

Keyesville Special Recreation Management Area
Wallow Rock Recreation Management Zone (RMZ)
May 17, 2014

Wallow Rock RMZ includes those parts of Keyesville South that are back from the river. However, nearly all use in the RMZ is inextricably linked to the river in the form of camping, day use, or rafting.

Problems and considerations facing management at Wallow Rock RMZ include:

- There is only limited access via rough roads.
- The area has a high volume of trash
- Roll off bins are an eyesore, but smaller dumpsters are more prone to fill up and overflow (they are also more expensive).
- Human behavior: Alcohol use leads to too much littering and violation of rules. To bring about change, there must be an interruption of regular behavior. People that litter should be kicked out.
- Wallow Rock receives a fair amount of use by those who are homeless; the homeless in the area have been connected to problems with theft and wildfire.
- Homeless visitors can stay for two weeks, like other visitors. Some of the homeless arrive by foot, while others have cars or recreational vehicles. Those who are on foot and try to stay longer can be very difficult to locate; better patrols or BLM presence is needed.
- If campsites are limited to areas away from the river, there may be no interest in them.
- There are many large family groups that camp here, especially on the holiday weekends. Some groups include more than seven vehicles with gear and people. A number of groups have “traditional” activities - coming to the same site on the same weekend for over twenty years.
- If a decision is made to control dispersed camping, we must find an effective mechanism to do so
- Consider some level of camping that falls between dispersed and fully developed sites – such as marking an acceptable location and allowing people to camp within 100 feet of that point
- Limit the number of people – allowing limitless crowds puts too much pressure on land and causes safety issues. Limits could be achieved via a quota.
- More maintenance and trail opportunities are needed. There is value in primitive, rugged trails. Note that a better name for “user-created” trails may be “non-system” trails.

- BLM needs to consider whether the time is right to make this a fee site. Fees are reinvested in the site for improvements. Fees cannot be charged unless there are adequate facilities and services. Passes and fees are frustrating.
- A concessionaire would provide a regular presence, but would increase the cost for visitors. Part of that cost would go toward paying for the cost of collecting fees.
- A campground host is the solution to many problems (e.g., trash, vandalism, minor maintenance); this solution is used on other BLM lands.
- More restrictions will push users to new places.
- “No Motorcycle” signs are inappropriate, since they prohibit street-legal vehicles.
- BLM has no position equivalent to the USFS Forest Protection Officer, who is not a fully delegated law enforcement officer but who can write citations. In BLM, only law enforcement officers can issue citations of any kind.
- Most people prefer to camp as close as they can to the river. Eliminating camping by the river fundamentally changes the area - and that user group is not represented at this meeting. Closing the river to camping may not serve the public. (This is a Dam RMZ issue.)
- People tend to stake out campsites along the river, limiting river access for other users. (This is a Dam RMZ issue.)
- There are issues with soil compaction by the river, and impacts to archaeological sites along the river. (This is a Dam RMZ issue.)

Recommendations from one or multiple members of the Workgroup include:

- Trash – place small dumpsters near the campsites
- Setting out recycling bins could help
- Place signs to explain the fines for littering
- Increase law enforcement focus on trash
- Encourage kids to help police or clean up the area by offering rewards for picking up trash. One suggestion was to have a drawing for a bike, with kids getting one raffle ticket for each bag of trash they pick up.
- Sites along the river could be designated and reserved for groups.
- A lot of concern was expressed that a developed campground away from the river may be unsuccessful
- In place of fees, have designated sites where people must sign in and sign out, so that they can be held responsible for litter.
- If a campground is developed, it will need a well-developed road to lead through rough terrain.
- If a campground is developed, trails will need to be built leading to the river, and along the river. Note that trails can be difficult to construct.

- Mechanized (mountain bike), equestrian, and foot trails are appropriate for Wallow Rock RMZ. Although there is some interest in motorized trails, there seemed to be more support for continued non-motorized use (a quiet area).
- Consider limited improvements to the Keyesville Gorge Trail. It is a nice trail, but has some spots that are very difficult for equestrians (rocks, logs) and bikes (sand); however, the ruggedness/ primitiveness of the trail are desirable for some hikers for a sense of exploration. Keep trail restricted to hiking, equestrian, and biking uses.
- Consider establishing a bike trail that connects to access from Lake Isabella.

A couple of general comments about areas outside of Wallow Rock and the river were:

- Locals like to hike to Keyes Mine. There are mixed opinions on whether anything has deteriorated through the years as a consequence of vandalism. BLM needs to explain why the closure is in place.
- BLM needs to revisit the barriers at the Main Staging Area.
- Questions were raised about the past use of state OHV fees; how those fees have benefitted the area is not apparent. Other users who do not pay fees but have benefitted from OHV fees need to contribute themselves.