



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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May 17, 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Field Office, 2369 West Orton Circle, West Valley City, Utah 84119

From: Field Office Manager, Richfield Field Office

Subject: Factory Butte Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Coordination for Monitoring Plan and Thresholds

This memo is a follow-up to the April 29, 2019 meeting, and subsequent emails and verbal communication between Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff where we discussed modifications and clarifications to the Factory Butte SRMA BO and the associated monitoring plan. Monitoring results from 2010 through 2015 showed that disturbance in any key area did not exceed 0.8%. In 2014, a range-wide monitoring effort was initiated for Wright fishhook cactus, which included monitoring locations within the SRMA. In 2015, disturbance within the SRMA was recorded within larger 25m X 50m macroplots and has continued since. Disturbance values since 2015 have not exceeded 0.6% in any year.

In light of these data, and according to discussions with your office, BLM proposes the following modified thresholds for off-highway vehicle (OHV) disturbance within Wright fishhook cactus habitat of the SRMA:

1. If a single cactus is damaged or killed due to OHV related activities, the BLM will notify the USFWS and schedule a follow-up conference call or meeting to discuss monitoring protocols, protection needs, and conservation actions.
2. If recent OHV disturbance occurs within a given macroplot and is found to meet or exceed 5 percent of the macroplot area (i.e., visible OHV tracks from the current or past 3 years), informal consultation will be initiated between the BLM and USFWS to further implement appropriate conservation measures. Where there is existing OHV disturbance prior to 2010 that resulted in long-lasting trails or disturbance, these areas will only be included in the quantification of disturbance if recent use is visible within these existing disturbance areas (i.e., recent use of an existing trail). The BLM defines recent use as occurring within the past 3 years. For the first year after opening the Factory Butte and

Caineville Cove OHV Open Areas, the BLM will evaluate OHV disturbance in the fall of 2019 and the spring of 2020. Monitoring in subsequent years will occur on an annual basis in the spring.

3. The BLM and USFWS will meet to discuss the monitoring methods and results of the first three years of data collection following the re-opening of the Factory Butte and Caineville Cove OHV Open Areas. The BLM will present the following macroplot information: 2019 baseline OHV use, annual disturbance, and cumulative disturbance. This meeting will be held no later than December 30, 2022.

Along with these proposed threshold changes, BLM commits to the following methodology for monitoring both OHV disturbance and Wright fishhook cactus population trends within key area macroplots associated with the SRMA.

Disturbance will be calculated and reported cumulatively for three years, and monitoring will occur the week following the shoulder weekend of Easter. BLM will attempt to assign the year each disturbance occurs within each macroplot. Additional to this annual commitment, BLM will conduct monitoring the week following the shoulder weekend of Labor Day, 2019. The method for disturbance monitoring specific to the SRMA is detailed below.

Each macroplot [REDACTED] as in the figure below. General locations of macroplots are identified on the attached map. All OHV disturbance within the boundaries of the macroplot will be documented in two ways. The first will be through the use of repeat photography, and the second will be through the use of a GPS receiver. Photographs will be taken of at least 12 angles of the macroplot as figured below. Each point labeled CP is where the photographer stands with arrows indicating the direction of the center of the camera view. If necessary, macroplot corners may [REDACTED]. Additional photos may also be taken of disturbance as deemed informative from anywhere within or surrounding the macroplot. Quantification of disturbance within the macroplot will occur through the use of a high-quality GPS receiver with the greatest accuracy practicable. It will also be helpful to have previous years' disturbance diagrams in the field at the time of monitoring so that disturbance can be deciphered for each year it occurs. Linear features, such as tracks and trails, will be recorded as a line with the average width of the feature to be recorded on the repeat inventory field form, in the "Illustrations and Notes" section. The distance of buffering for each linear feature in ArcGIS will be as recorded in the sketch of disturbance. For example, if a single motorcycle track traverses the macroplot, and the track averages 15cm wide, additional to the feature being recorded with a GPS receiver, the approximate location within the plot will be diagramed and expressly written on the monitoring form as averaging 15cm. This width will be the buffer added to the linear feature in ArcGIS for calculation of disturbance. Polygons will also be recorded for areas of disturbance. If there is undisturbed area within the polygons, then an estimation of the amount of undisturbed soil will also be noted in the sketch for each, and will also be documented with photographs. In the future, as technology improves, the desire of the BLM is to document disturbance through the use of drones and high-resolution imagery. However, modification to this method will only occur after consultation with USFWS. Also, BLM may at its discretion, utilize motion-activated cameras at any location to aid in protection of listed cacti and for prosecution of unlawful activities in the vicinity of the SRMA.

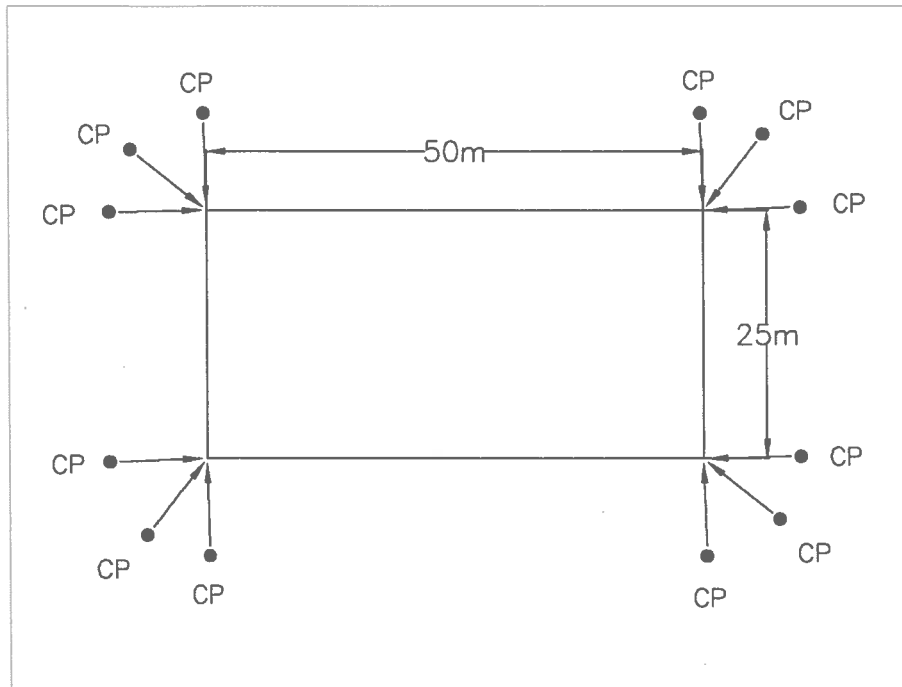


Diagram of macroplot layout showing camera point locations (CP) and direction of each photo.

In addition to disturbance monitoring, cactus trend monitoring will also be conducted within the [REDACTED] SRMA macroplots. This monitoring may occur concurrently with disturbance monitoring, or may occur later depending on cactus phenology and when Easter occurs each year. Methods for trend monitoring will be according to the Monitoring Plan for Wright Fishhook Cactus on BLM Lands in Emery, Sevier and Wayne Counties, Utah.

Reporting of annual monitoring to the USFWS will include information regarding cactus population trend at each monitoring location as well as the amount of disturbance for each year, and will be delivered no later than December 15th. Maps will be included that digitize and quantify visible disturbance, delineated by color for each year, as well as the locations of living cacti within each macroplot. Cacti damaged by OHV activity will be recorded and tracked the following year to determine if mortality results. The USFWS will be contacted as soon as practicable in any instance of cactus damage or mortality associated with unauthorized OHV use.

BLM understands that other aspects of the monitoring plan will remain as currently written, such as monthly photo point monitoring, and biannual disturbance transect monitoring. These components of the monitoring plan have continued to fulfill their purpose of identifying areas of non-compliance within the SRMA. These aspects of the plan and their perpetuation and necessity will be discussed with the USFWS in the 2022 meeting.

The BLM appreciates the opportunity to make changes to the thresholds for OHV activities and the necessary monitoring changes applicable to the Factory Butte SRMA. We look forward to continued coordination with the USFWS to protect endangered species while providing for some motorized OHV use in the Factory Butte SRMA.

Factory Butte Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

May 15, 2019

