

COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
Rabbit Valley Working Group Meeting Minutes
August 6, 2002

Attendees:

Ken Currey	Kathy Click	Kate Ellis	Eric Rechel
Sue Benjamin	Mike Click	Dawn Folks	Jane Ross
Nadja Brozina	Jim Cooper	John Potter	Lovell Sasser
			Charlie Sweet

Greetings and Introductions

Dave Farny was unable to attend tonight's meeting, so Eric Rechel offered to lead the meeting.

Jim Cooper, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Transportation Planner, presented the Rabbit Valley travel management plan.

Working Group Discussions

Group discussion began with the proposal for a shooting area north of I-70. It was pointed out that two target-shooting areas already exist, and they are not maintained. Some of the group was in favor of allocating a target-shooting area, some opposed.

A group member noted that he thought there was a road north of I-70 that does not currently appear on the National Conservation Area (NCA) maps. The BLM will modify the map.

Travel management alternatives are reflected on the attached map. The BLM interdisciplinary team (IDT) reviewed the proposed trail system. The green trails shown on the map received little resistance from the staff, but the purple trails were of more concern. The trail system, if implemented, would most likely become multiple-use, single-track trail.

The motorcycle play area perimeter will be constrained to ensure its boundaries do not continue to creep out. Some of this containment work has already begun.

Proposed trails in the Wild Horse Mesa area generated a great deal of discussion. Equestrians feel strongly that the area was meant for horseback riding and hiking, and motorized use should continue to be excluded from both current and future trails.

Motorized users feel strongly that, with each plan the BLM writes, motorized users continue to be pushed out. Within the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area

(CCNCA) are 75,000 acres of Wilderness, locking out both motorized and mechanized use. Rabbit Valley makes up about 14,000 acres of the NCA's 125,000 acres.

Issues discussed by the group:

- Rabbit Valley area is a small percentage of the total CCNCA.
- The Wilderness is exclusive to hiking and horses.
- Mack Ridge is mostly devoted to mountain biking.
- Rabbit Valley is a true multiple-use area.

The BLM has concerns about using the planning process as a tool for building a larger, more unmanageable trail system and hopes the public recognizes the CCNCA as a "conservation" area.

Another concern in Rabbit Valley is land health. As discussed in a previous meeting on Land Health Standards, Rabbit Valley is considered a red zone in terms of land health. Much of the area needs help in meeting standards. Some group members feel the increasing impact is caused by grazing, not recreational users. The Working Group should closely review current grazing policy and oversight for including policy improvements and changes in this plan.

A group member, involved in the planning process for the Ruby Canyon/Black Ridge Integrated Resource Management Plan, reminded the group that decisions made in that plan should be abided by in this plan.

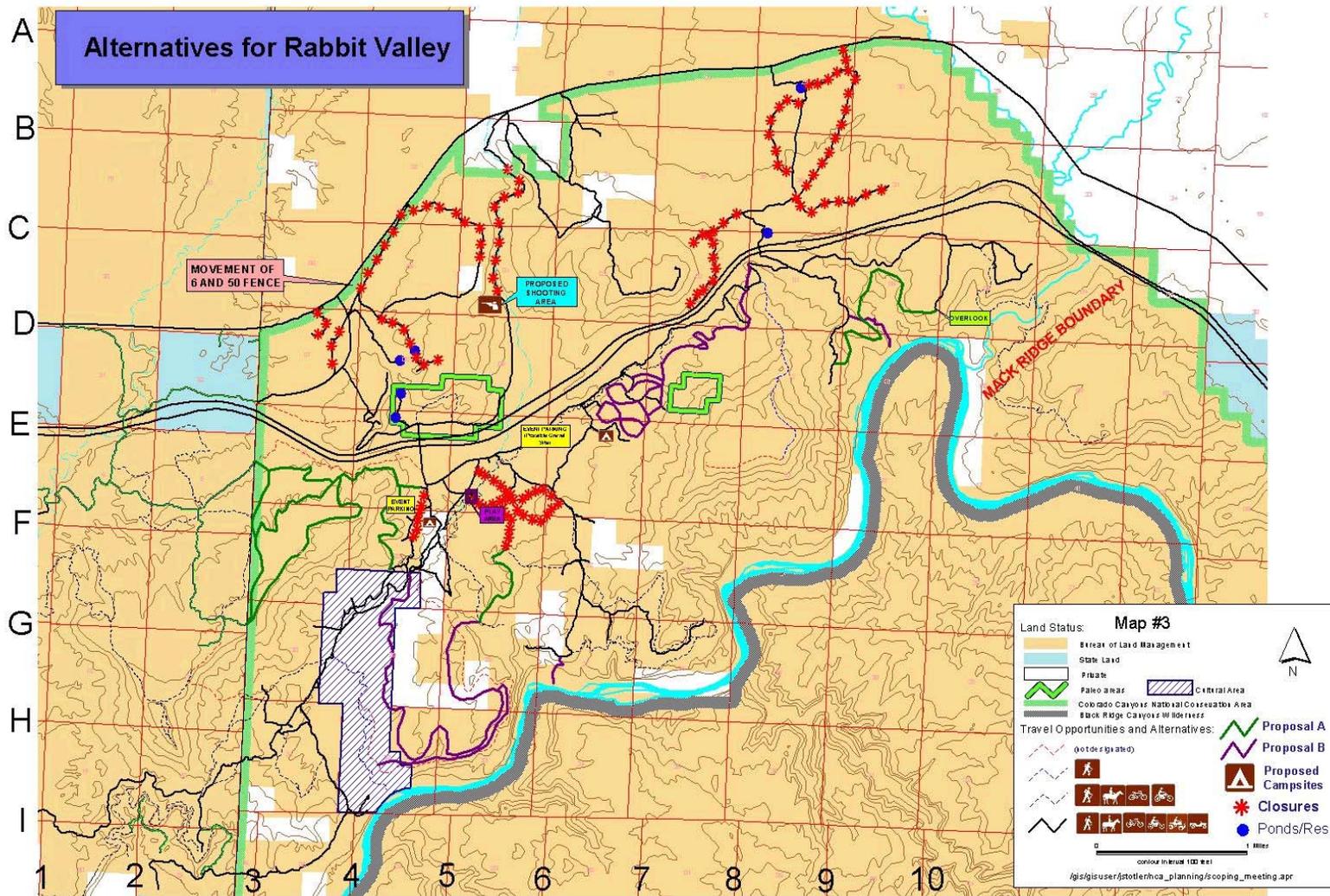
Discussion about trail designation ensued—if the BLM designates a trail, does that imply that the BLM is also responsible for its maintenance? It is better to incorporate trail maintenance expectations into the planning process.

The group requested a facilitated discussion, during the September meeting, for the purpose of addressing sheep and cattle grazing, and Land Health Standards issues.

John Potter expressed interest in becoming the new group leader. The group agreed, and John assumes the group leadership role effective immediately. John will lead the September 9 meeting scheduled for 5:45 p.m., at the Fruita Civic Center.

The group adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area Rabbit Valley Alternative Trails



Note to Map User: No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregation with other data.