders and Partners.....	10
DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF D-E NCA RECREATION SITES.....	11
Existing Campgrounds Proposed for Fee.....	11
Big Dominquez Campground.....	11
Potholes Campground.....	12
Potential future fee sites/areas.....	13
Gunnison River SRMA Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRPs).....	13
D-E NCA VISITATION.....	15
Visitor Profile.....	15
Visitor Demographics .....	16
Overview of D-E NCA Recreation Activities.....	17
Connecting With Communities .....	17
ANTICIPATED FUTURE VISITATION .....	17
FEE PROPOSAL .....	18
CURRENT OPERATING COSTS .....	19
USE OF RECREATION FEES .....	21
Fund Balance Maintenance.....	22
RECREATION FEE RATE ANALYSIS .....	22
Cost Recovery Fee Calculation Method.....	22
Fair Market Value Fee Calculation Method .....	24
FEE DISCOUNTS.....	26
IMPACTS FROM CHARGING RECREATION FEES.....	26



Impacts on Visitors and the Environment.....	26
Nonmarket Values and Benefits .....	26
Impacts on Local Economies.....	27
Socioeconomic impacts, including low-income populations and environmental justice communities .....	28
PUBLIC OUTREACH.....	29
APPENDIX A. D-E NCA RMP Recreation Objectives and Guidance .....	31
APPENDIX B. Dispersed Camping Restriction Areas in Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area .....	33
FIGURES .....	34
TABLES.....	34

## BLM Signatory Page

### Developed By:

Grand Junction Field Office—Recreation Program  
Upper Colorado River District BLM  
2815 H Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506  
(970) 244-3000  
Email: [blm\\_co\\_gj\\_admin@blm.gov](mailto:blm_co_gj_admin@blm.gov)

### Signatures for Approving Business Plan

Recommended by:

---

Assistant Field Manager-Recreation

---

Date

Approved by:

---

Field Office Manager (acting)

---

Date



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) within the Upper Colorado River District and Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) within the Southwest District propose to establish camping and Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP) fees as outlined in the draft Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA) Business Plan (Plan). The BLM is permitted to collect fees for the recreational use of public lands under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976). Additionally, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA, 2004) provides the BLM with the authority to collect special recreation permit fees for specialized recreation uses and expanded and/or standard amenity recreation site fees for the recreational use of certain areas. Camping and Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP) fees will be spent at the sites they are collected, providing the public a return on investment. The additional revenues derived from the new fee campgrounds and Special Area(s) will be used primarily for the maintenance of existing services to visitors and enhanced camping capacity. Furthermore, fees may be retained for several years, facilitating productive and long-standing partnerships, and providing for infrastructure replacement.

Camping and ISRP fees would be collected on site, on a first-come first-served basis, unless or until a reservation system is implemented. Day use and any areas where dispersed/undeveloped camping is allowed would continue to be available throughout the D-E NCA without a reservation or a fee (see Appendix B for allowable dispersed/undeveloped camping areas).

The two fee types proposed in this plan are expanded amenity fees and ISRP fees in Special Area(s) in alignment with FLREA. The expanded amenity fee is proposed for existing and future developed camping. Special Area fees are proposed where the Authorized Officer deems recreation use requires special management to protect resources of the D-E NCA. To address increased visitation within the D-E NCA, fees are deemed necessary to prevent/mitigate resource damage and to provide enhanced visitor services and the public would be notified of the ISRP requirement in a federal register notice.

The draft Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Business Plan was prepared and available for public comment posted on BLM's Recreation Site Business Plans website: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/business-plans>. The Plan was discussed with the Northwest Resource Advisory Committee (NW RAC) and the Southwest Resource Advisory Committee (SW RAC) at a joint RAC meeting on March 30, 2023. The Plan was again presented to the NW RAC meeting on June 22, 2023. The 30-day public comment period commenced on April 12, 2024 with final RAC approval occurring in May, 2024.

## INTRODUCTION

GJFO and UFO prepared the draft Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA) Business Plan (Plan) based on the need to meet public demand, provide visitor services, and to meet the criteria defined in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004. The BLM is permitted to collect fees for the recreational use of public lands under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976). Additionally, the FLREA provides the BLM with the authority to collect an expanded and/or standard amenity recreation site fee for the recreational use of certain areas. The FLREA authorizes revenue from recreation fees to be retained locally and outlines uses of revenue, such as facility repair, maintenance,

enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, visitor services, visitor needs assessments, signs, habitat restoration, law enforcement related to public use and recreation, and direct operating or capital costs associated with operations.

Currently, the D-E NCA does not collect fees at any recreation sites or areas. The focus of this Plan is to analyze and recommend recreation sites and areas within the D-E NCA that meet the FLREA requirements and to serve as public notification and opportunity to comment. This Plan describes the fee sites, proposed fees, future amenities, associated operating costs, financial analysis, and impacts of proposed fees.

The BLM Recreation Permit Administration Handbook (2930-1) is clear that “the intent of the fee program is not to maximize revenue, but rather to provide needed public services *while protecting and enhancing public lands and recreation opportunities*” (page 53). “*Recreation Use Permits (RUPs)*, [which include expanded amenities], *are issued to ensure that the people of the United States receive a fair and equitable return for the use of these facilities to help recover the cost[s]*” (page 9).

The two fee types proposed in this plan are expanded amenity fees and Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP) fees for Special Area(s) in alignment with FLREA. These fee types are proposed for existing and future camping opportunities meeting one of the definitions provided below:

- **Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRPs)** may be required for individual (i.e., private, noncommercial) recreation use in Special Areas. Special Areas are defined as areas officially designated by statute, Presidential decree, or Secretarial order and include components of the ... the National Wilderness Preservation System; national conservation areas, national monuments, or national recreation areas...; or any area where the Authorized Officer (AO) determines that resources need to be protected by special management and control measures and that a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives.
- **Expanded amenity recreation fees** cover specialized outdoor recreation sites and services including but not limited to developed campgrounds with at least a majority of the following amenities: (1) tent or trailer spaces, (2) picnic tables, (3) drinking water, (4) access roads, (5) fee collection by an employee or agent of the BLM, (6) reasonable visitor protection, (7) refuse containers, (8) toilet facilities, (9) simple devices for containing a campfire (Sec.6802.(g)(2)(A) of FLREA). Expanded amenity fees are categorized per FLREA as one form of a RUP.

Fees generated in D-E NCA will help the BLM fulfill its mandate under Public Law (PL 111-11), the enabling Legislation for D-E NCA, to conserve and protect the resources, objects, and values (ROVs) of D-E NCA for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The entirety of D-E NCA meets the definition of a Special Area.

Where monitoring indicates that increased use or changes in use by recreating visitors is causing impacts to ROVs of the D-E NCA, the BLM will take measures to move from primitive recreation opportunities to more developed and sustainable improvements and facilities. Through



adaptive management, BLM may implement fees once the conditions warrant (ISRP fees) and/or amenities (expanded amenity fees) are in place. Reference Appendix A for areas foreseen in the RMP as likely requiring intensive recreation management.

Camping opportunities could progress through stages of development (Figure 1) based on visitor use surveys/assessments, monitoring resources, and funding availability.

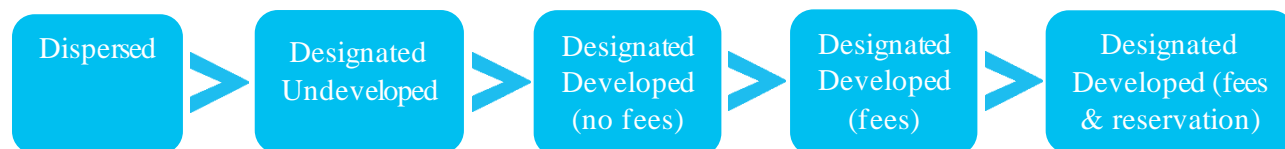


Figure 1 - Flow chart of adaptive management for campsite development

The BLM will complete the necessary National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation to evaluate future changes to campground size and level of development. New facilities or expanded campgrounds may be necessary to provide quality recreation experiences while protecting ROVs of the D-E NCA. Future visitor use may require management of individual use (ISRPs) in areas not considered in this business plan, for which notification would be published as a Notice in the *Federal Register*. If a future ISRP requires a fee for successful implementation and protection of the D-E NCA ROVs, such fees will mirror the proposal contained herein. Any future Notice published in the *Federal Register* for such an ISRP would include language alerting the public to this business plan.

## BACKGROUND AND AUTHORITIES

### Background

The BLM strives to manage recreation and visitor services to provide diverse outdoor recreation opportunities while maintaining sustainable resource conditions. The BLM's goals for delivering recreation benefits from BLM-administered lands and waters to the American public and their communities are to:

- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities.
- Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for and receive fair value in recreation.

This business plan will assist the BLM in meeting these recreation and visitor service goals in the D-E NCA. This plan covers existing campgrounds (e.g., Big Dominguez and Potholes) and establishes a framework for additional facilities as they are built and/or upgraded to the level outlined by FLREA through future planning efforts. Additionally, this plan covers any fees deemed necessary by the AO for administration of ISRPs.

### Authorities

The authorities and regulations for this business plan, including fee collection at federal recreation lands, are:

- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 [Public Law 94-579] contains BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section

302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands. Section 303 of FLPMA contains BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.

- The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004 repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced BLM's authority to collect recreation fees. The FLREA provides the BLM the authority to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees at federal recreation lands and waters that meet certain requirements. The FLREA also allows the BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they are collected and directs how the BLM will manage and utilize these revenues, including for expenses such as facility repair, maintenance and enhancement, interpretation, visitor information, services and needs assessments, signage, law enforcement directly related to public use and recreation, and operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program.
- 43 Code of Federal Regulations 2931.2 (Permits for Recreation on Public Land) establishes a permit and fee system for use of fee areas such as campgrounds. Further, CFR 2933.11 identifies sites where users are required to obtain a Recreation use permit as sites "where we provide or administer specialized facilities, equipment, or services related to outdoor recreation". Management of Special Areas is grounded in 43 U.S.C. 2932.5.

This Plan also follows applicable BLM recreation program policies and guidance, including:

- BLM Manual 2930, Recreation Permits and Fees, 2007
- BLM Handbook 2930-1, Recreation Permits and Fee Administration, 2014
- BLM Connecting with Communities Recreation Strategy
- Colorado Backyard to Backcountry Recreation Strategy

In December 2004, Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) was signed into law and updated in 2021. FLREA provides authority for the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees for use of some Federal recreation lands and waters, and contains specific provisions addressing public involvement in the establishment of recreation fees. FLREA also directs the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to publish six months' advance notice in the Federal Register whenever recreation fee areas are established under their respective jurisdictions.

Under Public Law 108-447, Sec. 803 (g) (2) (A/C) of the FLREA, developed campgrounds and rental cabins qualify as sites wherein visitors can be charged an expanded amenity recreation fee. Pursuant to FLREA and implementing regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 2933, fees may be charged for overnight camping, rental of cabins, and group use reservations where specific amenities and services are provided. Specific visitor fees will be identified and posted at each campground and affected Special Area. The proposed fee structure implements the decisions in the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (2017). Specifically for Special Areas, the decision REC-SRMA-MA-06 implements a Special Area ISRP requirement for all overnight private boaters (for the purpose of monitoring and to achieve RMA objectives). A Special Area under CFR 43 U.S.C. 2932.5 means "(1) *An area officially designated by statute,*



*or by Presidential or Secretarial order; [and] (2) An area for which BLM determines that the resources require special management and control measures for their protection...”* ISRPs are used to permit river use on the Gunnison River and may be used in the future to allow for special management and control measures throughout D-E NCA. ISRPs “*may be required for individual (i.e., private, noncommercial) recreation use in Special Areas. Special Areas are defined as areas officially designated by statute, Presidential decree, or Secretarial order and include components of the National Trails System; the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; the National Wilderness Preservation System; national conservation areas, national monuments, or national recreation areas; an area covered by joint agreement between the BLM and a state government, as provided for in Title II of the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C. 670a et seq.); or any area where the AO determines that resources need to be protected by special management and control measures and that a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives.*”

## LAND USE PLAN GUIDANCE

The Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA) was designated by Congress in 2009 with broad local, regional, and national support. Its Resource Advisory Committee met 35 times during the development of the Resource Management Plan (RMP), often with sizable public attendance. The 2017 Record of Decision and approved D-E NCA RMP is the foundation for the D-E NCA recreation program. The enabling legislation that proclaimed the NCA under the Omnibus Public Lands Act (2009) qualifies the NCA as a Special Area, allowing for a permit system. ISRPs are a classification of Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to manage for individual recreation use (BLM H-2930-1, Chapt.1, I.D.) which allows for fees to be charged. This plan applies to the two (2) existing campgrounds, future developed campgrounds and/or campsites, and Special Area ISRPs within D-E NCA. The RMP provides a framework that includes goals and decisions for the overall recreation program, and this Business Plan is consistent with RMP decisions, as presented in Appendix A.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

### Administrative Unit

The D-E NCA’s administrative boundary is split between Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) in Upper Colorado River District and Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) in Southwest District. The D-E NCA spans Mesa, Delta, and Montrose counties. This Plan pertains to the D-E NCA’s 1232 recreation fee account (LLCOG03000), which is exclusive to the D-E NCA.

### Overview of D-E NCA Recreation Program

The D-E NCA is part of the BLM’s National Conservation Lands, which offer the American people exceptional opportunities for hunting, solitude, wildlife viewing, fishing, history exploration, scientific research, and a wide range of traditional uses. The D-E NCA comprises 210,172 acres of protected public lands and includes the 66,280-acre Dominguez Canyon Wilderness (Figure 2). The southwest boundary of the NCA borders the Uncompahgre National Forest. The northwest boundary runs along Highway 141 and includes approximately 10 miles of the Tabeguache-Unaweep Scenic and Historic Byway. The northeast boundary is defined by Highway 50 and adjacent private lands. The southeast boundary is defined by Delta-Nucla (25 Mesa) Road, which runs south to the national forest boundary.

Redrock canyons and sandstone bluffs contain geological and paleontological resources spanning 600 million years, as well as many cultural and historic sites. The Ute Tribes today consider these pinyon-juniper-covered lands an important connection to their ancestral past. The Escalante, Cottonwood, Little Dominguez, and Big Dominguez Creeks drain the eastern Uncompahgre Plateau. Elevations in the NCA range from 4,800 to 8,200 feet. Approximately thirty (30) miles of the Gunnison River flow through the NCA, supporting fish, wildlife, and recreation opportunities. The Old Spanish National Historic Trail, a 19th Century land trade route, also passes through the NCA. A variety of wildlife call the area home, including desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, golden eagles, turkeys, elk, mountain lions, black bears, and collared lizards. There are 115 miles of streams and rivers in the NCA. The NCA provides habitat suitable for 52 protected species of animals and plants.

The varied landscape provides for multiple recreation opportunities, including auto touring, historical exploration, picnicking, ATV/UTV riding, biking, horseback riding, backpacking, hiking, rock climbing, bouldering, hunting, fishing, and camping. These opportunities are an important part of the rural, historical lifestyle of generational residents, newcomers, and visitors alike. Moreover, they are an important part of local economies. Visitors can choose to recreate by their own means or by hiring commercial outfitters to guide them.



## Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area

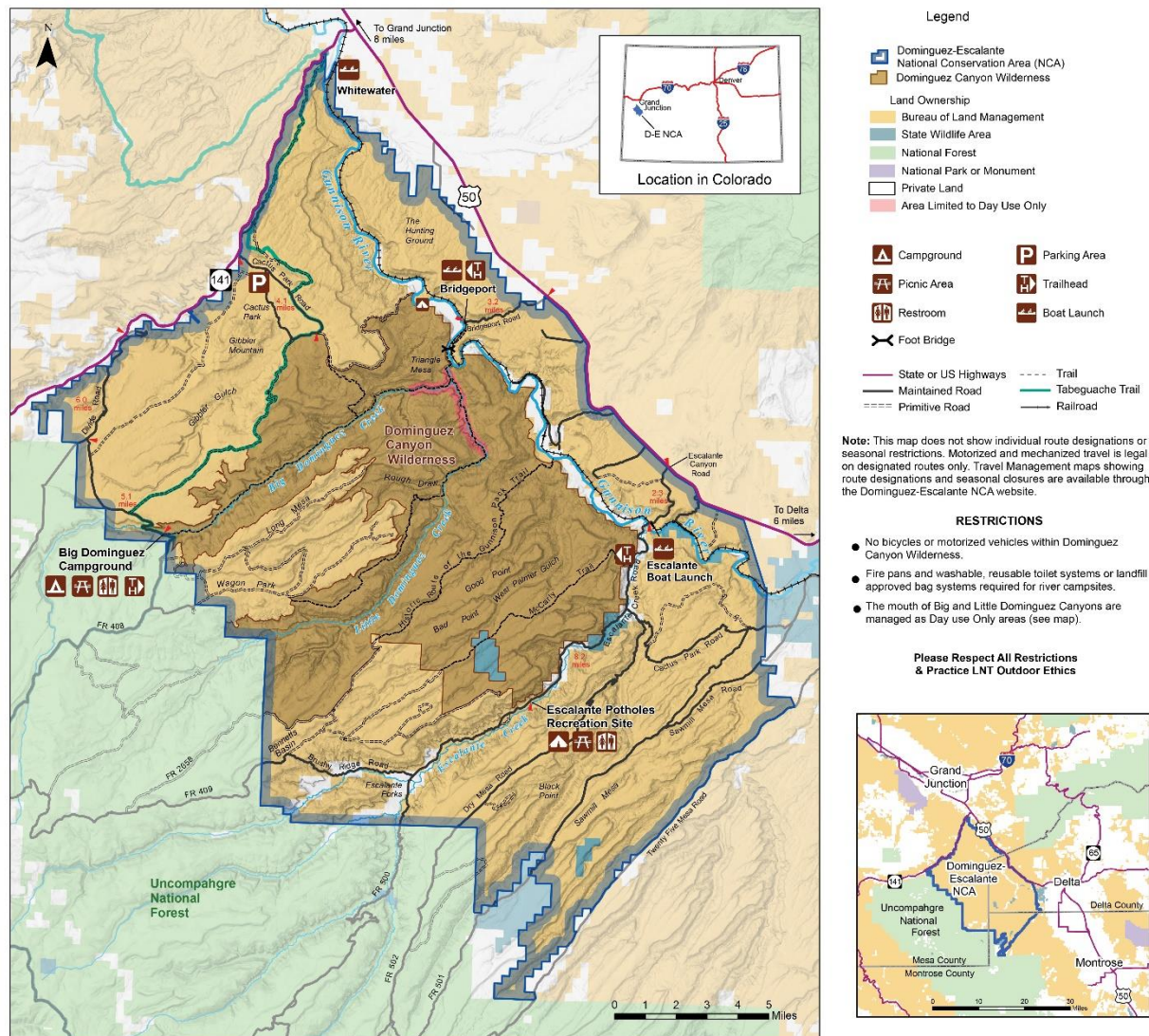


Figure 2 - Overview of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA)

### Stakeholders and Partners

The BLM has engaged stakeholder representatives through the RACs, receiving support for fee proposals. Further engagement with stakeholders will occur through the *Federal Register* Notification process, outreach efforts as more areas and sites are considered for fees, and through public comment periods as part of required NEPA analyses for the development of future campgrounds and/or campsites.

The D-E NCA receives substantial support and added capacity from its friends group and other partnerships. BLM staff, partners and volunteers conduct education, outreach, and stewardship in

the three western Colorado NCAs, engaging with thousands of youth and adults each year across the landscape.



Figure 3 - Volunteer clean-up event within the Gunnison River SRMA in D-E NCA

## DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF D-E NCA RECREATION SITES

### Existing Campgrounds Proposed for Fee

#### Big Dominguez Campground

Big Dominguez Campground (Figure 4) is located north of the Sawmill Mesa/Wagon Park Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA)<sup>1</sup> and west of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness, within the Cactus Park Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)<sup>2</sup>. The Big Dominguez Creek Trailhead intersects the campground. The trail is popular with foot and horse recreational travel and used by grazing permittees to trail cattle from the Gunnison River to their allotments on BLM and Forest Service lands. Mesa County maintains 1.9 miles of road that

<sup>1</sup> An ERMA is an administrative unit that requires specific management consideration to address recreation use, demand, or Recreation & Visitor Services program investments.

<sup>2</sup> An SRMA is an administrative unit where the existing or proposed recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are recognized for their unique value, importance, and/or distinctiveness, especially as compared to other areas used for recreation.



access the campground. High-clearance four-wheel-drive (4WD) vehicles are recommended during inclement weather and when the road has been damaged by erosion. There is a small two-track route that extends from the county-maintained road to the forest boundary. This route is used by 4WD vehicles and ATVs on BLM lands. The primary recreational activities within the area include hiking, horseback riding, and backpacking within the Wilderness and camping and OHV riding outside the Wilderness.

Big Dominguez Campground currently includes the following amenities required by FLREA: tent campsites, picnic tables, agency-provided metal fire rings, vault toilets, access road, and reasonable visitor protection.



Figure 4 – An example of a campsite at Big Dominguez Campground in D-E NCA

#### [Potholes Campground](#)

Potholes Campground is located within the Escalante Canyon SRMA (Figure 5). To access Potholes Campground, visitors turn south from Highway 50 and drive for approximately 11 miles. Recreation opportunities include heritage/scenic touring in Escalante Canyon, big game hunting, OHV riding, picnicking, swimming, and kayaking. The primary recreational activity in the lower part of the canyon is scenic touring. The campground also attracts day-use visitors for picnicking and swimming. During spring runoff following exceptional winters, kayakers have an opportunity to run Class V+ rapids.



Figure 5 – Potholes Campground in D-E NCA

### Potential future fee sites/areas

Where monitoring indicates the BLM requires active mitigation of recreation impacts to ROVs in any given area of the D-E NCA, and/or amenities are provided per FLREA as a means of mitigating impacts to ROVs, the BLM will charge an expanded amenity fee and/or an ISRP fee for Special Area(s). Reference Appendix A for areas foreseen in the RMP as likely requiring intensive recreation management. Figure 6 showcases examples of current dispersed camping areas within D-E NCA.



Figure 6 – Examples of dispersed campsites in Escalante Canyon SRMA within D-E NCA

### Gunnison River SRMA Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRP)

From the city of Delta to the Whitewater take-out, the Gunnison River runs 39 miles, mostly through D-E NCA. A NEPA decision (DOI-BLM-CO-G030-2022-0001-EA) was authorized November 3, 2023 and requires that camping would only be allowed at designated campsites on this Class I and II, family-friendly stretch of river (Figure 7). Currently, self-issue free ISRPs are used to keep track of visitor use numbers. The ISRP was implemented in 2019 following a land use plan decision in the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan of 2017 (REC-SRMA-MA-06, Appendix A). Being an implementation



decision in the land use plan, the Federal Register Notice for the RMP, 82 FR 4410, was sufficient public notice for a free ISRP implementation.

Presently, visitors can camp anywhere on BLM-managed lands. The majority of river campsites have been user-created over time and continue to be utilized. Campsites are primitive, with no developments. Some of the existing campsites are isolated, while others interface with the mouth of Big Dominguez Creek, which is a popular access point for hikers and backpackers into the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. Toilet facilities are available at each boat launch.

ISRP fees would be charged for overnight use of the Gunnison River SRMA (Figure 7); day use would remain free. Proposed ISRP fee structure is outlined in this Plan.

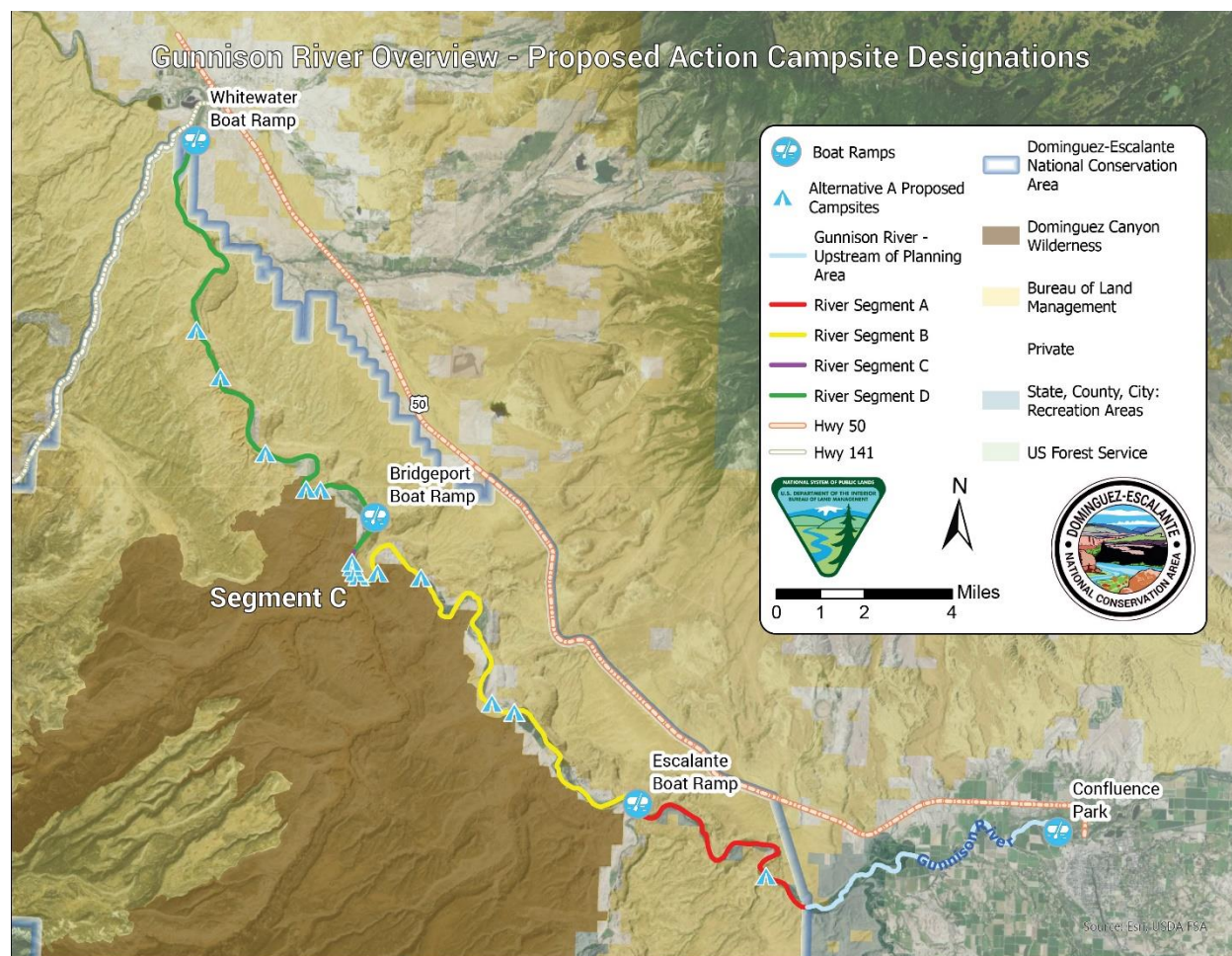


Figure 7 - Special Area (river segments A-D) within Gunnison River SRMA in D-E NCA



Figure 8 - Left: Escalante boat ramp. Right: River campsite within Gunnison River SRMA.

## D-E NCA VISITATION

### Visitor Profile

In FY 2022, an estimated 140,300 people visited the D-E NCA. Table 1 displays visitation to the D-E NCA over the past five years and how it compares to other National Conservation Areas in the region (McInnis NCA and Gunnison Gorge NCA). A “visit” is defined as one visitor entering onto lands or waters managed by the BLM for the purposes of recreation, no matter how long they stay. For example, a family of 5 hiking for one day would be 5 visits. A family of 5 camping in one area for 3 days would still be 5 visits. Visitor use numbers are tracked in the national Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) database. Visitor use numbers are collected through a variety of methods, including traffic and trail counters, estimates made by recreation staff, and special recreation permit holders’ post-use reports. While visitation occurs year-round, the busiest seasons are during spring and fall. Sites are available and open to the public year-round. In the last five years, visitation to the D-E NCA has increased by 36%.

Fiscal Year (FY)*	Total Visits		
	D-E NCA	McInnis NCA	Gunnison Gorge NCA
FY 2018	103,372	264,390	-
FY 2019	95,120	249,402	-
FY 2020	111,812	268,826	-
FY 2021	120,538	308,290	164,985
FY 2022	140,332	299,441	185,835
<b>Average Visits/Year</b>	<b>114,235</b>	<b>278,070</b>	<b>175,410<sup>^</sup></b>

Table 1 – Estimated visits to D-E NCA, McInnis NCA, and Gunnison Gorge NCA, FY 2018-FY 2022

\* Federal fiscal year (FY) runs from October 1 through September 30 of the following year.

<sup>^</sup> Visitor use data collection procedures changed from observational data only to traffic counter AND observational data. Average visits are calculated based on FY21 and FY22, due to more modern data collection procedures.

Other major attractions near D-E NCA that help drive visitation include:



- Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (NPS)
- Colorado National Monument (NPS)
- Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and Wilderness (BLM)
- Grand Mesa National Forest (USFS)
- Colorado River, Ruby-Horsethief Canyons (BLM)
- Mountain Bike trails in the 18 Road/North Fruita Desert area, Mark Ridge/Kokopelli area (BLM)
- Palisade Plunge Trail (USFS and BLM)
- Blue Lakes Trail in the Uncompahgre Wilderness (USFS)

### Visitor Demographics

Several indicators were used to provide insight into the recreational activities occurring in D-E NCA:

- Race, Age, Location, and Gender
  - In FY 2020, staff administered a Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Survey to Gunnison River recreationists in D-E NCA. All respondents except one came from Colorado, though these visitors hailed from 24 different counties across the state. 32% of respondents came from Montrose, Delta, or Mesa counties, the three counties within an hour drive of the D-E NCA. From the demographic data collected, survey respondents were about 50% male and 50% female and generally middle-aged. 85% percent of visitors were adults.
  - The socioeconomic data on BLM recreation users is unknown; however, the U.S. Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring Program (NVUM<sup>3</sup>) 2019 data provides detailed visitation socioeconomic data for nearby forests. NVUM survey results<sup>4</sup> collected on the nearby Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) in fiscal year 2019 provide additional insight into the area's typical recreational user. While these data are several years old and collected on forest, not BLM, lands, the survey remains one of the most accurate means for analyzing regionally specific data concerning recreational visitation.

The survey found:

- 31% of visitors were female and 69% were male
- 97% of visitors were white
- 17% of visitors were under 16; 9% were 20-29; 23% were 30-39; 14% were 40-49; 16% were 50-59; 13% were 60-69, and 8% were 70 or older
- Most visitors came from local areas with approximately 57% of visits by individuals who had traveled less than 50 miles to recreate

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/nvum>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd563500.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd563500.pdf)

## Overview of D-E NCA Recreation Activities

The 2020 “Existing Conditions, Trends, and Projections in Outdoor Recreation” report<sup>5</sup> from Colorado Parks and Wildlife notes that walking and hiking/backpacking are the two most popular outdoor activities in the two tourism districts that include Mesa, Montrose, and Delta counties. The report also notes that 32% of respondents to a 2018 statewide outdoor recreation survey participated in tent camping and 26% in RV camping.

Monitoring by recreation staff confirms that camping and hiking are popular activities in the D-E NCA. However, OHV use, rock climbing, and boating are also prevalent due to the D-E NCA’s high quality, site-specific characteristics necessary to engage in these activities. Staff also note that D-E NCA attracts self-directed visitors who enjoy adventuring into remote places with limited guidance or resources. This is balanced by the fact that the D-E NCA is close to two major highways and has graded, maintained county roads within its boundaries. Access to the D-E NCA, therefore, can be relatively easy and does not necessarily require specialized vehicles, making a large portion of the D-E NCA accessible to a diverse range of recreational interests.

Furthermore, how visitors choose to camp is shifting as well, from simple tent camping to self-contained vans and large RVs, or travel trailers. Visitors are often hauling additional activity gear such as dirt bikes, UTVs, kayaks, or bicycles. Camping in a group remains popular, which indicates a need for some larger sites. Developing recreation sites to accommodate the different ways people want to experience public lands is essential to BLM’s mission.

## Connecting With Communities

Public lands provide unique opportunities for cultural and heritage exploration and tourism. They provide some of the most significant evidence of human prehistory and history within the United States, along with paleontological resources that span hundreds of millions of years. The BLM recreation strategy titled “Connecting with Communities” includes the goals of bolstering economic opportunities in local communities, delivering outstanding recreation experiences to visitors, and sustaining recreation settings on public lands.

## ANTICIPATED FUTURE VISITATION

According to data from the Colorado State Demography Office, the population in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties was 232,174 in 2021. The three-county area comprised 39 percent of the Western Slope’s population. With a population of more than 157,000, Mesa County is the largest county on Colorado’s Western Slope. The population in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties has grown at a slower pace between 2010 and 2020, compared with the prior decade. The three-county population increased at an average annual rate of 0.5 percent from 2010 to 2020, compared with 2.1 percent from 2000 to 2010.

Over the next 10 years, population growth is expected in all three counties. The projected annual average growth rate between 2020 and 2030 is lowest in Delta County, at 0.7 percent. Mesa and Montrose Counties each have projected average annual growth rates of over 1 percent. The

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/Research/SocialScience/Trends-Report-July-2020-Final.pdf>



projected total change in population in the three-county area over this period exceeds 28,000. By 2050, the projected population in Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties could reach nearly 314,000 people.

The growing population base in the Western Slope and across the three-county area is anticipated to drive demand for developed and dispersed recreation opportunities (NVUM study). As a result, visitation to the NCA over the next decade is projected to increase and may lead to demand for new and/or more accessible developed recreation sites.

Geography	Historical Population*					Rate of Population Change (AARC)				Projected Population		
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2021	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2010	2010 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2030	2040	2050
Delta County	20,980	27,834	30,952	31,196	31,673	2.9%	1.1%	0.1%	1.5%	33,518	35,506	36,624
Mesa County	93,145	116,255	146,723	155,703	157,323	2.2%	2.4%	0.6%	1.0%	176,032	202,388	221,563
Montrose County	24,423	33,432	41,276	42,679	43,178	3.2%	2.1%	0.3%	1.2%	48,201	53,418	55,571
Western Slope**	334,208	461,423	554,574	587,702	590,618	3.3%	1.9%	0.6%	0.5%	651,485	731,437	790,017
Colorado	3,294,393	4,301,261	5,029,196	5,773,714	5,814,707	2.7%	1.6%	1.4%	0.7%	6,416,217	7,073,418	7,486,286

Table 2 - Population data for Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties, 1990-2050 (source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office, 2023)

\*Data from 1990 to 2020 is derived from the Historical Census years, and 2021 data is derived from the Colorado Demography Office intercensal estimates.

\*\*The Western Slope is defined using the Colorado Department of Local Affairs' State Demography Office definition including Archuleta, Delta, Dolores, Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, La Plata, Mesa, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Juan, San Miguel, and Summit counties.

Population growth in the region, combined with strong economic growth and organic economic growth in many of the region's industries such as healthcare, transportation, outdoor recreation, and manufacturing, is fueling growth at the local airport. The Grand Junction Regional Airport (GJT) is the largest airport on the Western Slope and one of the largest in Colorado. GJT, along with the aviation-related businesses and facilities, represents a vital and significant regional economic asset and supports the region's growing tourism base. According to the 2020 Economic Impact Study of Colorado Airports, GJT generates \$711 million in annual economic impact for Colorado and supports nearly 3,400 jobs. Growth at the airport is expected to continue with enplanements forecasted to increase at a rate of 2.6 percent through 2027, according to the GJT Master Plan. The facility is also home to several large, commercial, and non-commercial aviation organizations such as the BLM.

## FEE PROPOSAL

The proposed expanded amenity fee for each upland campsite is \$20 per night (up to 2 vehicles included and no more than 5 participants per vehicle). For larger capacity sites, as identified by the BLM, each additional vehicle beyond the first two vehicles will be \$10 each. A vehicle is

defined as legal transportation used to access the site (e.g., car, truck, motorcycle, van, or other wheeled conveyance). Participants may include non-human participants (e.g., dogs, horses, alpacas, etc.).

The proposed ISRP fee for the Gunnison River is \$20 per night for small groups (1-5 participants), \$50 per night for medium groups (6-14 participants), and \$100 per night for large groups (15-25 participants). Participants may include non-human participants (e.g., dogs, horses, alpacas, etc.).

The BLM will use various e-commerce technologies, as directed in Instruction Memorandum 2022-019, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve (if option is available), and pay for a site. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service Recreation.gov.

As BLM implements e-commerce solution options, a service fee would be charged in addition to the site fees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G). Current service fees can range from \$0.50 to \$10.00. The service fee is subject to contracting requirements on e-commerce and will be adjusted as that contract changes. E-commerce solutions offer the added benefit of secure fee collection and labor cost savings for BLM staff. Further, e-commerce solutions typically provide reports of occupied and unoccupied sites which facilitates occasional patrol and enforcement by law enforcement officers.

To account for inflation or other economic changes, this business plan also proposes tying the new fee structure to the Western U.S. Consumer Price Index (CPI). Fees would be reviewed annually against this index. The BLM would institute an automatic commensurate increase, rounded to the nearest whole dollar, if CPI rises by 20% from the date of approval of this plan. This process would be repeated further based on a 20% increase of the CPI from the date of the last BLM price increase. For example, at the date of publication of this business plan, the CPI was 329.330. A 20% increase would occur when CPI reaches 395.2068.

BLM would implement the above fee structure as proposed and then would reference the CPI through the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, specifically targeting the CPI closer to rural Western Colorado by using the monthly Western US CPI. This CPI targets the entire western US outside of the large metro areas that have their own CPIs calculated separately. While this is not a CPI for only Western Colorado, it does target the rural west and is the closest CPI that would represent the region. A yearly average of this CPI is published every January. This would create a more sustainable and consistent funding source that would increase assurances for users that the program could continue to provide regular maintenance and necessary capital improvements into the future. Fees could be adjusted without resubmitting a business plan. BLM would return to the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) after each fee increase (approximately every 4-5 years) to update the RAC on successes and challenges in using the Western U.S. CPI.

## **CURRENT OPERATING COSTS**

Table 3 shows an estimate of annual costs to maintain, repair, improve, and monitor the recreation sites within D-E NCA as of FY 2022. The operating costs depict the summary of total



obligations for D-E NCA. The projected costs for developed amenities, visitor services, security, and maintenance are based on anticipated site development and costs of collecting fees.

Service/Item Provided	Current Cost (FY 22)	Projected Cost (expanded amenity Sites)	Projected Cost (Special Area)
Visitor Information (kiosks, brochures, and other signage)	\$1,300	\$2,400	\$600
Cleaning Supplies (toilet paper, PPE, etc.)	\$1,200	\$2,000	\$500
Weed Control	\$1,900	\$2,000	\$500
Repairs	\$1,500	\$2,400	\$600
Toilets (pumping and service)	\$11,600	\$12,000	\$3,000
Equipment	\$1,100	\$2,000	\$500
Vehicle and gas	\$6,300	\$10,400	\$2,600
GS-7 Seasonal Park Ranger (80% in expanded amenity sites, 20% in Special Area)	\$30,000 (6 months)	\$50,405 (10 months)	\$12,601 (10 months)
GS-7 Full-time Park Ranger (80% in expanded amenity sites, 20% in Special Area)	\$44,000 (6 months)	\$53,451 (10 months)	\$13,363 (10 months)
Law Enforcement Support	\$13,350	\$16,000	\$4,000
Overhead/Admin (Outdoor Recreation Planner, NCA Manager, fee collection and processing* etc.)	\$6,950	\$11,200	\$2,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$82,250</b>	<b>\$164,255</b>	<b>\$41,064</b>

Table 3 - Current annual operating costs and projected operating costs in D-E NCA. Projected costs are based on estimated new developments.

*\*Fee collection and processing is subject to change dependent upon how e-commerce is implemented.*

The operating costs of maintaining the campgrounds include specialized equipment (e.g., facilities trailer, and cleaning truck equipped with hot water pressure washer), construction equipment (e.g., skid-steer loader), labor, contractual services, amortized costs associated with development of amenities, printing and reproduction, communications, utilities, supplies, materials, vehicles, and travel. Annual operating costs for the recreation program also include monitoring of visitor use, law enforcement services, and trash disposal (including illegal dump clean-ups). Up to seven (7) employees (permanent, career seasonal, or seasonal) currently provide services to the recreation program. Additional overhead/admin costs of administering the recreation program include managerial support, engineering collaboration, and office support.

## USE OF RECREATION FEES

Expanded amenity Sites	Quantity	Item Price	Total Price	20-year amortization
Vault Toilet	3	\$50,000/each	\$150,000	\$7,500
Picnic Table	61	\$500/each	\$30,500	\$1,525
Fire Rings	61	\$800/each	\$48,800	\$2,440
Site Engineering	3	\$35,000/site	\$105,000	\$5,250
Vehicle	0.5	\$6,000/year	\$3,000	\$150
Site Delineation (90 ft/ site)	61	\$100/ft	\$549,000	\$27,450
<b>Total over Time</b>			<b>\$886,300</b>	<b>\$44,315</b>

Table 4 - Projected cost of all necessary amenities to establish expanded amenity fee sites in D-E NCA.

Special Area(s)	Quantity	Item Price	Total Price	20-year amortization
Vault Toilet	1	\$50,000/each	\$50,000	\$2,500
Picnic Table	0	\$500/each	\$0	\$0
Fire Rings	0	\$800/each	\$0	\$0
Site Engineering	1	\$35,000/site	\$35,000	\$1,750
Vehicle	1	\$6,000/year	\$3,000	\$150
Site Delineation (90 ft/ site)	2	\$100/ft.	\$18,000	\$900
<b>Total over Time</b>			<b>\$106,000</b>	<b>\$5,300</b>

Table 5 - Projected cost associated with administration of Special Area(s).

The ability to charge fees at sites with expanded amenities and/or Special Areas would better ensure support for continued maintenance and operations if government appropriated funding changes. If appropriated funding were to remain the same or increase, fee revenue would enable the D-E NCA to institute improvements to the recreation amenities (see Table 3 for operating costs) as well as undertake some capital expenditures.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 above show estimated expenses associated with providing quality recreation experiences while also promoting sustainable use of the resource. Specifically, Tables 4 and 5 detail anticipated costs of capital investments required for sustainable recreation use of these areas in the future. In the far-right column in Tables 4 and 5, the 20-year amortized cost represents the annual cost to the government to provide amenities for the expected lifespan of said amenities.

Colorado directive for funds collected through user fees identifies the following as appropriate expenditures of user fees:

1. Repair, maintenance, and enhancement of recreation fee site projects.



2. Interpretation, visitor information, visitor services, and signs that directly benefit fee sites and areas where SRPs operate.
3. Habitat restoration directly related to wildlife-dependent recreation that is limited to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, or photography.
4. Law enforcement directly related to public use and recreation that benefits fee sites and SRP program.
5. Direct, operating or capital, costs associated with the cost of collecting and processing the recreation fee.
6. Support of volunteer and partnership projects, and similar partnership authorities related to recreation activities in fee areas or where SRPs operate.

The priorities for use of fee revenue are, first, to provide benefits at the site of collection; second, to establish new recreation sites as needed on lands within the D-E NCA; and third, to offset existing and new BLM recreation site costs within the same state. Future campsite developments will be considered primarily on the basis of recreation monitoring and resource impacts. Fees would be implemented at individual sites upon establishment of required amenities. Fees in Special Areas will be used primarily to increase monitoring and patrol by BLM personnel as well as establishment and maintenance of amenities necessary to protect ROVs of the area. Emphasis will be given to visitor services such as education, outreach, and stewardship of public lands through BLM staff and partners.

### **Fund Balance Maintenance**

Colorado directive for funds collected through user fees states that funds received from the public must be spent on activities which directly benefit the site or activity where the funds were collected. Two specific accounts will be created, one for expanded amenity sites and one for Special Area(s) in D-E NCA.

These funds are only supplemental to federally allocated funds received from BLM Headquarters. The BLM office will determine the most effective use of these funds with the maximum beneficial return for the site and/or the activity for which it was collected. Funds may be carried over to provide for expensive projects which would benefit the users. The balance will be managed as a working capital fund, with the goal of investing in facilities and services that will promote program growth consistent with visitor demand.

## **RECREATION FEE RATE ANALYSIS**

BLM policy proposes the use of two methods to calculate proposed recreation fee rates: the Cost Recovery and Fair Market Value methods. With the Cost Recovery method, a fee rate is calculated to provide revenue to recover the projected estimated annual operating and maintenance costs. With the Fair Market Value method, a fee rate is calculated to be comparable with fees charged at similar or comparable federal, state, and local recreation sites, particularly in the respective geographic area of the D-E NCA.

### **Cost Recovery Fee Calculation Method**

To predict the revenue that would be generated by the proposed fee areas, BLM utilized average visitor use numbers as shown on Table 1. However, with no current fees established in these areas, there is not information to estimate fee compliance. Since these would be all new fees, D-

E NCA are estimating between 50% and 100% fee compliance. This range was used to calculate the fee rate which the BLM would need to charge to cover costs estimated in Tables 3, 4, and 5. The daily rate to recover cost column shows the amount which, if paid by visitors under various scenarios (rows in Table 6), would ensure that the people of the United States receive a fair and equitable return for the use of these facilities to help recover the cost[s].

	Estimated number of sites	Estimated number of usable days	Estimated occupancy rate	Estimated revenue days*	Annual cost of operations^	Daily rate to recover cost #
<b>Future sites (100% fee compliance)</b>	70	200	0.65	9100	\$208,570	\$22.92
<b>Future sites (90% fee compliance)</b>	70	200	0.65	8190	\$208,570	\$25.47
<b>Future sites (60% fee compliance)</b>	70	200	0.65	5460	\$208,570	\$38.20
<b>Future sites (50% fee compliance)</b>	70	200	0.65	4550	\$208,570	\$45.84
<b>Existing sites (100% fee compliance)</b>	9	200	0.65	1170	\$82,250	\$70.30

Table 6 - Cost recovery rate calculations for expanded amenity fee sites.

\* Estimated revenue days = (number of sites) x (number of usable days) x (occupancy rate) x (fee compliance rate)

^ Annual cost of operations = (total projected cost from Table 3) + (20-year amortization from Table 4)

# Daily rate to recover cost = (annual cost of operations) / (estimated revenue days)

The cost recovery calculations in Table 6 display hypothetical expanded amenity fee rates required to cover the annual cost of operations. The bottom row shows the existing sites and the cost to the government for provision of 9 sites with expanded amenities which currently do not charge a fee.

	Estimated number of sites	Estimated number of usable days	Estimated occupancy rate	Estimated revenue days*	Annual cost of operations^	Daily rate to recover cost #
<b>Special Area with fees (100% fee compliance)</b>	14	125	0.6	1050	\$46,364	\$44.16
<b>Special Area with fees (90% fee compliance)</b>	14	125	0.6	945	\$46,364	\$49.06



<b>Special Area with fees (60% fee compliance)</b>	14	125	0.6	630	\$46,364	\$73.59
<b>Special Area with fees (50% fee compliance)</b>	14	125	0.6	525	\$46,364	\$88.31
<b>Special Area currently no fees (100% permit compliance)</b>	14	125	0.6	1050	\$16,450	\$15.67
<b>Special Area currently no fees (50% permit compliance)</b>	14	125	0.6	525	\$16,450	\$31.33

Table 7 - Cost recovery rate calculations for Special Area ISRP fees.

\* Estimated revenue days = (number of sites) x (number of usable days) x (occupancy rate) x (fee compliance rate).

^ Annual cost of operations = (total projected cost from Table 3) + (20-year amortization from Table 5)

# Daily rate to recover cost = (annual cost of operations) / (estimated revenue days)

The cost recovery calculations in Table 7 display hypothetical Special Area ISRP fee rates required to cover the annual cost of operations, including the cost to provide additional amenities from Table 5 and increased monitoring by BLM staff from Table 3. The bottom two rows show the existing sites and the cost to the government for provision of 14 sites, without additional needed infrastructure and monitoring, which currently do not charge a fee.

### Fair Market Value Fee Calculation Method

In addition to providing the cost recovery fee calculation method, this section of the Plan uses the Fair Market Value assessment approach to calculate the proposed fees. This approach compares the fees charged at campgrounds near D-E NCA, including privately-owned campgrounds (Tables 8 and 9). As Table 8 highlights, the proposed fee of \$20 a night for a campsite is congruent with other regional campground fees with similar amenities. Table 9 demonstrates in more detail how D-E NCA compares to other sites in the area. Similarly, proposed Special Area fees for the Gunnison River in D-E NCA mirror those of Ruby-Horsethief stretch of the Colorado River in McInnis NCA.

<b>BLM Proposal</b>	<b>Private (more amenities)</b>	<b>Federal/state (more amenities)</b>	<b>Federal/state (similar amenities)</b>	<b>Federal/state (fewer amenities)</b>
\$20/night	\$50/night	\$30/night	\$20/night	\$16/night

Table 8 - Overview of fair market value fee calculation, BLM proposal relative to private and other federal/state sites.

Site	Agency	Fees	Amenities
<b>Public Campgrounds</b>			
Rabbit Valley, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area	Bureau of Land Management	\$20/site/night \$50/group site/night	Vault toilets, picnic tables, fire rings
18 Road/North Fruita Desert Campground	Bureau of Land Management	\$20/site/night	Vault toilets, picnic tables, fire rings
Saddlehorn Campground, Colorado National Monument	National Park Service	\$22/site/night (plus entrance fee)	Flush toilets, drinking water, picnic tables, grills
South Rim Campground, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park	National Park Service	\$16/site/night \$22/site/night (electric)	Vault toilets, drinking water, picnic tables, electric hook-ups
Cobbett Lake Campground	US Forest Service	\$16/site/night	Vault toilets, drinking water, trash collection, picnic tables, fire rings
Jumbo Campground	US Forest Service	\$22/site/night \$30/site/night (electric)	Vault toilets, drinking water, trash collection, picnic tables, fire rings
<b>Special Areas</b>			
Gunnison Gorge Wilderness ISRPs	Bureau of Land Management	\$3/day/person (day use) \$10/day/person (1 night) \$15/day/person (2 nights)	Developed parking at boat ramps, toilet facilities, interpretive kiosks, campsite posts
Ruby-Horsethief ISRPs	Bureau of Land Management	\$20/night for small group (1-5 people) \$50/night for medium group (6-14 people) \$100/night for large group (15-25 people)	Developed parking at boat ramps, toilet facilities, interpretive kiosks, campsite posts



Private Campgrounds <sup>6</sup>			
Cedar Creek RV	Private	\$27.41/night (tent) \$48.50/night (electric)	Flush toilets, showers, RV sanitary station, electric hook-ups, drinking water, Wi-Fi
KOA-Montrose	Private	Minimum \$50/night (price goes up depending on multiple factors)	Flush toilets, showers, RV sanitary station, laundry, electric hook-ups, drinking water, Wi-Fi, picnic tables, fire rings

Table 9 - Fair market value table for campgrounds in the area

## FEE DISCOUNTS

Section 5 of FLREA provided for the establishment of a single interagency national pass known as the America the Beautiful Pass – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. Holders of the Interagency Senior and Access passes may receive 50% off expanded amenity fees. This includes overnight camping at campgrounds. No discount or fee-free days would apply to Special Area ISRPs.

## IMPACTS FROM CHARGING RECREATION FEES

D-E NCA thoroughly considered the potential impacts from establishing fees at expanded amenity sites and Special Area(s). The following is an overview of impacts on visitors and the environment, non-market values and benefits, impacts on local economies, as well as socioeconomic impacts from the establishment of fees.

### Impacts on Visitors and the Environment

High quality recreation opportunities in the western slope of Colorado are valued by local communities, as well as statewide and nationwide visitors. Recreational opportunities, including camping on public lands, are major reasons many residents choose to live here. The BLM expects the demand for camping, and associated recreation on public lands, to only increase in the future. As area visitation increases, it often leads to negative natural resource impacts, such as more litter, human waste, and vegetation damage. It is becoming difficult to maintain the recreation sites in their current conditions and without fee revenues. Implementing fees at the proposed recreation sites would improve the quality of the visitor experience by supporting more amenities, increasing the presence of rangers, and enhancing education and outreach efforts. Fees ultimately help to enable responsible recreation, thus protecting the environment for present and future visitors.

### Nonmarket Values and Benefits

The term nonmarket values refer to the benefits individuals attribute to experiences of the environment or uses of natural and cultural resources that do not involve market transactions, and therefore lack prices. Examples include the perceived benefits received from wildlife

<sup>6</sup> Represents a minimum fee. Does not include taxes or reservation fees. Camping fees also vary by length of vehicle, whether or not a trailer has slide outs, the number of people and/or pets, days of the week, and months of the year. Prices shown reflect the lowest published per night price. Fees can increase greatly with the presence of any of the above factors. For example, most private campgrounds charge extra for any persons over two per site.

viewing, hiking in a wilderness, camping in a semi-wild setting with friends and family, or recreational hunting. Nevertheless, such values are important to consider because they help tell the entire economic story. Estimates of nonmarket values supplement estimates of income generated from commodity uses to provide a more complete picture of the economic implications of proposed resource management decisions.

Numerous studies document that individuals are often willing to pay more than their actual costs for a particular recreational experience. This is termed *consumer surplus* or *net willingness to pay*, the amount an individual would have been willing to pay for an environmental benefit minus the amount actually expended.

For instance, hikers pay a market price for gasoline used to reach a trail but may pay nothing to use the trail itself. Similarly, campers may pay a fee for this activity, but may be willing to pay more due to the “free” economic benefit accruing to this experience. Any amount that a recreationist would be willing to pay to use this otherwise free or underpriced resource represents the nonmarket consumer surplus value of that resource to that consumer.

Nonmarket use values have been studied extensively for a wide variety of recreation “goods.” A recent study<sup>7</sup> commissioned by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) examined studies designed to measure consumer surplus for a wide variety of recreation activities that typically occur on USFS lands, including camping at developed sites. Although the examined studies show a large degree of variation across geographies, they do show considerable degrees of consumer surplus for the studied activities. Of interest to the current project, the authors determined that camping in developed campgrounds, or sites with development amenities such as fire pits, electricity, toilets, picnic tables, and parking, on USFS land produced an average consumer surplus of \$35.28 per visitor day in the Rocky Mountain Region. This represents the amount of benefit campers are receiving above and beyond the actual fee charged. These average value estimates are what we would expect the economic benefit to be, conditional on available information and holding all else constant.

Although one may quibble with the various methodologies these studies employ, it is well documented that recreationists are deriving value well beyond the fees charged.

### Impacts on Local Economies

Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties’ economies are heavily dependent upon tourism, and each county stands to benefit from more recreation opportunities. Many tourists and locals alike prefer to camp at public campgrounds and are looking for reasonably priced fee sites. The BLM proposes to expand provision of amenities and advance administration of Special Areas in response to increased visitation and associated impacts. Thus, the establishment of more fee sites is an indicator of increased visitation which represents a boon to gateway communities and their local businesses. Visitors typically contribute to local economies on their way to and from public

---

<sup>7</sup> Rosenberger, Randall S.; White, Eric M.; Kline, Jeffrey D.; Cvitanovich, Claire. 2017. Recreation economic values for estimating outdoor recreation economic benefits from the National Forest System. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNWGTR-57. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station



lands through the purchase of lodging and a variety of consumables (e.g., fuel, food, equipment, etc.). Facilities that meet the needs of visitors are likely to continue to attract visitation and result in an economic benefit to local communities and the economy.

#### Socioeconomic impacts, including low-income populations and environmental justice communities

Recreation on BLM-administered lands supported \$1.4 billion in economic output and 11,000 jobs in Colorado in fiscal year (FY) 2021. Colorado's 2019 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was developed in close collaboration with a wide range of partners to provide a shared vision for the future of Colorado's outdoors. Surveys conducted as part of SCORP are used to identify recreation participation in Colorado regionally and statewide for residents of the state. Studies found that 92% of all adult residents engaged in outdoor recreational activities in 2019.

The socioeconomic data on BLM recreation users is unknown; however, the U.S. Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring Program (NVUM) 2019 data provides detailed visitation socioeconomic data for nearby forests including the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests adjacent to BLM-managed public lands. Over 73% of visitors traveled to these forests to recreate. The majority of visitors traveled from the nearby area. Specifically, 57 percent of visitation is from the area within 50 miles, while 43 percent of visitation is from over 51 miles.

The NVUM study further asked visitors to report their household incomes by category. The following data was gathered:

<b>Annual Household Income Category</b>	<b>National Forest Visits (%)</b>
Under \$25,000	4.7
\$25,000 to \$49,999	11.3
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.0
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.8
\$100,000 to \$149,999	11.4
More than \$150,000	39.8

Table 10 - Annual household income of visitors traveling to Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

*Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding.*

Many tourists prefer to camp at public campgrounds; capacity at adjacent National Forest campgrounds is exceeded for the majority of the camping season. These campers rely on BLM and private campgrounds as many cannot afford the high cost of hotel accommodations in the area or would prefer developed camping to dispersed camping. Those who vacation away from home are more likely to be above average in income and in particular, recreation visitors to the area have a higher-than-average income profile than the population at large. As indicated in

Table 10 above, 64% of household incomes exceed \$75,000 that are visiting nearby forests. Furthermore, BLM campgrounds offer a very low-cost alternative to staying in a hotel in the area (where prices can range from \$60 to over \$150 per room per night during the season). This low-cost alternative is particularly important at the group sites, where groups can enjoy the amenities of the area at a very low cost.

Impacts to low-income or minority populations are not expected to be significant, as there are other free dispersed camping areas managed by the BLM and the nearby US Forest Service's Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests. Furthermore, there are discounted rates (50%) for camping for seniors and those with disabilities. An environmental justice screening was completed for Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties. Based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data as used by EPA's EJScreen tool (U.S. EPA 2023; U.S. Census Bureau 2021), all three counties have low-income populations that meet the criteria for being identified as environmental justice populations compared with the state reference.

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Low Income<sup>##</sup></b>	<b>Minority<sup>*</sup></b>	
Delta County	<b>39.6 percent</b>	19.2 percent	
Mesa County	<b>31.7 percent</b>	19.1 percent	
Montrose County	<b>31.3 percent</b>	24.1 percent	
Colorado	23.6 percent	33.2 percent	
(Reference area) <sup>^#</sup>		36.5 percent (MGA)	

Table 11 - Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties environmental justice baseline data

\* EPA EJScreen: <http://www.epa.gov/ejscreen> (accessed 06/21/2023); BLM EJ Mapping Tool

Note: A minority community of concern is present if the percentage of the population identified as belonging to a minority group in a study area is 1) equal to or greater than 50 percent of the population OR 2) meets the "meaningfully greater" threshold. Meaningfully greater is calculated by comparing the minority group population percentage with 110 percent of the reference area minority population. A low-income community of concern is present if 1) the population experiencing poverty in one or more study area geographies are near, at, or below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold of the reference area OR 2) if the population of the community experiencing poverty is at or above 50 percent.

<sup>^</sup> Headwaters Economics BLM EPS and SEP: <https://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/blm-profiles/> (accessed 06/21/2023) # American Community Survey, 5-Year 2017-2021 Estimates: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table> (accessed 06/21/2023)

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

As part of the proposal to establish camping fees, to develop new campgrounds, to expand existing campgrounds, and to establish ISRPs in Special Area(s), the Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) and Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) will conduct the following outreach efforts to notify the public of opportunity to review and provide comments:

- Post the Draft Business Plan on the blm.gov website
- Publish a news story in the *Grand Junction Sentinel*



- Publish a news story in the *Montrose Daily Press*
- Issue a News Release to print and broadcast media
- Post the fee proposal notice (in English and Spanish) at affected recreation sites

Prior to developing campsites and/or charging fees, the following outreach will occur:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and public comment period(s) for applicable future developments
- Publishing a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* for a minimum of 6 months prior to establishment of fees
- Publishing news stories about the *Federal Register* Notice of Intent
- Posting *Federal Register* notice near each of the affected recreation sites
- The BLM collects fee expenditure information annually and will post information on how FLREA fee revenue is spent in each campground. This information will be posted online<sup>8</sup>.

The BLM presented the topic of fees in D-E NCA at the combined NW and SW RAC meeting on March 30, 2023 and again to the NW RAC in June 22, 2023 during the development of this plan. The BLM will review and consider public comments and revise the draft business plan as needed, then finalize the business plan and present to the Southwest and Northwest Resource Advisory Councils (RAC)'s for their review and recommendations. Comments from both the public at large and the RAC would be considered prior to approval of the business plan. BLM will continue to review fees using the CPI and will inform them of actions taken regarding fee increases.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.blm.gov/colorado/flrea-revenue-and-spending-plans/annual-report/spend-plan-grand-junction-field-office>

## APPENDIX A. D-E NCA RMP Recreation Objectives and Guidance

Recreation	
REC-OBJ-01: Provide quality recreational opportunities that are consistent with, and contribute to, the conservation, protection and enhancement of the resources that were identified as purposes of the designation of the D-E NCA. Manage recreation consistent with biological, natural, and cultural resource objectives.	
Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs) General Guidance	
<p>Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs) are recreation areas that are managed to support and sustain the principal recreation activities and the associated qualities and conditions of the ERMA. ERMA management is commensurate and considered in context with the management of other resources and resource uses. The following general approaches apply to protect activities within the ERMAs designated in this RMP:</p> <p>In ERMAs, new recreation facilities (e.g., trails, trailheads, restrooms) to effectively address demand for identified recreation activity created by growing communities and recreation-tourism will be considered if 1) the proposal is consistent with interdisciplinary land use plan objectives; and 2) sufficient funding and long-term management commitments are secured from internal BLM sources and/or managing partners, visitor fees, or other sources.</p> <p>In ERMAs, BLM funding and staff will be prioritized toward effectively addressing visitor health and safety and user interaction issues and resource protection issues created by recreation activities.</p>	
Ninemile Hill ERMA	
REC-ERMA-AU-06: Limit vehicle camping to designated, undeveloped vehicle campsites (outside of developed campgrounds). Dispersed horse and foot camping is allowed outside designated sites if at a distance greater than ¼ mile off motorized routes.	
Sawmill Mesa/Wagon Park ERMA	
REC-ERMA-AU-20: Escalante Triangle RMZ: Limit overnight camping to designated campsites and/or developed campgrounds.	REC-ERMA-MA-19: If additional management controls are needed to control camping, construct a developed campground in or near the Escalante Triangle RMZ, outside the River Rims ACEC.
Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) General Guidance	
SRMAs are managed to protect and enhance a targeted set of activities, experiences, benefits, and desired recreation setting characteristics. SRMAs may be subdivided into recreation management zones to further delineate specific recreation opportunities. Within SRMAs, management of recreation and visitor services is recognized as the predominant land management focus, where specific recreation opportunities and recreation setting characteristics are managed and protected on a long-term basis.	
Gunnison River SRMA	
REC-SRMA-AU-03: Limit overnight camping to designated campsites (outside of developed campgrounds).	REC-SRMA-MA-06: Implement a Special Area SRP requirement for all overnight private boaters (for the purpose of monitoring and to achieve RMA objectives).
Cactus Park SRMA	



REC-SRMA-AU-20: Designate campsites within the RMA. Overnight camping limited to developed campgrounds and designated campsites.	REC-SRMA-AU-11: Limit overnight camping to designated campsites and/or campgrounds.
<b>Escalante Canyon SRMA</b>	
REC-SRMA-AU-20: Designate campsites within the RMA. Overnight camping limited to developed campgrounds and designated campsites.	

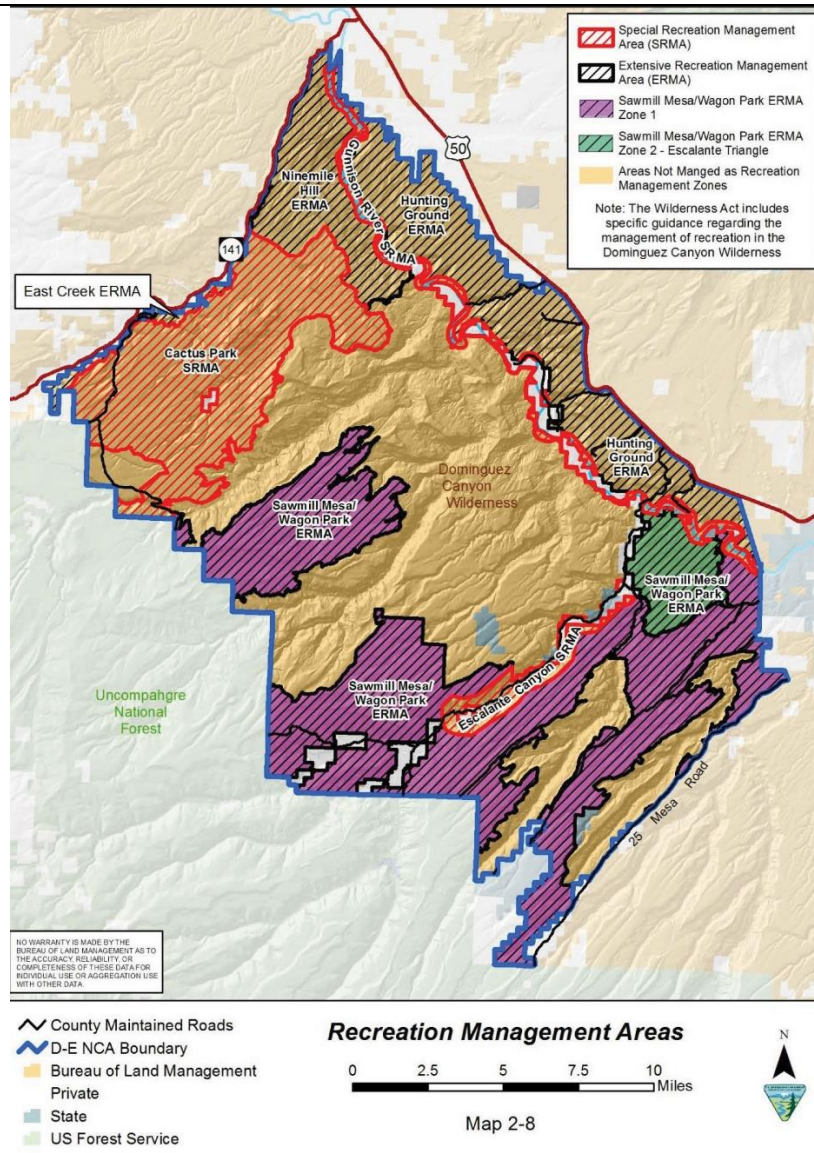
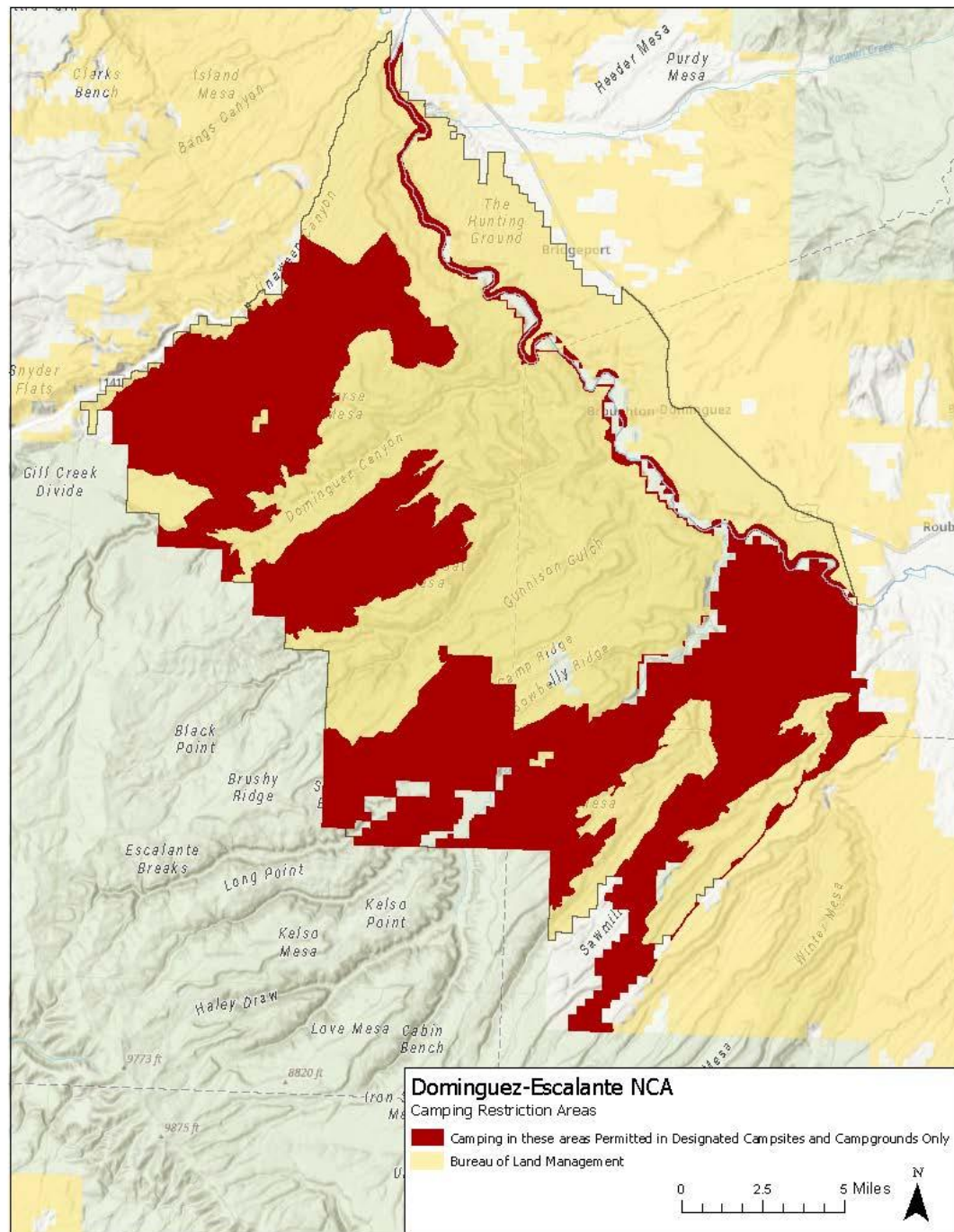


Figure 9 - D-E NCA Recreation Management Areas

## APPENDIX B. Dispersed Camping Restriction Areas in Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area





## FIGURES

Figure 1 - Flow chart of adaptive management for campsite development

Figure 2 - Overview of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA)

Figure 3 - Volunteer Clean-Up Event within the Gunnison River SRMA in D-E NCA

Figure 4 – An example of a campsite at Big Dominguez Campground in D-E NCA

Figure 5 – Potholes Campground in D-E NCA

Figure 6 – Examples of Dispersed Campsites in Escalante Canyon SRMA within D-E NCA

Figure 7 - Special Area (river segments A-D) within Gunnison River SRMA in D-E NCA

Figure 8 - Left: Escalante Boat Ramp. Right: River campsite within Gunnison River SRMA

Figure 9 - D-E NCA Recreation Management Areas

## TABLES

Table 1 – Estimated Visits to D-E NCA, McInnis NCA, and Gunnison Gorge NCA, FY 2018-FY 2022

Table 2 - Population Data for Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties, 1990-2050 (source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office, 2023)

Table 3 - Current annual operating costs and projected operating costs in D-E NCA. Projected costs are based on estimated new developments

Table 4 - Projected cost of all necessary amenities to establish recreation fees in D-E NCA. This table only predicts for expanded amenity sites

Table 5 - Projected cost associated with administration of Special Areas

Table 6 - Cost recovery rate calculations for expanded amenity fee sites

Table 7 - Cost recovery rate calculations for Special Area fees

Table 8 - Overview of fair market value fee calculation, BLM proposal relative to private and other federal/state sites.

Table 9 - Fair market value table for campgrounds in the area

Table 10 - Annual Household Income of Visitors Traveling to Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

Table 11 - Delta, Mesa, and Montrose Counties Environmental Justice Baseline Data



# Public Comment Period

In Person Overview

Zoom Participants Overview

One public comment received via email





# Public Comment Received

[EXTERNAL] Fw: racs decimating environment public commetn on federal register

o <bk1492@aol.com>

Sat 3/23/2024 12:54

To:Emerson, Jubal (JD) <jemerson@blm.gov>;speakerjohnson@mail.house.gov <speakerjohnson@mail.house.gov>;  
tom.kean@mail.house.gov <tom.kean@mail.house.gov>;info@aarp.org <info@aarp.org>  
Cc:info@cagw.org <info@cagw.org>;info@peta.org <info@peta.org>;info@idausa.org <info@idausa.org>;info@cok.net  
<info@cok.net>;info@mercyforanimals.org <info@mercyforanimals.org>

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

i am writing to please for the lives of the wild horses, burros, wildlife that tries to stay alive on our native lands, despite that creuel abuvise selfish human beings want to kill them all to make money off their bodies and to take any land they try to exist on. i am strongly for the animals having use of that natinoal land i want that environment to be protected and preserved for gods creatures. i find the blm is a vicious agency that has no idea of land protection and what it means for the life span of the human race and how necessary suchland prote tion is for all of us. instead teh nasty vicious destructive blm sees all nature simply there to rob and destroy to make money from. we cannot have that. that is killing us all. it is a ruinous philosophy and the blm usda only has that view. i am for taking all monies from blm at this point that are for helicopter roundups or any of that ilk. blm should have zero dollars for roundups at this time. protection of our national lands shoudl be the only thing we spend our american tax dollars onl prote tion and preservation. not destruction.b ker bk1492@aol.com



# **NW and SW RAC breakout sessions**

**SW RAC will remain on main Zoom meeting**

**NW RAC will have separate Zoom breakout meeting at**

**[https://blm.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltfuisqjgtG8j7\\_xWh2oEkTCKzgTWbSKs#/registration](https://blm.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltfuisqjgtG8j7_xWh2oEkTCKzgTWbSKs#/registration)**

**NW RAC breakout session Zoom link is also on NW RAC website**

**<https://www.blm.gov/get-involved/resource-advisory-council/near-you/colorado/northwest-rac>**

# Northwest Resource Advisory Council

## Field Manager Updates May 2024

### Northwest District

#### Kremmling Field Office (KFO – Kremmling)

Steve Leonard, Field Manager, (970) 724-3002, [sleonard@blm.gov](mailto:sleonard@blm.gov)

**Supplemental Rules** - Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO), Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO), Kremmling Field Office (KFO), and the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA) in northern Colorado are publishing a proposed supplementary rule in the Federal Register for a 60-day public comment. The rule would implement decisions related to resource protection and public health and safety issues that were addressed in each field office resource management plan. Each unit has proposed rules that address specific concerns and general rules that apply to all four units. All four sets of rules are being announced through the same process to avoid concurrent, redundant processes.

The BLM will accept public comments on the draft supplementary rule for 60 days from publication in the Federal Register (March 25, 2024). Public comments on the proposed rule should be specific, confined to the issues pertaining to the rule, and should explain the reason for any recommended changes. The BLM would also appreciate feedback on the clarity of the rule. Comments may be submitted through the ePlanning website at

**North Park Restoration Area** - The Kremmling Field Office will receive 5 million dollars for investment in aquatic, riparian, wetland and terrestrial habitat improvements, fuels reduction and invasive species management will preserve historic and cultural sites and enhance recreational opportunities. The Kremmling Field Office will initiate the following projects in 2024 for the North Park Restoration area.

**Bolton Draw Meadow Restoration** - Zeedyk rock structures and other process-based methods to stop the gully advancement and help detain runoff across the mesic meadow. Phase II would continue the initial work.

**North Sand Creek protective fencing** - North Sand Creek is a 303d listed stream for sediment. Fencing will reduce impacts from OHV use induced sediment.

**Mansfield Draw Fen** - Continue management of a restored fen that supports pale blue-eyed grass, saline variation of a rich fen with five springs within the fen. After restoration work, an electric fence has been used each grazing year to protect the mire head with quagmire. Trespass livestock have required additional restoration work, leading to the need of a permanent fence around the water sources.

**Travel Management Plan Implementation (TMP)** - Accelerated implementation of the 2015 TMP to close cross country route proliferation. Seeding of native species including forbs will



benefit overall land health and important sage grouse habitat. Small acreages have been completed to date.

**Virtual fencing** - The Kremmling Field Office is working with the Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge to initiate virtual fencing allowing the reduction of cross fencing which impacts wildlife. Funding will be placed into an agreement with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. Implementation of the project is slated for spring 2025.

**Blue Valley Land Exchange** - The BLM issued a Notice of Decision to exchange nine parcels, totaling 1,489 acres of Federal lands managed by the BLM in Grand County, Colorado for nine parcels totaling 1,830 acres of non-Federal lands in Summit and Grand counties, Colorado, owned by Galloway, Inc., the owners of the Blue Valley Ranch (BVR). The exchange results in a net gain of 341 acres of public land. In July 2021, the Kremmling Field Office published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was publicly available for 30 days.

During the public availability period numerous comments were received both in support and against the land exchange. Comments were consistent with what BLM received in response to the Draft EIS. The strongest support in favor of the land exchange was received from Summit County Commissioners, Grand County Commissioners, Trout Unlimited, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The decision initiated a 45-day protest period.

The protest period ended March 2, 2023. Twenty-one protests were received with some of them being large in scope. The BLM is preparing responses to the protests and expects to finish protest responses in May.

**The Upper Colorado Special Recreation Area Business Plan** - To meet increasing demands, operating costs and maintenance of developed facilities and services provided to the public; in addition to the modification of the fee schedule, additional fee sites are proposed where improvements and additional visitor services are required due to increased visitation and use.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) authorizes and provides guidance for the BLM and other agencies to charge and collect recreational fees on federal recreation lands and waters. FLREA allows agencies to utilize collected recreation fees to supplement appropriated funds and provide a funding source for deferred maintenance, site enhancements, operations, facility repair, interpretation and visitor services, visitor needs assessments, signs, habitat restoration, law enforcement related to public use and recreation, and direct operating or capital costs associated with the Recreation and Visitor Services program.

FLREA requires the BLM to prepare business plans for fees associated with facility and recreational use of public lands. At the KFO and CRVFO, the recreational use of campgrounds and recreation areas within the field offices is managed through the Recreation and Visitor Services Program.

An initial request for input for the fee schedule was presented at the RAC meeting on September 15, 2022. The Northwest Resource Advisory Council (RAC) voted to approve the fee structure at their October 2023 meeting.

The Kremmling Field Office will extend the camping fee sites for the 2024 season and make fee adjustments on existing fee sites at the beginning of the 2025 season. The new proposed fee sites are expected to be through the Federal Register Notice process for implementation in the 2025 season.

**Fuels Project FY23 Fuels EA (3,500 acres)** - Fuels reduction and Hazard Tree Removal in the Blacktail, Cow Creek, Little HO, McQueary, and San Toy project areas has an expected implementation summer of 2024, pending the outcome of archeological surveys.

## **White River Field Office (WRFO – Meeker)**

**Bill Mills, Field Manager, (970) 878-3800, [wmills@blm.gov](mailto:wmills@blm.gov)**

**Meeker Mustang Makeover (MMM)** - This year's MMM will take place August 23-24, 2024, at the Rio Blanco Fairgrounds in Meeker. The pickup day for selected trainers was April 27, 2024. The WRFO continues to partner with MMM to provide assistance with this and future events through planning and processing adoption applications.

**Adoptions** - Additional adoption event locations in 2024 include Greeley on May 26<sup>th</sup>, Castle Rock on June 8<sup>th</sup>, and the Montrose Wild to Mild event July 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Oil and Gas Development** - The White River Field Office (WRFO) currently processes the oil and gas for all three field offices in the Northwest District (Kremmling Field Office (KFO), Little Snake Field Office (LSFO), and the WRFO). There are approximately 4,000 active oil and gas wells located within the Northwest District Office (approximately 3,400 in WRFO, 300 in LSFO, and 200 in KFO). The largest oil and gas workload is located within the WRFO.

Currently, WRFO has processed 68 Applications for Permit to Drill (APD) and has 15 pending APDs. Of the 15 pending APDs 6 are on a single well pad within the KFO and the remaining wells are within the WRFO. We anticipate the submission of additional APDs in all three FO's during FY 2024. There are currently two active drilling rigs located in the Piceance Basin.

The WRFO witnesses approximately 40 to 50 well plugging annually. Currently, the FO is working with Chevron USA to complete the plugging and closure of the Wilson Creek Field which is located approximately 11-miles north of Meeker.

The WRFO processes approximately 2,500 sundry notices annually across the three field offices. The WRFO also completes the oil and gas inspection and enforcement covering all three field offices. In 2024, WRFO anticipates completing over 370 total oil and gas inspections (265 within WRFO and 105 within LSFO and KFO planned). The FO is currently working through a cooperative agreement to plug four orphan wells in FY 2024 and is working to secure funding for reclamation work to be completed on five orphan wells (two in WRFO and three in LSFO).

**Buffalo Horn Land Exchange** - In January 2021, the BLM issued a decision to approve a land exchange with Buffalo Horn Properties, LLC that will convey 14 parcels of Federal lands in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties in the Strawberry Creek area (total of 2,652 acres) to acquire one parcel of non-Federal lands in Rio Blanco County in the Smith Gulch area (total of 1,327.06). (Note: Land exchanges are balanced based on appraised values rather than acreage.) The BLM will also accept Buffalo Horn's offer to donate four parcels of non-Federal land in Rio Blanco County (totaling 508.2 acres) that are isolated "inholdings" between the non-Federal exchange parcel and other BLM-managed public land. The BLM received three protests of the decision (from Cody Barnes, Brandon Siegfried, and Colorado Wild Public Lands) which the BLM Colorado State Office is currently reviewing. Colorado Wild Public Lands Inc. filed an appeal of the decision to IBLA and BLM has been working to provide necessary information to IBLA for the lawsuit.

**Carbon Sequestration** - The WRFO has received an application for a carbon sequestration project located within Rio Blanco County. The site is being proposed to inject up to 750,000 metric tonnes (MMt) of CO<sub>2</sub>. The proposal would inject CO<sub>2</sub> below the Mancos Shale at a depth between 12,000 and 15,000 feet. The project would issue a subsurface pore space right-of-way for 150,000 acres. The proposal will also include surface infrastructure including injection facilities as well as pipelines to connect the CO<sub>2</sub> sources to the injection facilities. The Applicant has currently requested BLM place a hold on this project while they work with EPA for a Class VI injection well.

**PacifiCorp Gateway South** - The WRFO continues to assist with the variance work associated with the continued installation work of this project. It is currently anticipated that construction will continue through the fall of 2024.

**TransWest Express** - Along with the Gateway South project, Transwest was issued a Record of Decision to approve the Transwest Transmission Project which is a 735-mile 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line which spans Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and ends in the southern portion of Nevada. The Transwest project has received a notice to proceed for geotechnical and non-surface disturbing pre-construction activities within Colorado but does not plan on beginning construction in Colorado in 2024.

## **Little Snake Field Office (LSFO - Craig)**

**Kymm Gresset, Field Manager, (970) 826-5089, [kgresset@blm.gov](mailto:kgresset@blm.gov)**

**PacifiCorp Gateway South** - Gateway South (GWS) construction started in June 2022. The CO portions for pad sites, foundations and anchors are 100% completed. 96% of structures are erected and 62% of wire has been strung. Reclamation efforts have occurred on pad and pulling and tensioning sites with more this year. Construction has been approved to be completed at the Little Snake Substation. Energization of the line in the fall of 2024 is expected to be completed.



**TransWest Express** - TransWest Express (TWE) received their Notice to Proceed (NTP) on April 10, 2023. TWE is a 732-mile, a high-voltage transmission line that will extend from south-central Wyoming through northwestern Colorado and central Utah, ending in southern Nevada. TWE will deliver electricity generated by the largest onshore wind generation project in North America. The TransWest project has received a notice to proceed for geotechnical and non-surface disturbing pre-construction activities within Colorado but does not plan on beginning construction in Colorado in 2024.

**Lands with Wilderness Characteristics** - NFWF has awarded the grant money collected for compensatory mitigation funds for authorized impacts of the GWS Transmission Project to LWC lands in Colorado. Two proposals related to LSFO were awarded \$3.2 million dollars and \$1.9 million dollars respectively. The awards were made for proposals from two consulting firms in conjunction with partners and collaboration with the field office. Tribal consultation on the Cross Mountain project has begun. The other proposal with Logan Simpson on Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and LWC wilderness lands throughout the field office will begin this year.

**Greater Sage Grouse Funds** - 15 million dollars were tentatively awarded to 6 projects from the Greater Sage Grouse Mitigation for GWS, leaving over 3 million. These projects are in restoration and proposed acquisitions and conservation easements.

**Outcome Based Grazing Pilot Project** - OBGA management continues with internal changes in the permittee's organization. Due to this, there likely will not be cattle on the OBGA allotments in 2024. However, monitoring for greater sage-grouse presence and habitat quality will continue this year. LSFO Assistant Field Manager, Hunter Seim participated in a training module for flexibility in grazing use that will be available agency wide.

**Sand Wash Herd Management Area** - LSFO and NWD staff completed a Determination of NEPA Adequacy to approve the construction of permanent bait traps within the Sand Wash HMA. Materials are purchased and construction is expected to begin in Lake Draw pending completion of maintenance and upgrades to the access road.

The bait traps are part of a strategy to remove smaller numbers of horses on a more frequent basis, help facilitate ongoing fertility control efforts, more consistently maintain the herd size within the appropriate management level (AML) over time and reduce the need for large scale helicopter gathers. A census flight is planned for late spring 2024.

**Wild Horse Refuge** - In 2023, Pat Craig of the Wild Animal Sanctuary purchased approximately 17,000 acres of the former Rio Ro Mo Ranch with the intention of creating The Wild Horse Refuge as a home for titled former wild horses. The 17,000 acres serves as qualifying base property for, and is intermixed with, approximately 5,000 acres of public land across three grazing allotments. Pat has applied for and acquired the grazing preference for these allotments and will be working with LSFO staff for an application to change the class of livestock on the authorizations from sheep and cattle to horses. Pat has retained the services of a range consultant to aid in crafting a management plan suitable for the resources on the allotments and the LSFO is currently analyzing his proposed management. LSFO expects to issue a proposed decision in 2024.

# Upper Colorado River District (UCRD)

## **Supplemental EIS/RMP for Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) and Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO)**

The CRVFO and GJFO continue to work on the court ordered Supplemental EIS to address issues related to analysis of downstream greenhouse gas emissions and the range of alternatives for acres available for leasing under their 2015 RMPs and Records of Decision. The public comment period for the draft supplemental EIS ended on November 1, 2023. The BLM received a total of 373 total letter submissions (366 unique submissions). The BLM expects to release the Proposed RMP/Final Supplemental EIS for the public protest period (30 days) and Governor's consistency review (60 days) in summer of 2024. A Record of Decision is anticipated in fall 2024. ePlanning project site: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2016085/510>

## **Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) including McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (DENCA)**

**Amy Carmichael, Acting Field Manager, (970) 244-3077, [acarmichael@blm.gov](mailto:acarmichael@blm.gov)**

**Managing Livestock During Drought** - The Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) continues to work closely with permittees on drought related issues. The office has billed for approximately half of the use authorized on grazing permits and anticipates this trend to continue. Our lower elevation country is being impacted the most by the ongoing drought. We anticipate further policy guidance from HQ this year on determining the beginning and end of droughts and how to utilize available data to make management decisions.

**Low Elevation (Desert) Rangeland Management** - GJFO is looking for the most innovative methods to manage rangelands; specifically, rangelands that have converted to cheatgrass from past management. GJFO has had many low elevation rangelands transition over the years to be cheatgrass dominated and is working on developing a best management practices plan for rangelands that are in this state.

This project would include looking at the most recent research studies done on cheatgrass rangelands and incorporating that information into a best practices management action plan. Mapping and identifying these areas with the best available data would also be part of this project to help management identify which rangelands to focus management on and what would be the best course of action. The project deliverable will be a report that will help prioritize where and how the office can be most effective at managing these areas to return them to perennial rangelands.

**Little Bookcliffs Wild Horse Range Gather** - A wild horse gather is planned in the Little Bookcliffs Wild Horse Range for September. The appropriate management level (AML) for the is 90-150 horses. The last ground population count performed in July 2023 was 198 horses. This

gather is planned to remove approximately 100 horses. An EA will be posted to E-planning for a 30-day public review in mid-May.

**North Fruita Desert Trails Master Plan** - In partnership with Mesa County and the City of Fruita, a grant was funded to build new trails approved the North Fruita Desert Trails Master Development Plan, which includes 32 miles of new trails and trail reroutes and authorizes the use of Class 1 e-bikes on current and future trails in the North Fruita Desert (NFD) Special Recreation Management Area. Mesa County contracted the construction of new mountain bike trails with approximately 27 out of 32 miles completed thus far. Phase 3 of planned campground construction will begin this summer adding 26 new campsites, additional bathrooms, and new shade structures. Usage continues to grow with many sold-out weekends so far this Spring. Campground fee receipts hit an all-time record last fall.

**OHV Program** - GJFO and MCNCA retained Good Management grant status through the CPW OHV Grant program once again this year and will receive \$261k in funding to support the construction and maintenance of motorized trails throughout the resource. We were able to convert four casual seasonal positions into Career Seasonal positions which will greatly stabilize our workforce and reduce turnover.

**Clifton Parcel** - Mesa County has requested acquisition of a BLM disposal parcel located Clifton Colorado near 32 Road (Clifton parcel). The disposal process for this parcel is a multistage process due to an existing withdrawal on this parcel to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Reclamation filed a Notice of Intent to relinquish approximately 31.10 acres of land withdrawn from the public domain as part of the Grand Valley Reclamation Project since they no longer have need for the entire 31.10 acres parcel. Approximately 8.25 acres will remain withdrawn to Reclamation for project purposes that include the Government Highline Canal. The partial revocation is needed to open the land to appropriation under the public land laws, subject to valid existing rights, to facilitate a proposed land disposal. The BLM completed a categorical exclusion for the NEPA compliance for the revocation of the withdrawal. The Public Land Order was published finalizing the revocation and bringing the parcel back into BLM administration. The BLM is working on completing the disposal action to transfer the parcel to Mesa County.

**Cheney (Grand Mesa Slopes)** - In partnership with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, BLM closed on the acquisition of a 480-acre inholding along Highway 50 between Grand Junction and Olathe that will secure public access to Cheney Reservoir and other public lands in the Kannah Creek area. BLM acquired the parcel on April 8, 2024.

**Monument Trail** - The Grand Junction Field Office finalized the right-of-way grant for the Monument Connector Trail, which is an extension of the existing Monument Trail bike path. The path extension would connect the Lunch Loops (Tabeguache) Trailhead to South Camp Road. The City of Grand Junction is also partnered with Colorado West Land Trust on this project. The City of Grand Junction was awarded a GOCO grant to complete the trail construction.



## **McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA)**

**Dan Ben-Horin, Interim NCA Manager, (970) 244-3006, [dbenhorin@blm.gov](mailto:dbenhorin@blm.gov)**

**Rabbit Valley Campgrounds** - The effort to implement the 2018 Rabbit Valley Camping plan was completed in 2023. Rabbit Valley now has 75 campsites in five different campgrounds, all of which are thoughtfully constructed and placed to facilitate visitor engagement in different activities while staying in this popular multi-use area. Reservations for the 75 campsites are now available on Recreation.gov at \$20.00 per night.

**NCA Management Personnel Update** - Amber Koski resigned her position in mid-April to be a Program Manager for the Vernal Field Office in Utah. Dan Ben-Horin will be the interim NCA Manager until an official detail can be filled. We will have temporary management until a permanent NCA Manager is in place.

## **Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA)**

**Dan Ben-Horin, Interim NCA Manager, (970) 244-3006, [dbenhorin@blm.gov](mailto:dbenhorin@blm.gov)**

**Gunnison River Campsite Designation and Permit System** - The BLM implemented a decision from the 2017 D-E NCA RMP to require overnight boaters on the Lower Gunnison River, from Delta to Whitewater, to obtain a permit in October 2023. BLM staff updated signage and conducted outreach regarding the change with places like Mountain Buzz and American Whitewater. For now, the BLM has implemented a free, self-issued, permit that is filled out on-site. Compliance is estimated at 50-70% and compliance is expected to increase with additional education and outreach.

BLM will implement the campsite EA this summer, including mitigation for the Colorado hookless cactus and determining which cultural sites may be used for interpretation and education. The BLM anticipates that the campsites will be reservable on recreation.gov beginning in the 2025 river season, pending the approval of the D-E NCA Business Plan.

**Gunnison River Camping Fees Business Plan** - Refer to separate presentation.

**Escalante Ranch Acquisition** - Refer to separate presentation.

**Fuels Mitigation and Restoration Projects** - BLM fire crews used prescribed fire to improve 44 acres in the Farmers Canyon area to protect ponderosa pine stands from high intensity wildfire and improve ecosystem function. Fuels also completed mechanical treatments of 433 acres and 213 acres of hand cutting within the Farmers Canyon project area as a part of a comprehensive strategy to improve Gunnison sage-grouse (GUSG) habitat. The objective was to remove pinyon and juniper in areas that have a well-established sagebrush understory and improve connectivity of the Pinon Mesa GUSG sub-population as well as restore sagebrush habitat, improve big game habitat, and lower potential for catastrophic wildfire. A prescribed burn is planned for this Spring to continue this project.

## **Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO – Silt)**

**Valerie Baxter, Acting Field Manager, (970) 876-9000, [vbaxter@blm.gov](mailto:vbaxter@blm.gov)**

**Proposed Rock Crawling Trail in the Silt Mesa ERMA** - The CRVFO has been partnering with the Hi Country 4 Wheelers to designate a new 1.2-mile out-and-back rock crawling trail in the Silt Mesa ERMA, approximately 2.5 miles north of the Town of Silt. The proposed trail would provide a high-quality, unique rock-crawling trail experience within a naturally restricted draw, incorporating natural tread, gravel, and boulder features, and slickrock uplifts. No major construction would be needed due to the unique nature of this trail type. Cultural and paleontological surveys have been completed. The public scoping period closed on April 11. Of the 38 comments received, 32 are in favor of the proposed trail, including comments from the Blueribbon Coalition, Hi Country 4 Wheelers, Rifle Area Mountain Bike Organization (RAMBO), and Washington Off-highway Vehicle Alliance. Six individuals provided comments in opposition to the proposal.

**New Expanded Campground Fees and Day Use Fee at the Wolcott Day Use Site** - The CRVFO will begin implementing its new campground fee structure for six campgrounds in Eagle and Pitkin counties and charging a \$5 day-use fee at the Wolcott Day-Use Site on the Eagle River near Wolcott when the facilities open this spring. The new structure was published in the Federal Register in August 2023, and the new fees took effect in February 2024.

The NW RAC provided important review and comments and approved the fee proposal in June 2019. To account for inflation or other economic changes, the fee structure will be reviewed annually against a consumer price index. Fees could be increased or decreased in \$2 increments if supported by the index. The fees collected will be used specifically to manage these sites. The CRVFO will begin charging \$20 a night at the Prince Creek, Catamount, Lyon's Gulch, and Pinball campgrounds. There had been no fee at these sites. The previous \$10 per night fee at Gypsum and Wolcott campgrounds will increase to \$20. The CRVFO will charge \$4 per person at group camping sites at Gypsum, Pinball, Lyon's Gulch, and Prince Creek campgrounds.

**Upper Colorado River SRMA Carrying Capacity Study** - The CRVFO and KFO hired a contractor to conduct a carrying capacity study on the Upper Colorado River SRMA to determine current and future trends of visitation and uses and identify current and potential future impacts to Recreational Setting Characteristics identified in each office's RMP. The study will include interviews with various stakeholders, observational studies, analyses of existing facilities, and a compilation/review of existing data. The contractor will conduct observational studies at various locations including Pumphouse, State Bridge, Two Bridges, and Catamount and on-river inventories this summer. The results will be provided in a report by December 2024.

**Integrated Fuels and Habitat Improvement Projects** - The CRVFO is in various stages of planning and implementing several integrated vegetation management projects to improve wildlife habitat and reduce fuels including the following:

**Ongoing Projects with BLM Staff and Women's Fire Crew** - 1) The West Elk Ridge project north of New Castle and Silt is a collaboration with CPW's Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) involving mastication and lop and scatter work. 2) Dry Hollow south of Silt is a mastication

project. 3) Crews are re-treating the Cedar Mountain project north of Silt and Rifle. The original project was a collaboration with the Mule Deer Foundation, Muley Fanatic Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and HPP. Work on these projects will continue based on crew availability until complete.

**Cultural Inventories Contracted for Future Projects** - 1) Sopris Mountain Ranch will be a cross boundary project with the USFS and private landowners south of Basalt. It will include a combination of mastication and prescribed fire with expected 2025 implementation. 2) Antelope Creek near McCoy will be a mastication project with 2025 implementation. 3) King Mountain – Linear feature survey for forest health and hazard fuel mitigation work.

**Good Neighbor Authority Projects with Colorado State Forest Service** - 1) Bellyache Phase II – Dead, diseased, and dying mixed conifer will be removed from around a subdivision and important communication tower. Project will include biomass utilization. Potential implementation is fall 2024. 2) Cottonwood Pass Project – Cross boundary project with private landowners, USFS, and State Trust Lands to build a fuel break around the south side of Gypsum. Had the Lake Christine fire continued to burn, it could have reached Gypsum. Potential fall 2024 implementation. 3) King Mountain SRMA Proposed Treatments. Ongoing collaboration with the Colorado State Forest Service and stakeholders. Cultural survey contracted for first phase.

**Prescribed Fire** - 1) Bellyache Piles – Hoping to burn this spring as conditions allow. 2) Cottonwood Creek Rx, northwest of Eagle (141 acres) – Considering fall 2024 window. 3) June Creek Rx, south of Silt and Uncle Bob Mountain – Likely a fall 2024 window.

**Mechanical Mastication and Lop & Scatter** - 1) Copper Spur Mx – PJ and sagebrush mastication project near McCoy with expected 2024 or 2025 implementation depending on funding. 2) Light Hill – Additional 150 acres of mastication in collaboration with HPP, planning on 2024 implementation. 3) The Crown – 300 acres of Gambel oak, sagebrush, and PJ mastication, planning on 2024 or 2025 implementation. 4) Winter Ridge Maintenance – Maintain 300-1000 acres of greater sage-grouse habitat treatments near Burns in 2024.

**Thompson Divide Withdrawal** - On April 3 the Biden-Harris administration finalized protections for the Thompson Divide area. The public land order withdraws 197,745 acres of the White River and Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison national forests, as well as 15,465 acres of BLM-managed public lands and 8,689 acres of reserved federal mineral interest under non-federal land. The withdrawal is authorized by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which authorizes Secretary of the Interior to withdraw lands aggregating 5,000 acres or more for a maximum of 20 years, subject to renewal. Only Congress can legislate a permanent withdrawal.

#### **Mid-Continent Quarry (RMI) Updates:**

**Noncompliance and Rock Fall** - The BLM's work with RMI to address exceeding authorized acres (among other items) is ongoing. It was complicated by the January 2023 rockslide. Now that a geotechnical report has been completed and reviewed/approved by Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety (DRMS), the BLM is requiring RMI to submit an updated Plan of Operations that incorporates important information from the geotechnical report, including the

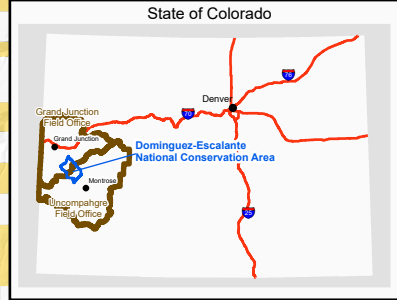


potential extent of disturbance that may be needed to stabilize the slope.

**DCV and Proposed Expansion** - The Determination of Common Variety Report (DCV), which was initiated in Spring 2019 by BLM mineral examiners, has been completed and was signed on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. While the DCV was being completed, the BLM required RMI to establish an escrow account and make monthly payments into this account so that the BLM could recover payments if the DCV determined that all or part of the limestone marketed by the Mid-Continent Quarry were not subject to disposal under the Mining Law. Now that the BLM has a completed DCV, the BLM will work with RMI to determine the disposition of the escrow account. The DCV Report will inform BLM's analysis of RMI's expansion proposal. BLM will determine appropriate management of the quarry based on the results of the DCV. This could include moving forward with the hydrologic baseline study and Ethnography to help inform a proposed expansion at the original or a reduced scale, or other potential paths.

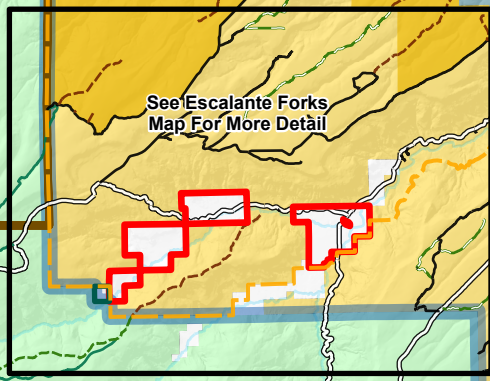
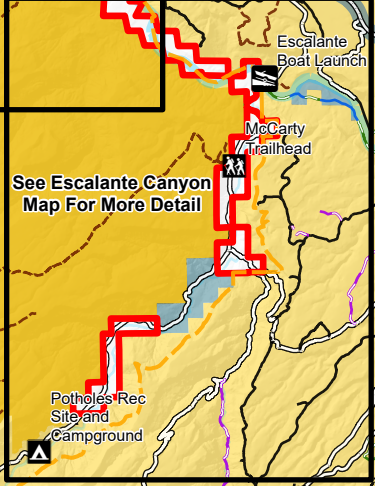
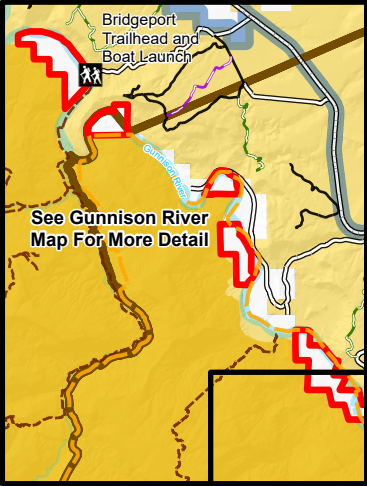
**Current and Forecasted Drilling Activity** - Currently, there are no active drill rigs working in the CRVFO or GJFO. GELLC plans to drill and complete two additional wells from the IPU Lower 1291 #13-24 well pad, beginning in May of 2024. GELLC intends to drill the IPU Lower 1291 #13-24 H2 and IPU Lower 1291 #13-24 H3 wells in the UFO. We do have an operator that has submitted APDs for 3 federal wells on one pad and 8 federal wells on another. In addition to drilling, the CRVFO has worked with a few operators to continue to plug wells. Plugging activity is expected to continue throughout the fiscal year in both CRVFO and GJFO. There is the potential to get a drilling rig for the GJFO and Uncompahgre Field Office in 2024.

**Anderson Camp Direct Sale** - The BLM is proposing to sell a 7.55-acre parcel in Eagle County to Sweetwater Rydev LLC, operator of Anderson Summer Camp. The proposed sale will resolve a more than 100-year-old inadvertent trespass and help the Anderson Summer Camp continue serving non-profit organizations and at-risk youth. The land is being sold for the fair-market value as appraised by the Department of the Interior's Office of Valuation Services. The purchasers will reimburse BLM for its staff time processing this sale. A Notice of Realty Action was published on 12/21/2023 in the Federal Register and had a 45-day public comment period on the proposed sale. The comment period ended on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and two comments were received in support of the sale. The NEPA Decision Record and FONSI for the Environmental Assessment were signed last week and the sale may be completed as early as May 2024.




### Escalante Ranch Overview Map

- Escalante Ranch BLM Acquisition Parcels
  - Escalante Ranch Grazing Allotment
  - Escalante Ranch USFS Acquisition Parcels
- Land Ownership and Administration
- Dominguez-Escalante NCA Boundary
  - Field Office Boundary
  - Wilderness
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Private
  - State Wildlife Areas
  - U.S. Forest Service
- Route Designations
- Foot and Horse
  - Bicycle
  - Motorcycle
  - ATV (50 inches or less)
  - Full Size Vehicles
  - County Maintained Roads
- Open To:
- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
- Non-BLM Routes
- State Wildlife Area Non-Motorized Routes
  - State Wildlife Area Motorized Routes
  - Forest Service Non-Motorized Routes
  - Forest Service Motorized Routes







**Escalante Ranch  
Gunnison River Map**

- Escalante Ranch Acquisition Parcels
- Escalante Ranch Grazing Allotment

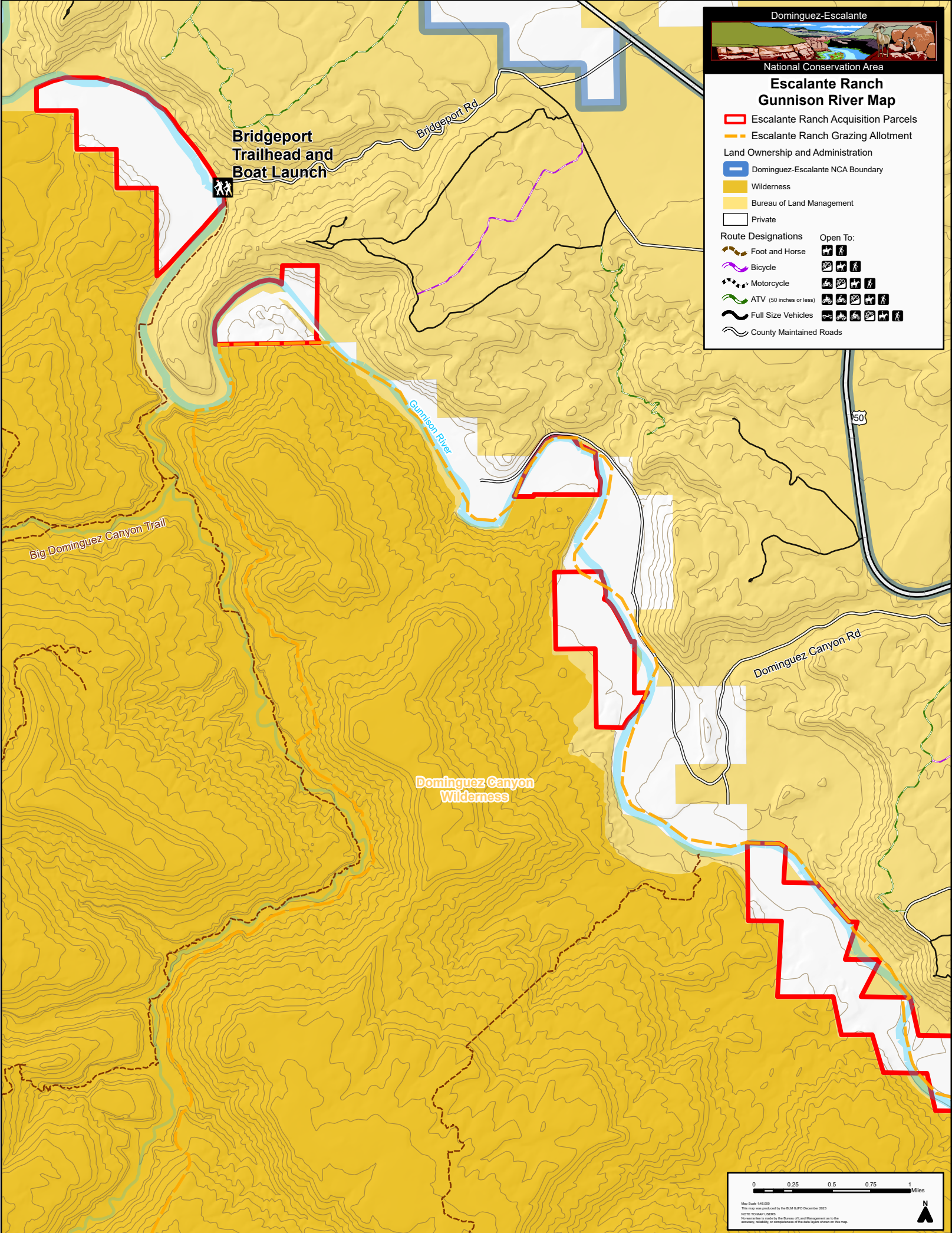
Land Ownership and Administration

- Dominguez-Escalante NCA Boundary
- Wilderness
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private

Route Designations

- Foot and Horse
- Bicycle
- - - Motorcycle
- ATV (50 inches or less)
- Full Size Vehicles
- County Maintained Roads

Open To:

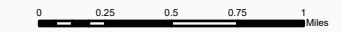
Bridgeport  
Trailhead and  
Boat Launch

Gunnison River


Big Dominguez Canyon Trail

Dominguez Canyon  
Wilderness

Dominguez Canyon Rd



Map Scale 1:45,000  
This map was produced by the BLM GIPD December 2023  
NOTE TO MAP USERS  
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map.







### Escalante Ranch Escalante Canyon Map

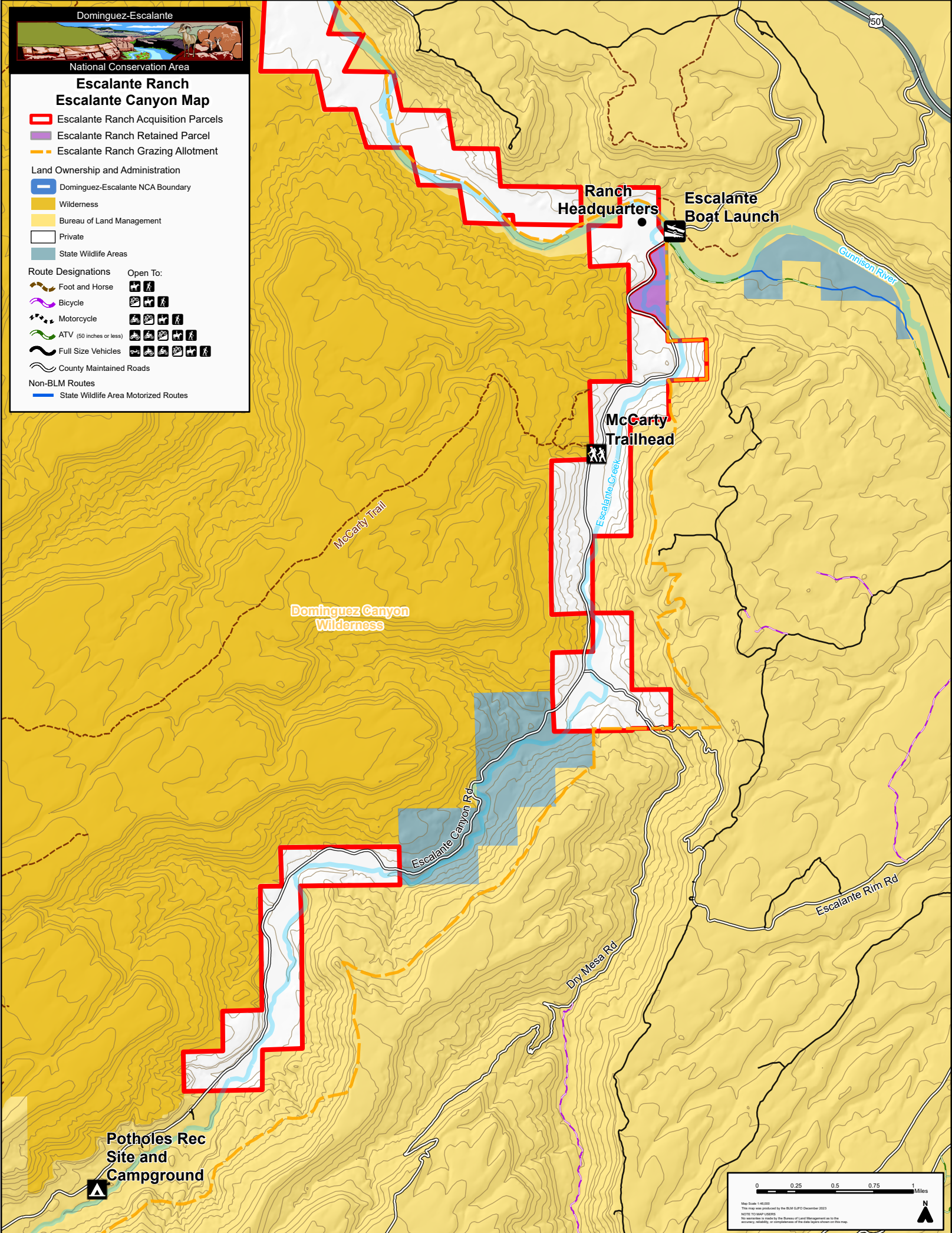
**Escalante Ranch Acquisition Parcels**  
Escalante Ranch Retained Parcel  
Escalante Ranch Grazing Allotment

**Land Ownership and Administration**  
Dominguez-Escalante NCA Boundary  
Wilderness  
Bureau of Land Management  
Private  
State Wildlife Areas

**Route Designations**  
Foot and Horse  
Bicycle  
Motorcycle  
ATV (50 inches or less)  
Full Size Vehicles  
County Maintained Roads

**Open To:**  
[Icons for various user types: hiker, horse, bicyclist, motorcyclist, etc.]

**Non-BLM Routes**  
State Wildlife Area Motorized Routes







Dominguez-Escalante

National Conservation Area

# Escalante Ranch Escalante Forks Map

- Escalante Ranch Acquisition Parcels
- Escalante Ranch Grazing Allotment

## Land Ownership and Administration

- Dominguez-Escalante NCA Boundary
- Wilderness
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- U.S. Forest Service

## Route Designations

- Foot and Horse
- Bicycle
- Motorcycle
- ATV (50 inches or less)
- Full Size Vehicles
- County Maintained Roads

## Open To:

- Foot and Horse
- Bicycle
- Motorcycle
- ATV (50 inches or less)
- Full Size Vehicles

## Non-BLM Routes

- Forest Service Non-Motorized Routes
- Forest Service Motorized Routes

Dominguez Canyon  
Wilderness

Escalante Forks

Z S Rd

Escalante Canyon Rd

Dry Mesa Rd

Uncompahgre  
National  
Forest

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Map Scale 1:40,000  
This map was produced by the BLM GPO December 2023  
NOTE TO MAP USERS  
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the  
accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map.

