Alpine Triangle
Final Recreation Area Management Plan

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Bureau of Land Management

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List of Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ATV	All terrain vehicle
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CDOW	Colorado Division of Wildlife
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMP	Corridor Management Plan
CRMP	Cultural Resources Management Plan
CSSP	Colorado Site Steward Program
DR	Decision Record
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GPS	global positioning system
ID	Interdisciplinary team
IMP	Interim Management Policy
mph	miles per hour
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OHV	Off-highway vehicle
PL	Public Law
RAMP	Recreation Area Management Plan
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMZ	Recreation management zone
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
RV	Recreation vehicle
SJMA	San Juan Mountain Association
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRP	Special recreation permit
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USC	U.S. Code
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WSA	Wilderness study area

1.0 INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 Introduction

This Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) provides direction and guidance to manage the lands and resources of the Alpine Triangle Special Recreation Management Area (Project Area) which includes roughly 186,252 acres of public land between the towns of Lake City, Silverton, and Ouray in southwest Colorado (Figure 1.1). Public lands within the Project Area are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Adjacent public lands are managed cooperatively with a variety of partners including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service and local and county governments. The BLM lands within the Project Area are managed by two BLM Field Offices, the Gunnison Field Office and the Columbine Field Office. In 1981, the BLM recognized the importance of recreation in the Project Area by designating it as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). This administrative designation recognized the Project Area as both a highly valued recreation resource and an area requiring enhanced management for the protection of these recreation-related resources, including a notable number of unique and nationally significant historic mining sites. Then in 1989, the Project Area was nationally recognized with the Alpine Loop Scenic and Historic Byway designation which initiated much higher levels of visitation, including an immediate acceleration of heritage tourism.

The Project Area has increasingly become a destination for recreation. The most recent visitor survey conducted in the Project Area found that two-thirds of those contacted lived outside the State of Colorado and represented 44 states in the U.S. (Virden et al. 1999). Primary recreation activities conducted by visitors to the Project Area include sightseeing and motorized recreation along the Alpine Loop Scenic and Historic Byway (referred to as the “Alpine Loop” from this point forward), hiking, viewing wildlife, fishing, whitewater boating, touring historic sites, snowmobiling, and backcountry skiing.

As a proactive approach to managing and protecting the unique recreation-related resources in the Project Area, the BLM developed the American Flats/Silverton and Lower Lake Fork Special RAMP for the Project Area in 1986 (1986 SRAMP) and the Alpine Triangle Cultural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Analysis (CRMP) in 1994. The purpose of these plans was to recognize that close coordination between recreation and heritage resources would be critical to achieve sustainable heritage tourism as a key component to recreation along the Alpine Loop and in the Project Area as a whole and to identify goals for the BLM's recreation program in the Project Area and supporting management actions necessary to achieve those goals. Though much of the management direction within the 1986 SRAMP still works well, enough has changed to require a re-examination of the document and the management direction it provides. Since the initial plan was developed, the type and volume of recreation in the Project Area has changed, such as the increase in the use of all terrain vehicles (ATVs) and off-highway vehicles (OHV). As such, this proposed RAMP and associated Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) will take a fresh look at the overall goals and supporting management actions necessary to guide a long-term, sustainable recreation program in the Project Area. In addition, the proposed RAMP will comply with new policy direction provided in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) and identify the activities, settings, and experiences that should be managed for, as well as the benefits that should result from this management approach. Last, the proposed RAMP will outline a strategy for how the BLM will continue to further strengthen and develop its partnerships towards accomplishing the goals and management actions identified.

BLM management of the Project Area has benefited from a long and successful partnership with local towns (i.e., Lake City, Silverton, and Ouray) and counties (i.e., Hinsdale, San Juan, and Ouray), as well as the businesses, organizations, and people that reside in them. These towns and counties have an economic base rooted in sustainable tourism, which is directly connected to the recreation resources in the Project Area. Aside from this strong economic tie, the social fabric and unique quality of life enjoyed by these communities is also closely linked to the Project Area. Over the years, the BLM has formed successful relationships with local communities to develop a shared vision for recreation and heritage resource management in the Project Area. This collaborative approach has grown over time in proportion to the demand for recreation in the Project Area. Recognizing the importance of this approach, a driving force behind the planning process for the proposed RAMP is to determine ways in which to sustain and further develop these partnerships.

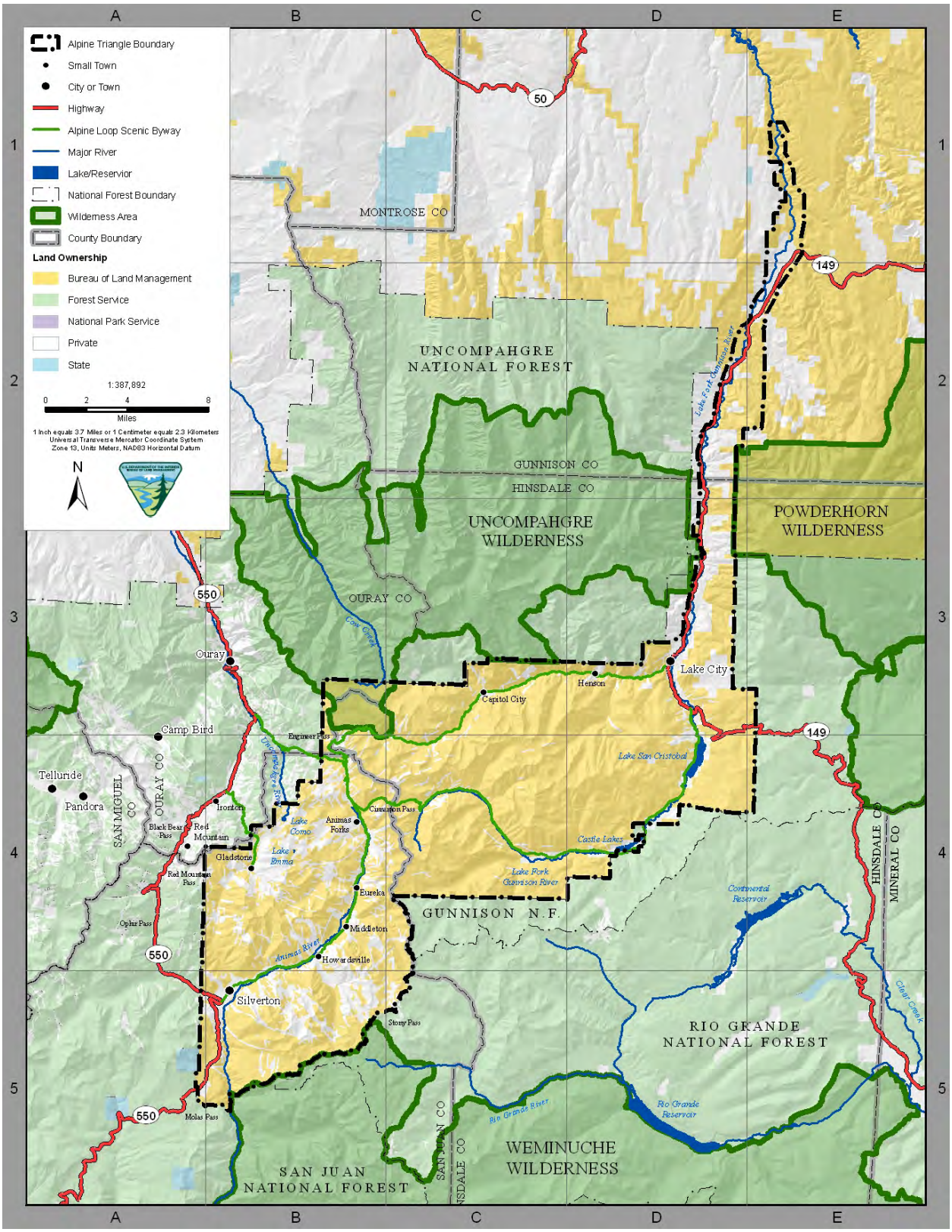

Figure 1.1 Alpine Triangle Project Area Map

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the Project Area for this planning process includes the entirety of the Alpine Triangle SRMA and the Alpine Loop. The Alpine Loop is part of both the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway and National Scenic Byway systems, and serves as a high mountain route between the towns of Lake City, Silverton, and Ouray. This 65-mile byway serves as a focal point for recreation, with 62 percent of visitors stating that the Alpine Loop was one of their primary reasons for visiting the Project Area (Virden et al. 1999).

The BLM serves as the lead agency in this planning process, as the majority of the land (75 percent) within the Project Area is managed under their authority. Also, management objectives and actions described in this plan pertain solely to federal lands managed by the BLM. Nothing in this management plan compromises private rights on private lands or circumvents the rights associated with existing legislation such as the 1872 General Mining Law, The Wilderness Act of 1964, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

As with previous versions, the current RAMP has been developed with the participation and assistance of interested members of the public. The BLM will continue to work closely with the public to provide quality recreational opportunities, comply with regulations, respond to emergencies, resolve conflicts, and protect the resources within the Project Area.

This RAMP employs a unique and innovative approach to the management of the Alpine Triangle and proposes the establishment of three geographical management areas, called Recreation Management Zones (RMZs) within the Alpine Triangle. Each RMZ would be managed to be consistent with the specific goals and objectives for that management area. The goals shape the type of recreation and conservation opportunities that are available for each RMZ. Management actions are provided for each RMZ to assist in reaching the goals and providing opportunities for targeted recreation experiences and resulting anticipated benefits.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this plan is to provide comprehensive guidance and direction toward providing sustainable recreation activities, and to maintain or improve the condition and health of unique cultural and natural resources while creating an environment to promote the health and safety of visitors, employees, and neighboring residents. To this end, the plan will provide direction toward:

- Identifying a process, along with specific opportunities to enhance collaboration between the BLM, local communities, and other agencies.
- Developing and managing both natural and heritage tourism in a manner compatible with resource protection goals.
- Identifying travel management decisions necessary to sustain the prescribed character of recreation settings and the production of targeted activities, experiences, and benefits desired by visitors.
- Identifying the type and level of visitor services, including facilities, needed to support desired visitor use.
- Developing methods to assess and monitor visitor satisfaction levels and resource conditions.

As noted, the previous plan for the Project Area was completed in 1986, and the type and volume of recreation in the Project Area have changed. This change is most evident in the case of ATVs, where their increase in use has been part of a national trend where "from 1982 to 2000, driving motor vehicles 'off-road' became one of the fastest growing activities in the country, growing in number of participants over 12-years-old by more than 100 percent" (Cordell et al. 2005). Aside from substantial growth in ATV use and other more traditional recreation activities (e.g., hiking, fishing), there has also been an increased emphasis on winter recreation. Some level of winter recreation has been present in the area for decades; however, growth in both traditional winter activities (e.g., backcountry skiing, snowmobiling) and more recent activities (e.g., developed downhill skiing, ice climbing, heliskiing, dog sledding) continues.

1.3 Overall Vision

The following management vision for the Project Area was derived from public scoping, interagency dialogue, and the BLM's interdisciplinary (ID) team.

Recreation management for the Project Area will provide a wide variety of opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation in a predominately natural alpine setting. These activities will be developed and managed in a way that provides desirable experiences and benefits for the public, minimizes the impacts on natural and cultural resources, reduces the conflicts between various recreation groups, and reduces conflicts between recreation and other valid uses of public land. Recognizing the strong economic tie to surrounding towns and counties, the BLM will work to build and maintain active partnerships with these stakeholders to foster collaborative working relationships and management.

1.4 Description of the Project Area

Located in southwestern Colorado, the Project Area is situated southeast of Ouray, northeast of Silverton, and southwest of Lake City (see Figure 1.1). The majority of the 186,252 acres comprising the Project Area are federal lands managed by the BLM. However, as presented in Table 1.1 below, smaller portions of the Project Area are either privately owned or managed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW).

Table 1.1 Land Status in the Project Area

Land Owner	Acres	Percent of Total
Bureau of Land Management	145,545	78.1 %
Private	40,373	21.7 %
Colorado Division of Wildlife	334	0.02 %
Total Acreage	**186,252**	**100%**

The Project Area is located in Hinsdale and San Juan counties, with a small portion in Ouray and Gunnison counties. Adjacent federal lands include the Uncompahgre, San Juan, Rio Grande, and Gunnison National Forests and Curecanti National Recreation Area. State Highway 149 and U.S. Highway 550 provide access to the area from the east and west, respectively. Both of these highways are State Scenic Byways. The majority of visitors enter and exit the Project Area through Lake City, with a smaller number using Silverton and Ouray (Virden et al. 1999).

The majority of the Project Area is located just west and north of the Continental Divide, with extremely rugged and colorful volcanic mountains. As part of the San Juan Volcanic Field and Caldera Complex, the Project Area is characterized by numerous massive 13,000-foot mountains dissected by deep, glaciated valleys. Three mountains (Redcloud, Sunshine and Handies Peak) exceeding 14,000 feet in elevation dominate the landscape. Furthermore, three major rivers, the Uncompahgre, Animas and Lake Fork of the Gunnison, have headwaters in the Project Area. The interior of the Project Area is primarily alpine tundra, while the peripheries and large portions in the eastern half are predominantly spruce and aspen. Cirques and talus-covered slopes, along with numerous rushing streams, cascades, waterfalls, and lakes add diversity to the rugged landscape. Lands along the lower Lake Fork include steep-walled canyons and a meandering river valley with meadows, mountain grasslands, aspen, and conifers.

1.5 Planning Process and Public Involvement

A strong collaborative process is vital to generating sound ecological, economic, and social rationale for recreation planning in the Project Area, and setting the stage for community support during implementation. With this in mind, the BLM developed and implemented a public involvement strategy at the beginning of this planning process that sought to obtain input from a diversity of stakeholders. As part of this strategy, the BLM formally initiated this planning process by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on September 14, 2006. Though it is not required to publish an NOI to formally initiate an activity-level planning process for a RAMP, the BLM wanted to take extra effort in notifying the public. Furthermore, if during the planning process it was determined that an amendment to either the Gunnison Field Office's 1993 Gunnison Resource Area, Record of Decision, Approved Resource Management Plan, and Rangeland Summary (Gunnison RMP), or the Columbine Field Office's

1984 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (San Juan RMP) was necessary, the requirement to publish an NOI for such an amendment would be satisfied.

Aside from publishing an NOI, the BLM, in general, follows a six-step planning process in developing a RAMP and associated EA. The results of these steps have been incorporated throughout the Draft Alpine Triangle RAMP/Draft EA, and are as follows:

Step 1 – Identify Planning Issues: Issues and concerns are identified through a scoping process that includes the public, Native American tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments. The scoping period began on October 3, 2006, with the publication of a press release in local newspapers (i.e., Ouray Plaindealer, Durango Herald), and ended on November 6, 2006. Scoping meetings were held in Silverton, on October 3, 2006; in Ouray, on October 4, 2006; and in Lake City, on October 5, 2006. Meetings were held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at each location and included informational presentations on the proposed project and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Forty-two individuals registered at the scoping meetings. The BLM accepted comments during scoping meetings and also throughout the scoping period via letter, fax, and electronic mail. Thirty-six respondents completed a comment form provided by the BLM, and six respondents submitted comments via letter or email. During the official scoping period, the BLM received approximately 624 comments from 49 respondents. As part of the scoping process, the BLM also generated comments internally. The results of this scoping process were compiled in the January 2007 *Alpine Triangle Recreation Area Management Plan, Scoping Report and Summary of Public Comments* document and were posted for the public on the BLM websites.

Step 2 – Formulate Alternatives: A range of reasonable management alternatives that address issues identified during scoping are developed. These alternatives have been developed from a range of potential management goals identified through the scoping process, ID team meetings, and planning discussions with both the Gunnison and Columbine field offices. As both the BLM and the public generally felt that the current management is largely effective, the alternatives were determined to a large degree by non-discretionary law, regulation, and policy. Two alternatives were developed in detail: the Current Management / No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action / Preferred Alternative. Management actions from previous plans were also brought forward.

This RAMP details the BLM's Preferred Alternative for recreation management including specific market niches, management objectives, and corresponding activities, experiences and benefits. The RAMP also defines the prescribed setting character for each RMZs. The complete listing of management goals, market descriptions, monitoring actions, and administrative support actions are presented in Chapter 2.0.

Step 3 – Analyze Effects of Alternatives: The environmental effects of each alternative are estimated and analyzed. As each RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) of the San Juan/Rio Grande and Gunnison field offices identified the Alpine Triangle SRMA, impacts associated with the designation have thus been accounted for in an FEIS. However, the RMZs and corresponding market niches, management objectives, experiences and other beneficial outcomes, and prescribed recreation setting conditions were developed for this RAMP, and therefore the impacts of these decisions have not been accounted for in the RMP process or other previous NEPA documents. These impacts are discussed in a separate Draft EA that accompanies this RAMP as a part of the planning process.

Step 4 – Identify Preferred Alternative: The alternative that best resolves the planning issues is identified as the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is defined to include the proposed management actions called the Proposed Action in the Draft EA, and is collectively referred to as the RAMP in this document.

Step 5 – Develop Recreation Area Management Plan: A Draft RAMP/Draft EA is issued and made available to the public for a review period of 30 calendar days. This document represents this step in the process. During the public review period, the BLM will hold additional public meetings to further explain the Draft RAMP and Draft EA, address public questions, and accept comments in writing. After comments to the draft document have been received and analyzed, the Draft RAMP and Draft EA will be revised and modified, as necessary, and the Final RAMP and Final EA will be published. A decision record (DR) will be signed to approve the Final RAMP and Final EA.

Step 6 – Implement and Monitor the RAMP: Upon approval of the DR, management actions outlined in the Final RAMP would be effective immediately and would require no additional planning or NEPA analysis. Site specific resource surveys would be completed prior to implementation of ground disturbing activities. Following the implementation plan (found in Appendix A) and with the development of a monitoring strategy, such as the example of draft language found in Appendix B, the effectiveness of the management actions toward meeting goals and objectives would be tracked.

1.6 Conformance with the Land Use Plan

The RAMP is designed to be in conformance with the objectives of the 1993 Gunnison and 1984 San Juan RMPs and FEISs. These RMPs, along with the 1986 SRAMP and the 1994 CRMP, currently prescribe the management for the Project Area.

In February 1993 the BLM completed the Gunnison RMP by signing the Record of Decision. The Gunnison RMP provides for the integrated multiple use and sustained yield of resources for the planning area. The Gunnison RMP states:

> Public lands in the Planning Area would be managed according to BLM's Recreation 2000: A Strategic Plan. Management would focus on resource protection, visitor services and information, and recreation facility construction, operation, and maintenance in order to provide a variety of recreation opportunities and experiences. Cooperative partnerships with agencies, the private sector, and volunteers would be expanded and strengthened to enhance local and regional recreation opportunities and tourism [BLM 1993a:I-5 and 2-20].

The 1986 SRAMP states:

> Alpine Triangle SRMA, composed of several Management Units, would be managed for a variety of recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) settings and opportunities, including historical, scenic, and natural values, hiking, sightseeing, motorized recreation, camping, winter recreation, hunting, fishing, and floatboating [BLM 1986a].

In 1984 the BLM completed the San Juan RMP by signing the Record of Decision that created the COLUMBINE FIELD OFFICE's portion of the Alpine Triangle SRMA as the Silverton Special Recreation Management Area. The San Juan RMP provides for the integrated multiple use and sustained yield of resources for the planning area. The San Juan RMP states:

> A wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities will continue to be provided for all segments of the public, commensurate with demand. Trails and other means of public access will continue to be maintained and developed where necessary to enhance recreation opportunities and allow public use. Developed recreation facilities receiving the heaviest use will receive first priority for operational and maintenance funds. Sites that cannot be maintained to acceptable health and safety standards will be closed until deficiencies are corrected. Recreation opportunities will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of recreation resources in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to assure that activities are compatible with recreation management objectives. Development will only occur when an identified need cannot or is not being provided by the private sector.
>
> Continue intensive recreation management of the Silverton Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Provide for a blend of settings and opportunities that tend toward the resource-dependent end of the BLM's ROS system. Allow local communities to provide for facility-dependent settings and opportunities. Provide increased semi-primitive, motorized opportunities with some primitive, semi-primitive, non-motorized, and roaded natural settings and management objectives. Continue off-road vehicle (ORV) management in the Silverton SRMA as per existing management framework plan (1981). Develop and implement a recreation area management plan (RAMP) for the Silverton SRMA that outlines specific needs for recreation resource, visitor, and facilities management [BLM 1984].

This RAMP addresses the resources and impacts on a site-specific basis as required by the NEPA of 1969, as amended (Public Law 91-90, 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.). Pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1508.28 and 1502.21, this site-specific RAMP tiers to the information and analysis contained in these RMPs and FEISs. In particular, the cumulative impact analysis contained in the FEISs established a baseline for recreation planning in the Project Area. Tiering to a NEPA document containing broader impact analysis allows the BLM to consider a narrower range of alternatives for this RAMP.

1.7 Relationship to Statues, Regulations, or Other Plans

The BLM developed the 1986 SRAMP in 1986 and the CRMP in 1994; these plans are incorporated and brought forward as appropriate into the management goals, mitigation, analysis, and decisions that are consistent with the proposed RAMP.

In addition to NEPA, there are other authorities that contain procedural requirements regarding treatment of elements of the environment when the BLM is considering a federal action. There are resource specific Executive Orders listed in the BLM's NEPA Handbook H-1790-1, Appendix 1, that have also been considered in preparation of this RAMP. A few are discussed below.

Heritage resources are protected by the Antiquities Act of 1906, (Public Law [PL] 52-209); the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (PL 89-665), as amended (PL 52-209); its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800); and other legislation including NEPA (PL 91-852) and its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508). Other relevant laws include the Archaeological and Historical Conservation Act of 1974 (PL 93-291); the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (PL 96-95) and its regulations (36 CFR 296); the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (48 USC 1996); and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. The 1971 Executive Order, No. 11593, also requires that cultural resources be protected. Compliance with Section 106 responsibilities of the NHPA are adhered to by following the BLM – Colorado State Historic Preservation Office protocol agreement, which is authorized by the National Programmatic Agreement between the *BLM*, the *Advisory Council on Historic Preservation*, and the *National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers*, and other applicable BLM handbooks.

BLM Gunnison and Columbine field offices' staff reviewed the proposed RAMP and determined it would be in compliance with threatened and endangered species management guidelines outlined in the 2008 Biological Assessment (Cons. #to be inserted) conducted for this RAMP. Through this consultation process, no further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is required. Threatened and endangered flora and fauna are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended (PL 94-325). Additionally, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703-71L) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 USC I.S.C. 668a–668b) protect other sensitive wildlife species that could occur in the Project Area.

The 1970 Clean Air Act, as amended (1990), establishes national ambient air quality standards to control air pollution. In Colorado, the state oversees air quality regulations and standards for stationary sources of air pollution. Impacts to air quality are managed through a case-by-case process.

Executive Order 12898 of 1994, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," requires federal agencies to ensure that proposed projects under their jurisdictions do not cause a disproportionate environmental impact that would affect any group of people because of a lack of political or economic strength. Environmental justice requires "the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and educational levels with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (Executive Order 12898).

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, commonly known as the Clean Water Act (codified at 40 CFR Part 112), protects surface water resources from pollution. Under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (as amended), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was directed to develop a phased approach to regulate stormwater discharges under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Land disturbing activities may require permit coverage through a NPDES storm water discharge, depending on the acreage disturbed. Additionally, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 permit for the discharge of dredge

and fill materials may also be required. Necessary permits and approvals may be required prior to any disturbance activities.

National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands (January 2001) provides guidance for motorized use. The RAMP is consistent with this document and incorporates numerous goals and strategies identified in this plan.

FLPMA (PL 94-579, 90 Stat. 2743, 43 U.S.C.1701 et seq.) provides the BLM with an operating mandate to emphasize the concepts of multiple use and sustained yield within this RAMP. Section 202(c) of FLPMA requires the BLM to "use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield" in developing land use plans for public lands. Multiple use is a concept that directs public lands and their resource values to be managed in a way that best meets the present and future needs of the people of the county. Multiple use involves "a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources…" (FLPMA, Section 103). Sustained yield is "the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use" (FLPMA, Section 103). The BLM is directed by FLPMA to manage sustained yield consistently with multiple use.

Locatable minerals are managed under the General Mining Law of 1872. Federal mineral estate in areas not under withdrawal will be open to entry and location under the general mining laws. Plans of operation will be required for proposed locatable mineral activity on the following lands: 1) lands under wilderness review, 2) lands closed to OHV travel, and, 3) lands within designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System Act (PL 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.) was created to preserve rivers with "outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural and other values" in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Rivers are inventoried by the BLM for characteristics that make them *eligible* for designation by Congress.

Wilderness areas are designated to provide long-term protection and conservation of Federal public lands. Wilderness is defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain…" Wilderness areas are managed to protect several characteristics including opportunities for solitude and unconfined, primitive recreation, and to remain without permanent improvements or human habitation.

Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are managed to protect the characteristics that contain wilderness values until these areas are acted upon by Congress. The BLM will review all proposals for uses and/or facilities within WSAs to determine whether the proposal meets the "non impairment criteria." The overriding consideration must be the preservation of wilderness values within a WSA and should be the primary consideration when evaluating any proposed action or use in a WSA (BLM 1995:8–9).

ACEC is a conservation program managed by the BLM through FLPMA (1976) to protect important riparian corridors, threatened and endangered species habitats, cultural and archeological resources and unique scenic landscapes through special management objectives.

Under Colorado State Law 08-063, state and federal agencies have the ability to educate and enforce state sound limits. The law sets a limit of 96 decibels on most OHVs and authorizes the use of the Society of Automotive Engineers 20-inch sound test. This test makes it possible to field test OHVs for sound education and enforcement purposes.

The main road that accesses this recreation area was designated as the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway in 1989 and as a State Scenic and Historic Byway in 1990. The Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP) was adopted in 1996 to serve as an interim corridor management plan for the Alpine Loop until a more extensive management plan could be developed. The CMP established management specific to the Alpine Loop management as a national byway. The CMP process emphasizes management of the Byway for its intrinsic qualities, byway visitor enjoyment, and collaborative management with neighboring communities.

The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program encourages use of existing documentation and plans when developing a CMP. "It is not always necessary to create a corridor management plan from scratch. There are many existing planning documents that already have identified and developed most of the information required for CMPs" (U. S. Department of Transportation [DOT] 1996:6). As such, through the RAMP planning process, the BLM evaluated the Interim CMP, 1986 SRAMP, Gunnison and San Juan RMPs, and local planning documents and incorporated management guidelines for these documents into the BLM RAMP format. Details regarding where the elements of the CMP have been included in the RAMP are listed and summarized in Appendix C as brief, self-explanatory paragraphs that explain the relevance and provide direction to the reader to find each comparable section within the RAMP.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the purpose and need of the RAMP, as well as the relevant issues, i.e., those elements of the human environment that could be affected by the implementation of the this plan. In order to meet the purpose and need of the project in a way that resolves the relevant issues, the BLM has developed a proposed RAMP that carries forward much of the successful management prescriptions that are currently being used. Additional information on the background of the resources, use trends, and associated issues are presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents the full detail of the proposed RAMP.

2.0 RECREATION MANAGEMENT: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A preliminary step in developing the management program for this RAMP involved identifying relevant issues, concerns, and opportunities with input from the public. The public and BLM ID-team helped to identify what long-term levels of recreation use, services, goods, and environmental conditions are expected from the Alpine Triangle Project Area. The issues, concerns, and opportunities help to determine the extent that the existing management and 1986 SRAMP would need to be revised. Much of the existing management was carried forward as it has been successful.

The discussion that follows provides an overview of the primary recreation activities that occur within the Project Area. As part of this overview, the current use and anticipated future trend for each activity is identified. Furthermore, the issues and concerns associated with each activity, which serve as the driving force behind this planning process, are presented in detail. This information was collected through the public scoping process, examination of existing data, and through the professional knowledge of agency personnel (i.e., BLM, USFS). A primary goal of this planning process is to address outstanding issues and concerns within the Project Area. As such, the RAMP (detailed in Chapter 2.0 of the Alpine Triangle Environmental Assessment) was developed in response to the issues and concerns identified below. A more comprehensive discussion of the issues and concerns driving this planning process is provided in the January 2007, *Alpine Triangle Recreation Area Management Plan Scoping Report and Summary of Public Comments*, which is on file at the Gunnison and Columbine field offices.

As a summary of issues, concerns, and opportunities Table 2.1 expresses the central themes as a series of questions that were carried forward into the RAMP and EA as part of the planning process. However, detailed descriptions follow by topic which allows for a more complete discussion of current use and anticipated trends.

Table 2.1 Summary of Scoping Issues and Concerns

Number	Scoping Issues	Related Sub-Issues
1	What management actions and strategies could be applied to decrease user conflict and resource damage while still allowing recreation, both motorized and non-motorized, along the Alpine Loop? What level of use is appropriate to enable the recreation settings and activities which can provide opportunities for desired experiences and beneficial outcomes?	Increasing use, user conflicts, off road travel, crowding, safety, increased demand for routes open to motorized and non-motorized use, increased need for facilities, excessive noise, appropriate level of road maintenance, increasing winter use such as snowmobiling and, cross country skiing, protection of Wilderness and WSAs, large group sizes, fees, dogs.
2	How does BLM allow visitation to sensitive historic and cultural sites while still adequately protecting them?	Increasing visitation to historic and cultural sites, increased access, hardening of sites for visitation, unlawful activity affecting sites, updating CRMP, private land issues.
3	What management actions are necessary to maintain unique resource values (such as remoteness and solitude for Wilderness areas) and reduce user conflicts in these areas?	Protecting Wilderness values, ACECs, increases user conflicts in remote areas.
4	What are the management goals to accommodate other multiple use activities so as not have negative impacts to the recreation settings, and the activities, experiences, and benefits that they support?	Increasing demand for rock climbing, shooting range, fishing, mountain biking, geocaching, and boating.
5	How can BLM facilitate growth of communities, support tourism-based economies, and minimize urban interface problems?	Increasing demand for collaboration with BLM lands such as trail networks from communities, resolving complex land ownership issues, and identified expansion of recreation and public purposes leases.

2.1 Travel Management and Access

2.1.1 Motorized Recreation

Motorized recreation is one of the dominant recreation activities in the Project Area, and primarily occurs along the Alpine Loop. Types of motorized vehicles used include four-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles, ATVs, and motorcycles. In general, motorized recreation is practiced from late May to late October while the roads are free of snow, with the heaviest use occurring from July to mid-August. The activity takes place primarily on gravel or dirt roads managed by the respective counties. Lower portions of the Alpine Loop are accessible by two-wheel drive (2wd) vehicles, but 4WD and high clearance is necessary to cross the passes in the upper portions of the Alpine Loop.

Almost everyone who visits the Project Area uses some form of vehicle to traverse the area. For some, the vehicle is just the means of getting to a place where they can start their preferred activity, such as hiking or nature photography. For others, the vehicle use is part of the experience they are looking for along with other activities such as those who drive the Alpine Loop to enjoy a 4WD adventure while looking at the area's spectacular scenery or exploring historic mining sites. There are others for whom using the vehicle in that setting is the primary purpose of their trip. At times, it is part of their motivation to challenge themselves and the capabilities of their vehicle by driving on steep or difficult terrain. Most motorized recreationists (87%) use their own vehicle while 11 percent rent 4WD vehicles and 2 percent participate in guided 4WD vehicle tours (Virden et al. 1999). Occasionally, large groups of vehicle enthusiasts hold events such as the Jeep Jamboree or Mile High Jeep Club annual outing along the Alpine Loop.

Four-wheel drive vehicles have traditionally been the vehicle of choice for use on the Alpine Loop. The most recent visitor study conducted in the Project Area found 76 percent of visitors using a 4WD vehicle, 17 percent using a 2wd vehicle, 3 percent on ATVs, and 3 percent on motorcycles. Since around 2003, though, there has been a marked increase in the number of ATVs that are being used on the Alpine Loop. Informal surveys by field staff in 2007 revealed that ATV riders comprised approximately 40 to 50 percent of the motorized vehicles used during the summer season. The overall numbers of 4WD vehicles has not seemed to decrease appreciably, but the number of ATVs has clearly shown sharp increases. The level of motorcycle and 2wd vehicle use appears to remain in line with the findings of the 1997 visitor survey.

Vehicle use takes place under the guidelines of the BLM and USFS vehicle designations. These require vehicles to drive only on designated routes to avoid inappropriate impacts on the scenery and fragile high altitude ecosystems. Visitor information signs, websites, and brochures inform the public of the designations and encourage responsible vehicle use. In general, there is reasonably good compliance with these regulations but there are always some who create problems by driving off the designated routes – sometimes creating impacts (e.g., damaged vegetation) that take many years to heal. The BLM regularly has seasonal personnel patrolling the Project Area and talking with visitors, but the presence of law enforcement personnel has been very low and has not been adequate to serve as a strong deterrent to violations of vehicle designations. In some areas, wooden barriers or boulders have been effectively used to discourage vehicles from venturing off of designated roads.

Vehicle recreation will continue to be very popular in the Project Area and will be a major focus of BLM management. It is reasonable to assume that the upward trend in ATV use will continue. As sales of these vehicles rise, the demand for ATV riding opportunities will continue to rise. Part of this expected rise in ATV use is dependent on the level of effort put into marketing the opportunity to prospective visitors. Since ATVs are generally ridden by one person, a family of four that used to ride the Alpine Loop in a single 4WD vehicle may now be riding in four separate, but smaller, vehicles. This trend makes the busy time of the year seem even more crowded on the Alpine Loop. There will likely come a time when some visitors feel the Project Area is too crowded and will either try to come during a less crowded time of the year or find another destination to visit that isn't as crowded.

Vehicle recreation is somewhat dependent on the price of gasoline both to travel from home, and within the Project Area. As gasoline prices rise, some visitors will be lost due to the high cost of traveling from home to the Project Area. There is also a small subset of the vehicle recreation market that is building and buying vehicles with more and more extreme capabilities for pursuits like rock crawling. While the BLM has not identified any areas in the immediate vicinity as appropriate for this type of use, it is probable that some of these riders will find their way to the Project Area looking for a place with challenging terrain. The prospect of changing technology could affect

vehicle recreation both for better and for worse. Positive influences could lead to quieter motorcycles or cleaner burning fuels, which could reduce social and resource impacts. Negative influences could include more powerful engines or better suspension that allow vehicles to travel these narrow roads even faster than they are now, which could lead to safety problems.

A summary of the key issues and concerns related to motorized recreation in the Project Area is provided below.

2.1.2 Travel Management Network

Increased demand for routes open to motorized vehicles – given the heavy vehicle use along the Alpine Loop, some feel that a possible solution would be to open up additional routes for the vehicle use to be better distributed. There is a balance that needs to be maintained by providing enough vehicle access to provide good experiences for vehicle recreationists and protecting the outstanding scenery that most people come to the Project Area to enjoy.

Minimizing the impacts of vehicle recreation – a variety of impacts can occur to soils, vegetation, wildlife, cultural, and scenic values from improper vehicle use. These impacts can come when vehicles drive off the designated routes to explore, park, camp, etc. The alpine, subalpine, and riparian ecosystems in the Project Area are particularly sensitive to vehicle impacts because they have shallow soils, short growing seasons, and a harsh climate.

2.1.3 Transportation Facilities

The need for transportation facilities increases as use increases – some users would like more staging areas for ATVs or snowmobiles, parking for hikers, runners, ice-climbers, and other recreationists getting access to the area. Others do not want to see the larger facilities. Some users would like more signs, kiosks, and interpretative information; while others would prefer a more rugged back country experience. While it is clear that the vehicle designations are meant to keep vehicles on the roads, there is a need to allow adequate places for vehicles to park out of the roadway at undeveloped camping sites and viewpoint areas.

2.1.4 Management, Maintenance, and Monitoring of the Transportation System

Safety concerns about inadequate room for vehicles to pass along portions of the Alpine Loop – some segments of the Alpine Loop are narrow, and don't provide room for vehicles to safely pass. During the high-use season (i.e., summer) for motorized vehicles, this can often lead to safety concerns. The shelf road leading up to Burrows Park and the routes around Cinnamon and Engineer passes are examples of this problem.

Concern about the lack of identifying information on ATVs – these vehicles typically do not have license plates. If they are found driving off the designated roads or driving unsafely then neither the general public nor agency personnel have an easy way to record and identify the owner of the offending vehicle. The State of Colorado requires an OHV registration sticker from either Colorado or from the state the owner of an ATV resides in. However, these stickers are currently small and not easily seen. Furthermore, even if registration numbers are noted in the field it is difficult to track down the owners.

Safety concerns about vehicles traveling at excessive speeds on the Alpine Loop – this is particularly true of motorcycles which are maneuverable enough to traverse even challenging roads at relatively high speeds. Some of the visitors driving these roads are comfortable in a 4WD environment, while others with less experience feel challenged by the driving conditions. In addition, many drivers are distracted while looking at the scenery and not always able to react quickly to another vehicle coming fast in the opposite direction. The road system is wide and well maintained in some places allowing all vehicles to travel faster than the 25 miles per hour (mph) speed limit. In other places, the road system is rough and narrow, with blind curves and steep drop offs, as well as inadequate room for two vehicles to pass. Vehicles traveling too fast and cutting corners on blind curves have the potential of causing a serious accident.

Excessive noise from motorcycles – motorcycles, particularly those with two stroke engines, can generate noise up to 106 decibels. Some motorcycles have had their mufflers modified or removed resulting in increased noise. The noise from these machines can be disturbing to most other recreation groups as well as to adjacent homeowners. State law allows the USFS and the BLM to enforce state sound requirements of a maximum noise output of 96 decibels. Despite this fact, the BLM's capability to monitor and enforce noise levels is very limited.

Appropriate level of road maintenance – many vehicle recreationists are attracted to the Project Area because of the challenging roads. A message regularly heard from the public is that the BLM shouldn't maintain the roads too much or visitors will lose the 4WD experience in the Project Area. In fact, the majority of road maintenance in the area is carried out by the respective counties. The BLM has a good working relationship with the counties and continue to have periodic meetings with them to discuss what is appropriate, but there isn't always universal agreement. Roads that are too wide or smooth often lead to increased vehicle speed which results in safety problems, dust, and noise. Roads that are too rocky or difficult can lead to safety problems and vehicle damage. The BLM realizes that some visitors come to the Project Area looking for the roughest roads to challenge them and their machine, while others who are not very experienced with 4WD operation don't want to see them get any more challenging. Maintenance issues also include a discussion of dust retardants, such as magnesium chloride. Homeowners along the Alpine Loop regularly petition the counties to put dust retardants on the road to minimize the dust kicked up by passing vehicles. Others worry that magnesium chloride may have adverse effects on roadside vegetation. The counties have also expressed concern over the increasing costs associated with road maintenance.

2.1.5 Winter Transportation System

Because snowmobiling occurs on the snow and rarely contacts the ground, there is very little damage to soils or vegetation. There is the potential for impacts to wildlife if snowmobile use occurs in areas frequented by wildlife in the winter. Snowmobile use can stress wintering wildlife by causing them to burn up critical energy reserves. There is also a potential impact to Canada lynx, a federally endangered species. Groomed snowmobile trails can make it easier for coyotes and other predators to invade deep into winter habitat and compete with the lynx for scarce food supplies. There is an interest by some snowmobilers to add to the mileage of groomed trails in the Project Area. This could be a challenge due to the concerns with lynx habitat.

There are potential snowmobile and cross-country skier conflicts on shared trails. This is due in part to the noise of snowmobiles disturbing the quiet experience that skiers are looking for. There can also be problems with fast snowmobiles threatening skiers' safety when drivers are not careful when passing skiers. Conflicts also occur in some areas where there is competition for powder snow. A single snowmobile can impact a large area of potential powder skiing in a short amount of time.

In addition to groomed trails, snowmobiles use some ungroomed roads and areas along the Alpine Loop. However, the steep terrain along parts of the Alpine Loop results in considerable danger from avalanches for much of the winter. There is no snowmobile use allowed in designated Wilderness or WSAs. Outside of those areas, snowmobile use is currently allowed anywhere on public land in the Project Area.

2.1.6 Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future

Many recreationists are concerned that it may be necessary to add or remove a road in the future based on monitoring of resources and uses in the Project Area. The public is concerned that the BLM could add or remove a road. It is possible to add or remove roads and trails in the Project Area. The Gunnison and San Juan RMPs make allocations for public lands and designate them as Open, Limited, or Closed for travel. The Project Area is generally designated "Limited," and adding or removing a road does not require an RMP amendment; however, site specific NEPA analysis is necessary to disclose the impacts of adding or removing a road, and to inform the public and allow public involvement. WSAs are Closed to travel, cannot be changed by the RMP, and will be managed according to BLM Manual H-8550-1 – Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review (IMP).

2.1.7 Public Access Easements and Rights-of-Way

The need for public access is necessary for infrastructure such as power lines, roads, pipelines, trails, and other developments. Some areas are difficult to manage with the complicated land ownership pattern. This makes it confusing for the public and difficult for private land owners.

2.2 Recreation Management – Spring, Summer, and Fall Use

2.2.1 Visiting Cultural Sites and Heritage Tourism

One of the more popular attractions and opportunities for visitors to the Project Area includes visiting and learning about the historical remnants of the mining days in the late 1800s and early 1900s. For some, this is the primary reason they come to the Project Area. For others, this is an interesting attraction during a trip that was made for other purposes. Whatever the motivation, many visitors are spending time visiting and photographing these historical sites and learning about the history of the area. This practice is referred to as heritage tourism. Heritage Tourism is vital to the economies of San Juan, Hinsdale and Ouray Counties. Preservation of the historic mining structures within the Project Area is essential for providing the experience that heritage tourists specifically come to this area for.

The historic mines, mills, and residences in this area range from 80 to 130 years in age. Time, weather, the sheer volume of visitation, and in some cases vandalism, are taking their toll on these fragile historic buildings. Some are deteriorating and unstable enough to be in danger of collapsing, and in some cases they are a safety hazard for visitors. Some have been stabilized through efforts of the BLM and volunteers from the historical societies in the surrounding towns and are safer for visitors to enter. Some are located on public land and open to the public. Others are on private land and are regularly visited without the permission of the private landowner. The stabilization efforts that the BLM have carried out to date have focused primarily on structures located on public land. In a few cases, the BLM has stabilized structures on private land when permission was given by the landowner to allow the public to visit the site. All mine tunnels and shafts are considered dangerous and should not be visited by anyone because of their instability and potential buildup of poisonous air. The BLM has been working with the state to close these dangerous mines to avoid safety problems and reduce the point source pollution that can come from these tunnels.

In 1994, in recognition of the critical link between increases in heritage tourism and associated increases in access (particularly vehicle access) and the resultant damage and loss of heritage resources as they are “loved to death”, the BLM prepared the CRMP for the Project Area. In addition, the BLM prepared the Alpine Loop Back Country Byway Draft Interpretive Overview and Sign Plan (Interpretive Plan), which identified major management actions aimed at informing and educating visitors about historical resources that they might visit and establishing priorities for stabilization measures to preserve the integrity of these sites and secure visitor safety. Some of the management actions in these plans have been implemented with the help of grant funding from the National Scenic Byway program administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Colorado Historical Fund administered by the State of Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Others have been implemented by the BLM through congressional funding and their volunteer and public land stewardship programs. This has resulted in information and education messages related to historic resources being offered on interpretive signs, in brochures, and at the visitor centers. These materials also include ethics messages about the need to protect the integrity of these sites. Most visitors are respectful of the historic sites; however most of the sites have not been "hardened" for such heavy visitation. A small percentage of visitors abuse these sites by tearing them apart, taking historical artifacts as souvenirs, writing names or other graffiti on the buildings, or leaving trash or human waste in and around the buildings. Current regulations prohibit camping within 50 feet of historical buildings.

In 1994, in response to public concern about water quality and public safety at abandoned hardrock mines across the West, the BLM initiated a national Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation program. The Upper Animas River drainage was selected as a national pilot project for this program to reduce the levels of heavy metals in waters coming from hardrock mines in the Project Area. Recognizing the high degree of mixed land ownership typical of industrial mining regions in the West, one of the goals of the local Upper Animas pilot program was the formation of a Stakeholders Group to facilitate collaboration between multiple land-owners to achieve a coordinated approach. Also recognizing that hardrock mines can also be important heritage resources, in 1998 this Stakeholders Group supported the documentation of over 300 historic sites in the Project Area. Since this massive documentation effort followed the BLM’s preparation of its Alpine Triangle CRMP, none of this substantial database has been considered in the recreation planning process for heritage tourism in the Project Area. For this information to be evaluated and integrated most effectively within the objectives for recreation-resource management and heritage tourism, an update to the CRMP is needed.

In spite of the management actions taken to protect the cultural resources in the Project Area to date, most of the key heritage tourism resources remain in active and accelerating stages of deterioration and collapse. From monitoring data and photographic evidence, the BLM has determined that in the past 15 years, 40 percent of the standing structures in the Project Area have collapsed and estimates that in the next 5–10 years another 40 percent will no longer be standing without drastic stabilization and stabilization maintenance measures. If the recreation-related heritage resources are going to continue to attract heritage tourism, a major economic focus for the high altitude communities along the Alpine Loop, strong partnerships between federal, state and county agencies, communities and private land owners need to be formed and major stabilization efforts need to be initiated immediately.

Because of heavy levels of visitation to heritage sites along the Alpine Loop and in the Project Area, the BLM and the San Juan Mountain Association's Southwest Colorado Site Steward Program has been coordinating volunteer site stewards to monitor heritage tourism sites in the Project Area since the program was expanded to include the Upper Animas River drainage in 2005. Detailed site condition and visitation data from several of the most heavily-visited sites in the area has been gathered and some sites have received impact remediation and minimal emergency stabilization treatment under close federal oversight as a result. This program needs to be expanded on the San Juan side to include more sites and expanded (or a similar program initiated) to include the Gunnison side of the Project Area.

2.2.2 Hiking/Trail Running/Backpacking

This popular activity is practiced primarily on maintained hiking trails in designated Wilderness and WSAs found in the interior portion of the Project Area. The majority of visitors come from Colorado and the Four Corners Region, though hikers from around the country can be found on these trails. By far the most popular destinations for hikers and mountain climbers are the 14,000-foot mountain peaks (Fourteeners), including Redcloud, Sunshine, and Handies Peaks. These three peaks are some of the easiest Fourteeners in Colorado, with well-maintained trails leading to the top. Climbers can use the trailhead in Burrows Park and climb all three peaks in a weekend. On some weekends during the peak season, as many as 60 vehicles can be seen at the trailhead parking area. The main motivation for hiking these trails is to get to the top of these peaks. Other desired outcomes that are common in the backcountry, including experiencing a low number of social encounters and solitude, are of less importance on these trails. Most visitors hike these trails during a single day so camping use along these trails is not common but does happen on occasion. In certain areas, the high tundra near these peaks provides the habitat for an endangered species of insect; as a result, camping is discouraged above 12,000 feet to avoid impacts to this habitat. The Fourteeners are also popular with outfitters so it is necessary to place limits on their use of these popular trails to avoid adding to the number of social encounters that other hikers experience.

A variety of other trails lead to more remote and solitary backcountry opportunities. These trails get less use than the Fourteeners, but still get enough use to make it worthwhile to maintain them. They also serve as good alternatives for outfitters who do not have enough opportunities to meet their needs on the more popular trails. There is also an increasing demand for urban interface trails that provide easy to moderate hiking opportunities for residents and visitors alike to get some exercise, walk the dog, or access public lands directly from town without having to drive to a trailhead. The presence of private land around the communities often makes it difficult to tie trails in town out to public lands, but if the opportunity exists to develop these trails they should be considered.

Visitors regularly bring their dogs with them while hiking, running, or backpacking. This allows the dogs to get exercise and adds to the visitor's enjoyment. Dogs can cause problems though when they chase or attack wildlife, fight with other dogs, or attack other visitors. In some heavily visited parks rules require dogs to be kept on leashes, but these rules are often looked at as excessive and are regularly abused.

2.2.3 Hunting and Shooting

Hunting is practiced throughout the Project Area under the management of the CDOW. Along with providing outstanding recreation experiences, hunting plays an important role in keeping big game populations at appropriate levels. This activity occurs primarily during the shoulder season of September and October so it provides an important income source for local communities during the off season for visitors. There is some concern that hunters are responsible for driving off designated routes, establishing illegal routes, and causing inappropriate impacts at camping areas. This behavior has diminished over the years in part because of efforts to educate hunters about the principles of Tread Lightly, Stay the Trail, and Leave No Trace.

There is a small but ongoing demand for opportunities for shooting and target practice primarily from local residents. It has been a challenge to find a location suitable for target practice that does not pose safety problems for other recreation use in the area. In Hinsdale County, target practice has traditionally taken place at the Clauson Mesa meadow which is one of the few flat, open areas close to town with at least 100 yards of distance and a reasonable hillside for a backstop. Unfortunately, the meadow is also used by campers and fishermen, which can lead to conflicts. The BLM worked with the Lake City shooting club several years ago to try to find an alternative location for their target practice, but were unable to identify a good alternative. The buildup of trash and debris at shooting areas has been a common problem in other parts of the state but has not been a major problem in this area. Paintball shooting has not been practiced to a notable extent in the Project Area, but could be an activity that is practiced occasionally in the future.

2.2.4 Fishing

Fishing is practiced in streams, rivers, and lakes with viable fisheries, throughout the Project Area. The activity requires a fishing license from the CDOW and is subject to any rules or limitations of this state agency. Fishing is rarely practiced as a sustainable activity. The demand for fish often exceeds the ability of the habitat to produce fish so many streams rely on augmentation of the natural population through stocking programs managed by the CDOW. Isolated BLM parcels along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River north of Lake City offer outstanding opportunities for walk/wade fishing and, to a lesser extent, float fishing. This is due to the relatively natural setting, good fish population, and relatively low fishing pressure. A high priority should be placed on protecting these values.

Different anglers are looking for different settings in which to practice their sport. On one end of the spectrum, these can be places close to town or a road where anglers can easily access fishing opportunities. Because of the easy access, anglers in these settings rarely expect to be alone and usually are not surprised if there are others fishing in the same area, or if the fishing success is only moderate. On the other end of the spectrum, there are anglers who would prefer an isolated stream or backcountry lake that doesn't get many visitors. They are looking for an experience with less crowds and the chance for better fishing success. They are usually not averse to hiking or riding moderate distances to get to places that others rarely use. There are many areas where the river corridors are privately owned and public access for fishing is not allowed. There are some tracts of public lands along rivers and lakes where public access is allowed, but there are sometimes problems with fishermen continuing to fish beyond those boundaries and trespassing on private land. Hinsdale County has proposed a project to the BLM that would reroute a paved portion of the county road along Lake San Cristobal to develop a more comfortable area for visitors to enjoy fishing on the lakeshore away from the traffic. The reroute has the potential to impact some historic sites so this issue, and others, must be evaluated and resolved before this project can be approved.

2.2.5 Camping

Camping is practiced in a variety of locations in the Project Area. There are developed fee campgrounds along the Lake Fork at Mill Creek, Williams Creek, and Wupperman Creek. Developed fee campgrounds also occur at The Gate and Red Bridge along the lower Lake Fork north of Lake City.

At this time there is no developed campground on public land along the Alpine Loop in the Animas River corridor; however, the public has indicated that a campground would be a desirable amenity in this area. This is a challenging task because of the mosaic of intermixed public and private land in the Animas River corridor. The most likely place for such a campground would be the Eureka townsite where dispersed camping is currently taking place. The area is mixed ownership between the BLM, San Juan County, and private landowners so it would take considerable effort to develop a fee campground in this area. A designated camping area may be pursued by San Juan County in close proximity to the townsite of Eureka. This facility would potentially be developed by San Juan County on San Juan County lands with possible collaboration from BLM.

Camping at undeveloped sites occurs regularly in several dozen sites throughout the Project Area. Self-contained visitors in recreation vehicles (RVs), trailers and tents pull into parking spots alongside the road and camp in places that have little or no facilities. At this time, the number of undeveloped camping spots in the area seems to be adequate to meet the demand. The possible exception would be at the Silver Creek trailhead where visitors regularly spend the night as they prepare to climb the trails to the Fourteeners in this area. While this type of camping is generally low impact, it can result in some impacts caused when campers push their vehicles onto undisturbed ground, leave trash, or create multiple fire rings. The BLM regularly cleans-up these sites and sometimes

establishes barriers to delineate appropriate use areas. There is currently a 14-day camping limit in undeveloped sites for recreationists to allow other campers an opportunity to use the area, and prevent impacts that often come from long-term stays. There are also periodic problems with squatters that want to reside on public lands as an alternative to finding traditional housing in the surrounding communities. This activity is prohibited in all cases.

Currently, the BLM does not allow vehicles to travel off of designated routes to access an undeveloped campsite in the Project Area. This avoids user-created routes impacting the alpine and subalpine meadows in the area, which would detract from the scenic beauty of the Project Area. In most traditional undeveloped campsites, routes have been developed to allow vehicle access. In some cases, barriers have been established to define suitable parking areas for camping or RVs have parked immediately adjacent to roads.

2.2.6 Rock Climbing

Rock climbing is practiced regularly by relatively small numbers of visitors in a few specific areas. The volcanic nature of the rock in the Project Area often makes it too unstable for safe rock climbing, but there are a few places where the rock is stable enough and the extent of the cliff lends itself to good opportunities for this activity. These areas are used primarily by commercial outfitters who offer their clients rock climbing opportunities as one activity among several that they practice during their time in this area. A small but growing number of private climbers are coming to a rock climbing area along Henson Creek to climb routes that have already been established and to establish new ones. The site has received some promotion in rock climbing magazines so its popularity could grow in the future. Climbers regularly share information about the location of good climbing areas so this site could see major increases in use if it is promoted. There is limited parking available for this site and an increase in use could result in problems with parking. There is a strong competitive mentality in the climbing community to see who can establish new routes, especially difficult routes. This results in climbers regularly exploring for new areas to climb.

The effects of rock climbing on the area's resources are usually minimal but there can be impacts to soils and vegetation on the trails used to access climbing areas, and on cliff nesting birds that could be disturbed by climbing activity. Climbing is primarily practiced in the summer and fall, but some spring climbing does occur once the climbing areas and access roads are clear of snow. There have been some concerns with rock climbing activities resulting in trespassing on private land if boundaries are not well marked or if desirable pitches are located on private land near public land climbing sites. Climbers need solid and safe anchors to attach their ropes to for protection and safety. Sometimes they use natural anchors, such as rocks or trees, and remove their hardware when they are done for the day. Sometimes they will establish artificial anchors, such as bolts, chains, or cables, and leave them in place once they are established. There is no system for evaluating the safety of these artificial anchors so climbers must recognize that they climb at their own risk, and use their best judgment when deciding whether they should trust an anchor that has been placed by someone else.

2.2.7 Horseback Riding and Pack Animals

Horseback riding does not commonly occur in the Project Area. Many of the steep, rocky trails are not well suited for horses. The majority of horse use occurs in backcountry areas by outfitters during hunting season to carry in hunters and equipment, and to carry out game. A few other commercial outfitters offer day rides or overnight pack trips during the summer. Occasionally, large groups of riders come to the Project Area for a week-long event.

Horse use can result in resource impacts in several ways. Horse use on wet trails can impact the tread, create mudholes that hold standing water and encourage other users to go around problem areas, causing additional impact to soil and vegetation. At campsites, horse impacts occur in a variety of ways. When they are kept in one area for too long, such as tying them to trees or building temporary corrals, they can cause excessive impacts to soil and vegetation. If they are tied too close to water they can impact water quality. If they are tied too close to desirable campsites they can leave a mess of droppings that discourage other campers. If the feed that is brought in for horses is not certified to be weed free invasive weeds can be introduced or spread on public lands.

Most of the horse use done by commercial outfitters avoids these potential impacts as a condition of their permit authorization. At this time, horse related recreation does not cause many of these potential impacts because of the low amount of use and the low impact practices followed by commercial outfitters. Given the steep terrain and rocky roads in the Project Area it seems unlikely that horse use will increase considerably in the future.

Llama packing and goat packing are unusual activities in the Project Area, but they have occurred in the past. In general, these activities cause less impact than horse related recreation because the animals weigh less and consequently don't impact soils or vegetation as much as horse use does. It is unlikely that these activities will increase considerably in the future.

2.2.8 Whitewater Boating

Whitewater boating is practiced primarily on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River north of Lake City, and on the Animas River from Silverton south to Durango. These sections of river are used for whitewater rafting, kayaking, and float fishing though different sections of the rivers are more suitable for some activities. The rivers range from Class I (i.e., calm flat water) to Class V (i.e., dangerous, with rapids of sufficient length and difficulty requiring precise maneuvering). The rivers are most popular with boaters during the spring and early summer (i.e., late May to July) when there is enough water from spring runoff to allow easy passage. The rivers are narrow and trees can fall and block the entire river. If this happens on private land, boaters are forced to trespass to get around the obstacle.

Occasional problems associated with whitewater boating include trash, human waste, impacts on diversion structures and trespass on private lands. Portions of these river corridors pass through private land. This poses several challenges, including identifying key parcels of public land for put-in and take-out points that allow the public to access the river. The Lake Fork of the Gunnison River has four sections for boaters to use that are primarily governed by access to the river. Whereas, for the Animas River below Silverton access is provided 0.75-mile south of Silverton along the railroad tracks, with permission from the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

2.2.9 Geocaching

Geocaching is a relatively new outdoor activity that has grown in popularity over the last five to seven years. Geocaching is a type of scavenger hunt that involves a person who established a cache somewhere in a place they want to share with others. The cache can be a natural feature such as a mountaintop, or overlook. More commonly the cache is an artificial container like a bucket or box that can contain any number of items. The global positioning system (GPS) location of the cache is recorded and posted on a website. Other geocachers can download the coordinates then use their GPS receivers to search the woods to find the cache. When they find it they may record their name or leave a small token of their visit. Since the information necessary for them to practice their activity is available on a website they usually do not come to land managers for information. As a result, it is uncertain how many visitors are practicing this activity in this area; however, at present, the geocache website lists 113 caches within 30 miles of Lake City.

The caches are sometimes placed close to trails or roads and sometimes require cross-country travel to find them. The tendency to leave man-made materials on public land for extended periods is not allowed under BLM regulations. The BLM would much rather see caches that focus on natural features rather that artificial debris left on public lands. At present, no resource impacts associated with this activity are evident; however, if the activity becomes more popular social trailing to cache sites could occur. These unauthorized trails could result in impacts to soils and vegetation.

2.2.10 Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is practiced primarily on existing roads in the Project Area though there are several single track trails, such as the Lake to Lake Trail and the Henson Creek Trail, where mountain bikes are permitted. Mountain bike use is not allowed in designated Wilderness or WSAs. Use is relatively low and practiced primarily by local residents rather than visitors from outside the area. Some recreationists have suggested adding a few more single track trails that would be open, and suitable for mountain biking. This is particularly true in urban interface areas around Lake City and Silverton since some residents would appreciate the opportunity to be able to ride direct from town on a trail system that would take them out to public lands. There have been some cases where mountain bikers have created unauthorized trails on public land.

Currently, the existing Gunnison and San Juan RMPs do not specifically address mountain bike use through the designation of either travel management areas or networks (i.e., system of trails). The steep topography, presence of private land in key access areas, and the large areas currently off limits to biking restricts opportunities to expand

mountain biking trails at this time. It is anticipated that the demand for mountain bike opportunities in the foreseeable future will grow only slightly beyond where it is today. As such, a few priority actions and minimal monitoring appear to be adequate at this time to support mountain biking in this area.

Existing roads in the Project Area and the proximity of several towns provide the setting for an outstanding multi-day mountain bike trip called the Four Passes Tour. Starting in Lake City riders go over Engineer, Imogene, Ophir, and Cinnamon Passes as they return to Lake City. Following this route riders spend evenings in the towns of Ouray, Telluride, Ophir, and Silverton. This tour is best done in the fall when the amount of vehicle traffic on these jeep roads is reduced and there is less chance for conflicts between bikers and motorized recreation. There is currently one commercial outfitter that is offering this kind of tour in the Project Area. On occasion, road bike tours such as the Bicycle Tour of Colorado or Ride the Rockies includes a portion of the Project Area in their route. These large groups usually stay on the paved highways and spend the night in the local communities so their use of public lands in the Project Area is minimal.

2.3 Recreation Management – Winter Use

2.3.1 Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is a popular winter activity in portions of the Project Area. The activity is practiced by both locals and visitors from outside the area. On the Lake City side the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail is a well-developed system of 80 miles of groomed trails along the Continental Divide, on the Cannibal and Alpine Plateaus. The majority of this trail is on USFS land, but approximately 10 miles are on BLM land. The trail is groomed by the snowmobile club in Lake City under a permit from the USFS and BLM, with the assistance of an annual grant from the State Snowmobile Fund. On the Silverton side the Silverton Snowmobile Club also grooms 28 miles of trails through a permit. Snowmobile trails may only be groomed with authorization from the managing agency.

In addition to groomed trails, snowmobiles use some ungroomed roads and areas along the Alpine Loop. However, the steep terrain along parts of the Alpine Loop results in considerable danger from avalanches for much of the winter. There is no snowmobile use allowed in designated Wilderness or WSAs. Outside of those areas, snowmobile use is currently allowed anywhere on public land, in the Project Area.

Because snowmobiling occurs on the snow and rarely contacts the ground there is very little damage to soils or vegetation. There is the potential for impacts to wildlife if snowmobile use occurs in areas frequented by wildlife in the winter. Snowmobile use can stress wintering wildlife by causing them to burn up critical energy reserves. There is also a potential impact to Canada lynx, a federally endangered species. Groomed snowmobile trails can make it easier for coyotes and other predators to invade deep into winter habitat and compete with the lynx for scarce food supplies. There is an interest by some snowmobilers to add to the mileage of groomed trails in the Project Area. This could be a challenge due to the concerns with lynx habitat.

There are potential snowmobile and cross-country skier conflicts on shared trails. This is due in part to the noise of snowmobiles disturbing the quiet experience that skiers are looking for. There can also be problems with fast snowmobiles threatening skiers' safety when drivers are not careful when passing skiers. Conflicts also occur in some areas where there is competition for powder snow. A single snowmobile can impact a large area of potential powder skiing in a short amount of time.

Hybrid skiing/snowmobiling is a relatively new activity that involves a snowmobiler transporting a skier or snowboarder to an area, dropping them off, and then picking them up at the bottom of the slope. This allows skier/snowboarders to make many more trips than they would normally by hiking up the hill. This activity occasionally causes some conflict with traditional cross-country skiers due to competition for powder snow. This activity is becoming more prevalent in the Project Area and is expected to increase in the future.

2.3.2 Developed Downhill Skiing, Snowboarding, Cross-country Skiing, and Snowshoeing

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are practiced regularly during the winter season primarily by local residents of the surrounding communities along with a few visitors. No trails are specifically groomed for this activity, though many skiers use the trails groomed by the snowmobile clubs. There is also a system of four yurts along

portions of the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail that offers hut to hut opportunities for overnight trips by skiers. Skiers break their own paths on existing roads and trails that have a reasonable enough grade to allow skiing or snowshoeing. The primary motivations are moderate to strenuous exercise, and viewing winter scenery and wildlife. Cross-country skiers prefer quiet use areas that offer an experience free from motorized noise. They can share trails with snowmobiles particularly if there is not much traffic on the trail, but increasing the level of motorized traffic reduces the experience that most skiers desire. Conflicts also occur in some areas where there is competition for powder snow. A single snowmobile can impact a large area of potential powder skiing in a short amount of time.

As with snowmobiling, skiers have to be careful about avalanche danger. The steep terrain and avalanche danger in the Project Area limit the opportunities for good skiing and snowshoeing. These uses have some potential to grow in the future and can add to a desired increase in winter tourism business.

There are relatively few impacts associated with cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The major concerns are the potential impacts to wildlife that come from an increased human presence that can disturb wintering animals. Skiers and snowshoers are more likely to travel with dogs which can be very disturbing to wildlife.

Developed downhill skiing and snowboarding occurs in several locations in the Project Area and generally results in little to no impacts, assuming users follow rules prescribed by developed ski areas. The most developed facility is located at the Silverton Mountain Ski Area north of Silverton accessed by San Juan County Road 110. The area has one double chairlift which is located on private land. The ski area operates on 1,600 acres of public land which has been under permit from the BLM for the past five years. The area includes extremely steep, avalanche prone terrain and caters to more advanced skiers. Clients for this area come from all over the U.S. to experience both guided and unguided skiing/snowboarding. The area has also been approved for helicopter skiing and operates from December to April, depending on snow pack (see Section 2.3.3 Heliskiing).

Lake City operates a small community ski area served by a rope tow on BLM land and managed by the town under a Recreation and Public Purposes lease. It is the primary downhill ski opportunity for the residents of Lake City. The town has petitioned the BLM to convert the property to their ownership.

Silverton also operates a small ski area known as the Kendall Mountain Ski Area which is served by a double chairlift. It is located on both town property and on BLM land, and is managed by the town of Silverton under a Recreation and Public Purposes lease. Silverton has expressed interest in expanding the ski area to include a larger amount of BLM land.

2.3.3 Heliskiing

Heliskiing is a commercial activity that allows a company to ferry skiers to the top of a mountain in a helicopter, and then have a guide lead them down the slopes to be picked up again at the bottom of the hill. Commercial heliskiing has been allowed on public lands within the Project Area through an annual permit with the Telluride Helitrax Company since 1995. The area covered under this permit only includes public lands in San Juan County managed by the BLM COLUMBINE FIELD OFFICE. Silverton Mountain Ski Area is also permitted to use helicopters for skiing access, within their permitted ski area. Heliski operations are not allowed in designated Wilderness or WSAs. The one current permitted heli-skiing operation permit, Silverton Guides LLC, will be honored in all Recreation Management Zones.

Avalanche danger on desirable slopes for heliskiing area can be high. Therefore, avalanche evaluation is essential and control activities are necessary in order to run a safe operation. This avalanche control activity usually takes the form of explosive charges dropped from the helicopter onto avalanche prone slopes. If the charge fails to detonate then the company is expected to record the location, and conduct a ground search the next summer to try to locate it so it doesn’t pose a danger to hikers or other recreationists.

Heliskiing is conducted in very remote areas. If there was a crash or serious injury to a client while skiing, those areas would be difficult to access for rescuers. The snow cover, low temperatures and short days of winter provides less-margin for error so proper training of staff, good equipment maintenance, good communications, and solid rescue plans are essential for safe operations.

There are so many patented mining claims spread throughout the mountains that it is difficult for the company to locate heliski runs that do not cross at least some private land. The BLM can only authorize commercial activities on public land so the company must seek permission from these private landowners to cross their land. The likelihood of impacts to soils and vegetation are small but many landowners are somewhat concerned about the possibility of unexploded avalanche control charges being left on their land. Finally, there is a concern that heliskiing activities could potentially impact Canada lynx populations.

2.3.4 Dog Sledding

Dog sledding is practiced by both private and commercial dogsledders, primarily on groomed snowmobile trails in the Project Area. This activity is not very prevalent and is not anticipated to increase in the foreseeable future. Impacts are generally low; however, dogs not under the control of their owners have the potential to harass or bite visitors or their dogs.

2.3.5 Ice Climbing

Ice climbing is practiced in the Project Area at several natural waterfalls that provide stable ice for a portion of the winter. These sites have not been precisely located to determine if they occur on public or private land. The location of these sites is shared among the practitioners of the sport through personal communication, emails, websites and magazine articles. An artificial ice wall has been developed, with temporary authorization from the BLM, on the Henson Creek Canyon just west of Lake City. The number of people that practice this activity is relatively small; however, the areas suitable for practicing the sport are also limited. Most practitioners are local residents but a few ice climbers come from other parts of Colorado, and the Four Corners Region.

Ouray has developed an extensive system of artificial ice walls on private land in the canyon south of town that is well known among ice climbers. It attracts a number of visitors from throughout the U.S. It also hosts an annual ice climbing festival that brings many visitors to town in January. The Ouray Ice Park does not charge fees but is supported by donations, memberships and proceeds from the ice festival. The success of this operation has prompted other towns like Lake City to consider establishing smaller versions of the Ouray Ice Park to attract additional winter tourism. Lake City has proposed a project to extend plastic pipe from the water tower above the town about a half mile upstream along the Henson Creek Canyon, and spraying water over the cliff to establish ice climbing routes on a number of suitable spots. Ice climbing also takes place at the Eureka climbing area located northwest of Eureka, accessed by San Juan County Road 2 and in Cunningham Gulch.

Ice climbing has some potential impacts or concerns that must be considered as proper management for this activity is developed. Safety is a major concern for a variety of reasons. The same drainages that develop natural ice falls also have a tendency to have periodic avalanches. Ice is constantly changing based on changes in temperature, moisture and use. These changes can make the ice more durable and safer for climbers or more brittle and more dangerous. Ice can break while you are climbing it or break off from above to fall on climbers. Some natural ice climbing areas have not been located precisely on maps to determine if the site or access route is on public or private land. This could lead to trespass problems. Increasing human activity in remote locations during the winter also has some potential to impact wintering wildlife, especially Canada lynx.

In general, natural ice climbing opportunities in remote and scattered locations have more potential for safety problems, trespassing, and resource impacts. Rescue of injured climbers at these areas would also be challenging. Artificial ice climbing opportunities, such as the one proposed near Lake City, have the potential of being easier to access, monitor, and respond to emergencies, and less likely to have major avalanche danger, result in trespass and cause undesirable impacts to resources. These benefits would make it more likely to be visited as long as the area offered desirable climbing opportunities. This, in turn, would likely result in more visitors being drawn to the area and contributing to winter tourism. The BLM does not traditionally engage in the development or operation of artificial ice climbing areas. Therefore, the BLM would have to work in partnership with ice climbers, and the affected town and county to develop and safely manage such a project.

2.4 Recreation Management – Resource Protection

Some respondents believe that the current management does not sufficiently protect natural and cultural resources. Some respondents suggested that changing the management of some or all of the Project Area by designating the Project Area as an Alpine National Conservation Area would better protect the area. Other recommendations included consideration for Wilderness designations. Conflicts between user groups were also identified as a common theme.

2.4.1 Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

A wide range of issues were raised during scoping, such as protection of crucial ranges, winter habitat, breeding/nesting and other reproduction areas, wildlife migration corridors, and habitat linkages. Sensitive habitats of concern included sagebrush steppes, alpine tundra, riparian areas, willow carrs, and fish-supporting waters. The public was concerned about the effect of increased human activity on these species and their habitat.

2.4.2 Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas

Comments suggested that increased recreation may pose challenges for special management areas (BLM 2007:16). Impacts from recreation to WSAs could negatively impact and deteriorate the wilderness values and the opportunities for primitive back country experiences.

2.4.3 Lands and Realty

Commenters had concerns about access to historic structures, mining sites, and private development within the Project Area. Many of the historic relics and structures enjoyed by visitors are located on private property associated with historic mining claims. Access issues were also identified related to private lands within the Project Area (if they are needed and where they should be located). Commenters had concerns about development on private inholdings in the corridor which could impact the recreation experience.

2.4.4 Local Land Use Planning

The BLM has three principal levels of land use planning decisions: 1) the RMP level; 2) the activity level; and 3) the site-specific level. This Draft RAMP/Draft EA focuses on providing activity-level guidance, and some site-specific level decisions for managing recreation in the Project Area. The RMP level documents that provide broad resource objectives and direction for the Project Area include the Gunnison and San Juan RMPs, and their amendment (i.e., Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado), approved February 1997. The BLM finds the RAMP, described in Chapter 2.0 of the Alpine Triangle Draft EA, to be in conformance with these RMPs. More specifically, the BLM finds the RAMP to be in conformance with the San Juan RMP's resource objective of providing a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities for segments of the public, commensurate with demand (BLM 1984). Furthermore, the BLM finds the RAMP to be in conformance with the Gunnison RMP's objective of providing a variety of recreation opportunities and experiences through visitor awareness, information, interpretation, signing, and protection; and making efforts to expand and strengthen cooperative partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, the private sector, and volunteers to enhance recreation opportunities and tourism (BLM 1993).

As noted, both the Gunnison and San Juan RMPs were amended in February 1997 to incorporate Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Standards for Public Land Health). These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific resource analyses in Chapter 3.0 of the Alpine Triangle Draft EA.

At present, the San Juan RMP is under revision. If this RMP revision is completed prior to a Final RAMP/Final EA and DR are approved, then a determination of conformance between these two documents would be made.

The National Scenic Byway Program identifies six intrinsic qualities that distinguish scenic byways: Scenic; Historic, Cultural, Recreational, Archaeological, and Natural. Land managers are encouraged to be "careful and sensitive" when manipulating the landscape and to enhance "its uniqueness and character" (DOT 1995).

The Project Area, which includes the Alpine Loop, is a National Scenic Byway. The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Design and Planning Manual includes design guidelines and management strategies to promote the preservation of these six qualities. These guidelines aim to preserve the integrity of scenic, historic, and other intrinsic values important to the integrity of the scenic byway.

2.4.5 Visual Resources

The spectacular natural scenery of the San Juan Mountains is one of the primary attractions for visitors to the Project Area. For some it is the principal purpose of their trip. For the rest, it is an important secondary benefit of their visit. The special value of this scenic beauty has been recognized with the designation of the Alpine Loop as part of the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway and National Scenic Byway systems. The American Basin area, with its outstanding display of alpine wildflowers, has also been designated as an ACEC. Additionally there is a scenic withdrawal and mineral withdrawal to protect scenery along the corridor of the Alpine Loop.

The proposed RAMP designates the entire Project Area as BLM Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II, which encourages management to place a high value on protecting the integrity of scenic resources. The objectives of VRM Class II are "to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape" (BLM 1986b).

The management prescriptions and objectives of VRM Class II identified in the RAMP for scenic resources support the overall intent of a Scenic Byway and provide a "careful and sensitive" management when manipulating the landscape and enhances the Project Area's "uniqueness and character" (DOT 1995).

Impacts to the integrity of scenic resources come primarily from development on private land. Private land is common close to the towns and along the lower portions of the Alpine Loop so more development and manmade structures are expected. When this type of development occurs in pristine areas of the Project Area, then the disturbance is more noticeable and disruptive to visitor experience. These developments usually occur on patented mining claims that are now being sold for vacation home development. Counties have the potential to pass zoning regulations or building codes that could help to protect the scenic quality of the area. Design guidelines and zoning controls may help protect the scenic resources that are so important to visitors. Many developments on private inholdings need road access to reach these private properties. Substantial impacts to scenic qualities can occur where these roads cross steep slopes in visible terrain, on otherwise undeveloped public lands. While zoning and other planning tools for private lands are outside of the BLM jurisdiction, access roads across public lands may present opportunities to work with land owners.

2.4.6 Other Resources

Concerns for other resources include the effects from increasing recreation on air quality, floodplains, invasive and noxious plants, noise, paleontology, vegetation visual resources, and many others. All the resources considered for detailed analysis are presented in Chapter 3.0 of the Alpine Triangle Draft EA.

2.5 Recreation Management – Facilities, Signs, and Interpretation and Education

2.5.1 Facilities

Several comments expressed concerns about the location and number of additional facilities such as restrooms, interpretive sites, parking facilities, and staging areas.

2.5.2 Signs

A few comments addressed concerns about the location and number of additional signs. Some recreationists would find additional signs beneficial and some do not wish to experience such a heavily managed experience.

2.5.3 Interpretation and Education

Interpretation and education is a management activity that the BLM practices to both enhance the experience of visitors and to encourage the proper understanding, appreciation, care, and stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Many visitors have a desire to learn more about the natural and historical resources in the Project Area to enhance their experience. The more visitors know about public land resources, the more likely they are to work in partnership with the BLM to protect them. At present, the BLM does not have enough law enforcement capabilities to ensure that all visitors are behaving properly while visiting the Project Area.

Current interpretation and education activities for the Project Area employ a variety of media to get across BLM messages. Among others, these media include signs, brochures, maps, web-based information, newspaper or magazine articles, interpretive presentations, and face-to-face communication. As noted, an Interpretive Plan has been prepared for the Alpine Loop which focuses heavily on interpreting the history of the area, but also includes messages about the geology, vegetation, and wildlife. Under the direction of the Interpretive Plan, the BLM has installed roadside interpretive displays at a variety of locations around the Alpine Loop, and developed several brochures, maps and web pages. Along with information about where to go and what to do, these sources usually include messages about how to care for resources. In addition, the BLM conducts interpretive programs and field trips with local school children to give them a greater understanding of the natural world around them.

2.6 Recreation Administration

2.6.1 Outfitters and Special Events

At least 40 different commercial outfitting or special event permits are issued in the Project Area each year. They cover such activities as hunting, fishing, backpacking, horsepacking, snowmobiling, jeep tours, hut systems, extreme foot races, educational activities, 4WD jamborees, and rock climbing, and most of these activities also include visits to historic sites. All of these activities are subject to BLM special recreation permit (SRP) regulations, and are at the complete discretion of the respective BLM Field Office Manager.

At present, the number of commercial outfitters operating in the Project Area seems adequate to meet visitor demand. One issue of concern related to commercial outfitting and special events is the social impact that large numbers of visitors or large groups can have on other visitors. This is particularly true in backcountry areas, such as the trails to the Fourteeners. BLM regularly receive requests for new outfitting permits for the Project Area. These requests need to be weighed in light of the activities they want to do, the area they want to do them, the current use levels by existing outfitters and the general public, and the potential for inappropriate impacts to the area's values. As such, new commercial outfitters, offering such services as guided trips to Fourteeners, are not needed. Some issues of concern related to commercial outfitting and special events include large groups impacting the heritage resources and social setting in some areas (e.g., Fourteeners), and crowding at trailheads from commercial hunting outfitters parking large vehicles and trailers.

2.6.2 Competitive Events

Several comments expressed concerned regarding the impact of competitive events on resources in the Project Area. Conflicts between users groups were identified as an issue and further use of the area for competitive events could further tax existing facilities and increase user conflicts.

2.6.3 Fees

Some users do not want increased fees and more and better facilities. Other users would like better facilities and enforcement and would be willing to pay modest fees to have these available.

2.6.4 Dogs

Conflicts between unleashed dogs and users increase as recreation increases. Many users like to take their dog with them while recreating. Some user groups and or individuals perceive threats or are exposed to real aggressive behavior of pets. Areas available for unleashed dogs could be established and other guidelines or rules for control of dogs could be established to help reduce conflicts.

2.7 Recreation Marketing

The BLM must continue to work with its partners in developing the vision and marketing of the Project Area. For the purposes of this plan, recreation marketing is defined as communication with the potential recreationist to match recreation opportunities and setting character conditions with the recreator's preference for recreation activities and outcomes and areas that are consistent and appropriate as defined in the RAMP management goals. Marketing is used in this sense as a tool to guide prospective visitors to the areas that are managed to provide the experience and benefit opportunities that they seek. The BLM does not anticipate a heavy emphasis for aggressive promotion campaigns however, the BLM may participate with its partners to attract new target audiences or redirect visitor use in ways that are in agreement with plan goals.

2.8 Recreation Monitoring

Monitoring social and environmental indicators is a tool to help the BLM to understand how the public uses and experiences the landscapes and facilities provided through recreation management. Social indicators and standards are derived directly from recreation management objectives and require that the BLM talk to its customers to assess the degree to which the objectives are being met. Environmental indicators and standards are derived directly from setting prescriptions and are used to determine whether or not prescribed setting character is being achieved and sustained.

2.9 Recreation Collaboration

Public lands are used and provide benefits for a variety of individuals, groups and entities. It is essential to have active input and cooperation with these varied constituencies to achieve the best management for public lands. Many organizations recognize the benefits they get from public lands and want to work with the BLM to maintain or improve those opportunities. Such cooperation helps the BLM to develop a more complete vision of how public lands should be managed and contributes labor, funding, equipment and materials toward mutually beneficial projects. Of equal importance is the fact that when individuals and groups work with the BLM in the collaborative management of public lands, they develop a greater sense of ownership and stewardship toward them. In many cases it takes time and effort to build and maintain relationships with these entities that lead to positive contributions.

Over the years, the BLM has worked in partnership with several entities in addressing management issues and concerns in the Project Area. Among others, they include local towns and counties and their chambers of commerce, historical societies, commercial outfitters, and the Colorado State Scenic and Historic Byways Committee. Furthermore, a variety of non profit or recreation advocacy groups have been active partners including the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, San Juan Mountain Association, Alpine Triangle Recreation Task Force, Western Colorado Interpretive Association, Colorado State OHV Fund, State Snowmobile Fund, Colorado Mountain Club, Colorado Trail Foundation, Outward Bound, the Hardrock 100 racers, Mountain Studies Institute, and the Ghost Town Club.

3.0 MANAGEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

This chapter presents management goals and management actions for the Alpine Triangle planning areas. Some of the goals and actions are for the entire Project Area and some are for specific zones. BLM has decided to establish three separate geographic areas, called Recreation Management Zones (RMZs), to assist in the management of the Project Area.

Though encompassing a single SRMA, the Project Area would be divided into three RMZs. They are identified as RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry, RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads, and RMZ 3 – Animas & Lake Fork Rivers, and these designations are illustrated in Figure 2.1. In delineating these RMZs, consideration was given to the distinct settings these areas offer, as well as their predominant recreation activities, use patterns and management issues. Furthermore, it should be noted that RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads is inclusive of the 65-mile Alpine Loop. These RMZs will allow BLM to manage different geographic areas of the Project Area to meet different goals.

Each of these three RMZs will be managed based on a recreational setting. The recreational setting is used to determine the level of development, the types of facilities that are appropriate and ultimately, the type of recreational opportunity that one will experience. Full descriptions of the intended recreation experiences, attributes and management guidelines for each setting are below.

Public lands were historically managed for activities (what people were allowed to do) but recreation is more complex than that. The recreation experience is made up of the activity that you are practicing in the setting (or surrounding) you choose to do it in. A fisherman looking for the experience that comes from hiking into a remote lake in a Wilderness would probably not be satisfied by fishing along a busy road near a popular lake. And the reverse is true; someone looking for easy access and minimal exertion would probably prefer fishing at the lake rather than hiking into the backcountry.

The settings that lead to good recreational experiences for visitors have physical, social and administrative characteristics; these can be managed in a way to have consistent uses, fewer user conflicts, and fewer impacts on the environment. This allows the broader experience of participating in an activity of providing benefits to the recreationist.

Physical Setting - The physical setting has to do with the scenic beauty and degree of naturalness of the area that people are recreating in. For example, most visitors would rather practice the activity of scenic driving on a road through dramatic mountains, pristine forests and meadows full of flowers rather than a road with trash, mine tailings or billboards.

Social Setting - The social setting has to do with the level and quality of interactions with other people. Fly fishing on a stream with no one else around might be ideal. Fishing within sight of three other people on that stream may be acceptable but fishing with in sight of 20 other people may significantly reduce your level of enjoyment. Your experience will also differ if the other visitors that are there are friendly and respectful or obnoxious.

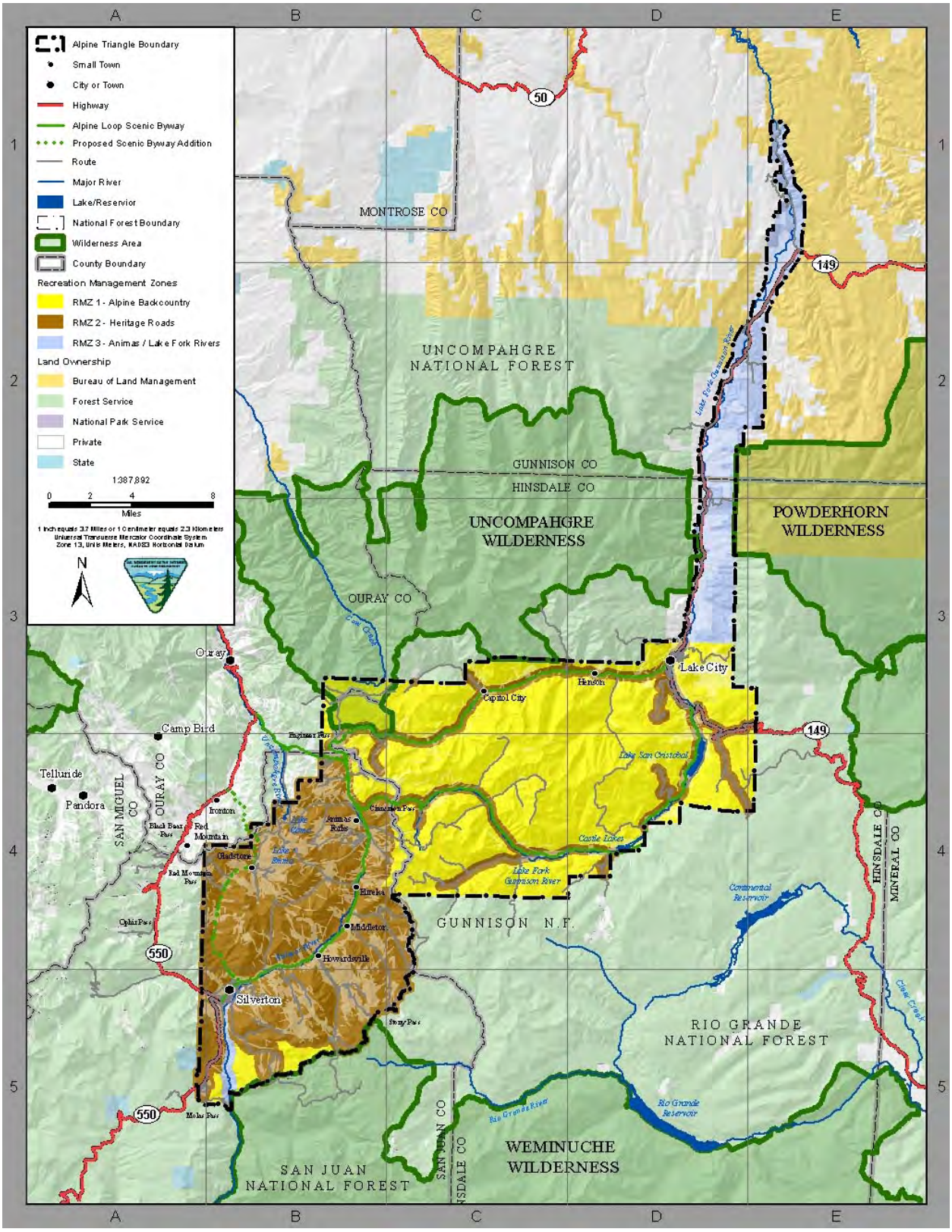

Figure 3.1 Proposed Recreation Management Zones

Administrative Setting - The administrative setting refers to the infrastructure, rules, enforcement, information and assistance that the BLM provides to help visitors enjoy their experience and protect the integrity of the resources they have come to enjoy. The BLM also has many partners that help provide all the amenities that make up the total recreation experience such as the county that maintains many of the roads in the area, the museum that helps you understand the history of the area, or the restaurant that serves you a meal.

Public lands within the Project Area provide a variety of recreation opportunities for visitors to engage in a number of activities in a wide variety of settings that lead to satisfying experiences. These experiences generate a diverse array of benefits for our visitors such as improved physical fitness, a sense of exploration or adventure, being with family and friends, a sense of stewardship, and learning about local history. The flow of visitors also generates monetary benefits for individuals and businesses in the towns and counties in this area as well as sales taxes, property taxes and other income that help the local governments to function. The scenic beauty and recreation opportunities on public land also contribute to the quality of life for local residents.

To realize all these potential benefits, the goals for recreation management need to go beyond just managing for different activities on public land. Instead, the BLM and its partners need to try to understand, manage for and maintain the different settings that visitors are looking for to get the experiences that satisfy them. A range of opportunities, experiences, and beneficial outcomes should be provided in their appropriate settings with the goal of optimizing net benefits to visitors and affected residents, their communities, and the environment. This benefits-based approach to managing recreation in the Project Area is incorporated into this RAMP and formed the basis for the Preferred Alternative, which is presented in the Alpine Triangle Draft EA and is summarized in this chapter.

3.1 Management Prescriptions

The Project Area would be managed under a destination recreation-tourism market strategy, due in part to its attraction as both a regional and national recreation resource. As such, this strategy be designed to meet the needs of visitors throughout the U.S. with specific emphasis on the Four Corners Region, and Colorado and Texas. Motorized and non-motorized recreation activities, occurring in both the summer and winter seasons, would be targeted under this strategy.

Recreation activities would include, but not be limited to heritage tourism along the Alpine Loop, hiking, mountain climbing, camping, scenic driving, heritage tourism, motorized recreation, fishing, hunting, rafting, kayaking, skiing, eco-tourism, outdoor/conservation education tourism, and snowmobiling. Summer motorized recreation is limited to designated roads and mechanized use (such as mountain bikes) would also be required to stay on roads and trails designated for that use. Winter motorized recreation (e.g., snowmobile) is not limited to designated roads and trails, but participants are encouraged to not travel in potential avalanche areas. Snowmobile use is prohibited in WSAs and designated Wilderness. Other recreation activities would be allowed in the Project Area to the extent they are compatible with the primary, targeted activities (e.g., hiking in Recreation Management Zone 1 – Alpine Backcountry).

Central to the RAMP is the recognition that current management in the Project Area is serving both visitors and the environment relatively well; no major shift in the current approach to managing recreation in the Project Area is proposed. New management direction is still needed to address issues (including increased motorized recreation and deteriorating historic sites) and anticipated issues and concerns.

Under the RAMP, an effort would be made to distribute the demand for recreation more evenly across the year. As noted, the majority of visitation to the area occurs during the summer season (i.e., July to mid-August). Through effective visitor information, targeted marketing and other management actions, the RAMP would seek to redistribute visitation from the peak use season from July to mid-August to the shoulder seasons (i.e. June and mid-August through September). This broadening of the tourist season could alleviate some ongoing impacts to recreation including the crowding in the peak summer season, maintain or increase visitor satisfaction, and provide a longer business season in the surrounding communities. The BLM would continue to look for ways to increase recreation during the winter without significant impacts to wintering wildlife and other resources.

Although the Project Area would be managed under a destination recreation-tourism market strategy, managing for visitors on a regional and national level, this does not exclude or diminish the importance of local communities. Historically, the Project Area has played a key role in the lives of local community members by serving as an engine of economic growth and an opportunity to sustain and improve their quality of life. As such, BLM would work in partnership with these communities to recognize the unique value of their knowledge, experience, and participation and to ensure the success and long-term management of the Project Area. Toward building upon this role, BLM would regularly collaborate with local communities in all aspects of marketing, managing, monitoring, and administration of the recreation resource.

The discussion that follows is organized by describing, in turn, the three RMZs delineated within the Project Area and their associated management objectives, activities, experiences, benefits, and natural resource settings. With these RMZs serving as a basis for recreation management in the Project Area, a discussion of specific goals, objectives, and management actions is provided. These topics are organized first under the issue of travel management and access, and then under the broader headings of recreation management, marketing, monitoring, administration and collaboration. Current management direction not specific to an individual RMZ, but instead applied across the entire Project Area is organized under the heading of "Management Common to all Recreation Management Zones." Next, additional management direction specific to each RMZ is provided under the same headings of recreation management, marketing, monitoring, administration and collaboration. All management direction discussed under the RAMP would be constrained, as necessary, to both achieve and sustain the prescribed character of recreation settings and produce the activity, experience, and benefit opportunities targeted in the management objectives for each RMZ.

Recreation Management Zone 1 – Alpine Backcountry

Management Objective: Provide opportunities for visitors to engage in challenging and educational summer backcountry activities such as hiking, mountain climbing, and backpacking. Secondary activities that could occur but would not be a major focus of management include trail running, horseback riding, and fishing and hunting. RMZ1 is primarily to be managed for non-motorized uses, but that existing permits for heliskiing will be honored. These activities would be carried out on primitive trails developed and maintained in a setting that is primarily a naturally appearing landscape where the sights and sounds of human caused disturbance are not readily noticeable.

Targeted Recreational Opportunities and Outcomes for RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry: This matrix identifies the key activities, experiences and benefits that would be managed for in this RMZ. Other activities, experiences, and benefits would be allowed as long as they are compatible with the management objectives of the RMZ. Key management for RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Key Management for RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry

Primary Activities	Targeted Experiences	Anticipated Benefits
• Hiking • Mountain Climbing • Backpacking • Conservation Projects/Eco-touring • Educational Programs • Hunting	• Enjoying moderate to strenuous physical exercise • Developing or testing personal endurance • Enjoying risk-taking adventure • Enjoying mountain scenery • Enjoying being close to nature • Exploring a new area • The opportunity for solitude • Participating and contributing to resource conservation/preservation	Personal (for all visitors to the area): • Improved physical fitness • Gaining a greater sense of self confidence • Reducing the stress of everyday life • Enhanced awareness and appreciation of nature • Improved quality of life • Connection to the land Economic (for residents of the surrounding communities): • Increased local tourism revenue • Improved local economic stability Environmental: • Increased protection of natural landscapes

Recreation Setting Prescriptions for RMZ 1 - Alpine Backcountry: The following are the physical, social, and administrative settings necessary to provide the activity, experience, and benefit opportunities listed above. These

prescriptions would be accomplished primarily by protecting and maintaining the existing recreation setting characteristics. Management actions may be required to improve the existing characteristics of the recreation setting, and as a result, better meet the management objectives of the RMZ (see Table 3.2 for definitions). This RMZ is primarily composed of WSAs, designated Wilderness, ACECs, and other backcountry lands. These areas are largely away from roads, and are dominated by non–motorized recreation opportunities and natural settings.

The physical setting for this RMZ would be predominantly natural with the sights and sounds of human activities kept to a minimum during the summer. During the winter, motorized use for permitted helicopter skiing operations, will be honored. It would be a priority to protect and preserve soils, vegetation, wildlife, scenery and cultural resources and keep them in a condition that is as close to natural as possible. Recreation would be primarily based on foot access so primitive single track trails would be maintained in suitable areas to facilitate public access. There would also be some areas where trail access would not be developed and opportunities for cross-country exploration, route finding, risk taking and backcountry skill development would be provided. This would be a place where visitors could find opportunities for physical exercise, quiet, solitude, reflection, introspection and the ability to enjoy and study natural landscapes and processes. Major impacts from current day-use activities would be discouraged and rehabilitated to the extent possible. Impacts from historical human activities such as mining would generally be left intact unless they are causing unacceptable impacts to key resources such as water quality or present a hazard to the public.

This RMZ would be managed to generally provide opportunities for less crowded, non-motorized recreation experiences so visitors would have opportunities to be away from the sights, sounds stress and pressures of their everyday lives. Most of these areas would provide a low number of social encounters that would offer opportunities for solitude and introspection. Some popular routes such as the trails to the Fourteeners would be expected to have a higher number of social encounters (i.e., up to 100 visitors per day). These trails would be managed to allow higher levels of social encounters because the primary experience that visitors desire on these trails is to climb the Fourteeners rather than seeking solitude. Footprints and hoof tracks would be seen on trails. Noise and litter would be infrequently encountered. Vegetation and soil impacts would be visible at campsites and popular areas.

Ninety percent of this RMZ is made up of Wilderness and WSAs. The remaining ten percent of this RMZ outside of Wilderness and WSA's may have some motorized/mechanized uses during all seasons, but this is limited due to terrain and safety issues. Roads designated for motorized use exist within this RMZ as do some motorized snowmobile routes. The planned visitor experience will be achieved in the majority to this RMZ.

Hiking trails would be the primary access routes built and maintained into these areas. Informational and educational signs may be posted at trailheads and along trails to give visitors the information they need and encourage responsible stewardship of the area. Basic maps, brochures, website information, and other information media could be developed as needed to inform and educate the public about using these areas. Any marketing would be focused to attract recreation uses that are consistent with the goals of the recreation management plan and are most likely to enjoy the opportunities that the area is managed to provide. Marketing efforts would not aggressively seek to increase visitation to this RMZ, but some increase in visitation can be achieved without compromising resource values. Use restrictions for the general public would not be common, but may be considered in some cases where resource impacts or deterioration of recreation experiences become problematic. Outfitters and special events using this RMZ would be managed in a manner that supports management goals in the area and may regularly be governed by group size limits or service day limits to avoid social impacts to other recreationists. Management presence would primarily consist of regular patrols to contact visitors, maintain trails, clean-up backcountry campsites and detect and resolve nonconforming uses. Volunteer efforts should be encouraged, promoted, and marketed to improve land stewardship and would be used whenever possible to extend our capability to maintain trails and clean-up human caused impacts.

Table 3.2 Recreation Setting Prescriptions for RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry

Prescribed Physical Setting Summary	• The area is predominantly an undisturbed natural setting or natural appearing landscape. There is minimal evidence of human intrusion and few modifications. • Preservation of natural resources (e.g. wildlife, soils, scenery, and cultural resources) would be a high priority. • Existing cultural resources would be managed to preclude impacts to other resources or visitor injury • In backcountry locations, some primitive trails of native materials will be allowed; • Recreation will generally be based on foot, and cross-country travel and exploration will be allowed in non-trailed areas.
Prescribed Social Setting Summary	• Group sizes would generally be 4-6 people. • Social encounters would be anticipated to be less than three encounters per day at campsites, and fewer than six encounters per day on travel routes in primitive areas. Encounters in transition areas would be 15-29 encounters per day off travel routes, and 30 or more encounters per day en route. • Recreation would be generally non-motorized and use basic, limited equipment. • Evidence of human intrusion would be limited to footprints and slight vegetation trampling at acknowledged popular routes and campsites. • Access trails to Fourteeners would be managed for more concentrated use and could see 50 or more social encounters per day during heavy use seasons.
Prescribed Administrative Setting Summary	• Visitor services and informational media would be provided externally to the RMZ, would be limited to basic maps, and would seldom be provided as on-site assistance. • Informational signs may be possible at trailheads and key route locations • Marketing efforts would not seek to increase utilization. • Use restrictions would only be used to protect resources from known impacts • Outfitter use and permitted activities would be managed for limited group size. • Regular management and volunteer efforts to resolve non-conforming use.

Recreation Management Zone 2 – Heritage Roads

Management Objectives: Provide opportunities for local, regional and national visitors to engage in scenic driving, heritage tourism (i.e., visiting historical sites), and motorized recreation on rough, but relatively safe roads in the Project Area. The centerpiece of these activities would be the Alpine Loop, but other areas with designated roads could also provide these opportunities. Secondary activities practiced in this RMZ include camping, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, rock climbing and photography. The Silverton Mountain Ski Area is located in this RMZ and would be a focus for winter management. Winter recreation activities such as snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and ice climbing may also be practiced in this RMZ. These activities could occur in settings ranging from rural (near communities) where the sights and sounds of human development are obvious to less developed (middle country) settings where the landscape is predominantly natural.

Targeted Recreational Opportunities and Outcomes for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads: Table 3.3 identifies the key activities, experiences and benefits that would be managed for in this RMZ. Other activities, experiences and benefits would be allowed as long as they are compatible with the management objectives of the RMZ. Key management for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads is presented in Table 2.3

Table 3.3 Key Management for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads

Primary Activities	Targeted Experiences	Anticipated Benefits
• Scenic Touring • Motorized Recreation • Visiting cultural and heritage sites • Camping • Photography • Viewing wildflowers • Skiing (Silverton Mountain Ski Area)	• Enjoying mountain scenery • Enjoying outdoor experiences with friends and family • Seeing and learning about shared cultural heritage • Developing skills and abilities	Personal (for all visitors to the area): • Increased appreciation of area's cultural history • Gaining a greater sense of self confidence • Reducing the stress of everyday life • Stronger ties with family and friends • Improved quality of life Economic (for residents of the surrounding communities): • Increased sustainable heritage tourism revenue • Improved local economic stability • Increased local job opportunities Environmental and Cultural: • Increased protection of cultural resources and historical landscapes

Recreation Setting Prescriptions for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads: The following are the physical, social, and administrative settings necessary to provide the activity, experience, and benefit opportunities listed above. These prescriptions would be accomplished primarily by protecting and maintaining the existing recreation setting characteristics. Management actions may be required to improve the existing characteristics of the recreation setting, and as a result, better meet the management objectives of the RMZ (see Table 3.4 for definitions). This RMZ would consist primarily of those areas on and immediately adjacent to the Alpine Loop as well as other designated roads that are open to public use. The RMZ would also include a variety of historic sites along the road corridors.

The roads in this RMZ are primarily maintained by the counties and vary in condition from well maintained, multi-lane gravel roads to rougher and more challenging roads where 4WD, high clearance vehicles are required. The primary corridor through the RMZ would be the designated scenic byway, so emphasis would be placed on maintaining the scenic quality along the road corridors. Human impacts are noticeable in the form of maintained dirt roads, campgrounds, restrooms, trailheads, historic buildings, signs, utility lines and modern houses (developed on private land). These features on public land do not overpower the natural landscape features.

This RMZ would receive the heaviest visitation and use in the Project Area. During the busiest part of the summer visitors could expect to encounter 100 or more visitors in a day. Eventually the number of social encounters during the busy season may reduce visitor satisfaction, and then consideration would be given to implementing management or marketing actions to keep the level of visitation within acceptable limits. During the spring and fall shoulder seasons social encounters would more commonly be in the range of 20 to 30 encounters with other parties. Attempts to resolve crowding concerns during the busy season by redirecting some visitors to the shoulder seasons would result in no net loss to the tourism related economies in the surrounding communities. During the winter months, social encounters may reach 20 to 30 encounters with other parties in popular areas for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, or ice climbing, but would more typically be in the range of three to seven encounters. During busy utilization periods, vehicles and vehicle tracks would be regularly observed, and vehicle noise would be common. Additional evidence of heavy use might include litter and impacts to soils and vegetation at regularly used areas.

Table 3.4 Recreation Setting Prescriptions for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads

Prescribed Physical Setting Summary	• Remoteness would vary from 4WD roads in natural settings to improved roads in more modified areas near towns. • Landscapes would appear mostly natural except for primitive roads and historic structures. Near towns, more utilities and development would be expected. • Facilities would be maintained and trails marked. Simple trailhead developments, improved signs, campgrounds, interpretive sites and staging areas could be available. • Roads are primarily maintained by the Counties • Management would emphasize maintaining natural scenic quality, and elements of human intrusion, both modern and historic, are evident but not overpowering.
Prescribed Social Setting Summary	• Group sizes vary from remote areas to near towns and developed site with 7 - 100 encounters as acceptable. • As this is the zone that receives the heaviest utilization by visitors, encounters with other groups can be expected in some areas and unusual on less utilized routes and trails. • Motorized vehicles and equipment will likely be present. Campers and tents may be seen in more developed areas. • Winter recreation is common, although less utilized than other seasons. • Evidences of human activities are evident and impacts may be visible.
Prescribed Administrative Setting Summary	• Management controls commensurate with visitor utilization to minimize impacts to resources with signing, rules, and restrictions prescribed as necessary. • Facilities developed and maintained to meet basic visitor requirements, and fees may be charged in developed recreation sites to support maintenance. • All motorized traffic (except snowmobiles) and mechanized use limited to designated routes. • Informational signs posted at key locations. • Informational media available externally to RMZ focusing on goals of sustainable tourism and stewardship. • Work collaboratively with partners and volunteers to manage the area.

Since this RMZ receives the highest level of visitors to the Project Area, it would also have the highest level of management inputs to accommodate visitors and reduce the impacts on resources. BLM would cooperate with the counties to discuss the appropriate level of maintenance on the roads in the RMZ. Facilities such as campgrounds, restrooms, trailheads and stabilized historic buildings would be developed and maintained, as feasible, to meet visitor needs. All traffic would be limited to designated routes to prevent impacts to soils, vegetation and scenic values in this fragile alpine environment. Low profile log and rock barriers, and regulatory and directional signs may be used to remind visitors to stay on the designated roads. Directional signs would be used to help visitors find their way. Interpretive signs would help them understand and appreciate the things they are seeing in the area and would include ethics messages to encourage them to help protect these values. A variety of maps, brochures, web-based information and other forms of visitor information would be developed to enhance visitor experience and promote stewardship in the area. Any marketing would seek to attract segments of the recreation market that are most likely to enjoy the opportunities best provided in the RMZ. Marketing efforts would not aggressively seek to increase visitation to this RMZ during the busy summer season, but some increase in visitation can be achieved during the shoulder seasons without compromising resource values. Use restrictions for the general public would not be employed except as a last resort to resolve serious resource impacts or serious reduction in visitor satisfaction with the experiences being provided. Outfitters and special events using this RMZ would be managed in a way that supports the BLM's management goals for the area and may regularly be governed by group size limits to avoid social impacts to other recreationists. Management presence would consist of regular patrols to contact visitors, offer information and education, maintain facilities, clean-up undeveloped campsites and deal with violations of rules and regulations.

Recreation Management Zone 3 – Animas & Lake Fork Rivers

Management Objectives: Provide opportunities for local and regional visitors (i.e., Colorado and the Four Corners Region) to engage in summer river related activities such as whitewater rafting and kayaking, and float and walk-wade fishing. Secondary activities practiced in this RMZ include but are not limited to camping, hiking, rock climbing, picnicking, and hunting. These activities would be carried out on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River north of Lake City, and the Animas River from Silverton south towards Durango. These activities would occur in settings ranging from rural (near communities) where the sights and sounds of human development are obvious to less developed (middle country) settings where the landscape is predominantly natural.

Targeted Recreational Opportunities and Outcomes for RMZ 3 – Animas & Lake Fork Rivers: Table 3.5 identifies the key activities, experiences, and benefits that would be managed for in this RMZ. Other activities, experiences, and benefits would be allowed as long as they are compatible with the management objectives of the RMZ.

Table 3.5 Key Management for RMZ 3 – Animas and Lake Fork Rivers

Primary Activities	Targeted Experiences	Anticipated Benefits
• Rafting • Kayaking • Walk-wade Fishing • Float Fishing	• Enjoying moderate to strenuous physical exercise • Enjoying outdoor experiences with friends and family • Enjoying risk-taking adventure • Developing skills and abilities	Personal (for all visitors to the area): • Improved physical fitness • Improved outdoor recreation skills • Greater sense of adventure • Reducing the stress of everyday life • Stronger ties with family and friends Economic (for residents of the surrounding communities): • Increased local tourism revenue • Improved local economic stability • Increased local job opportunities Environmental and Cultural: • Increased protection of natural landscapes

Recreation Setting Prescriptions for RMZ 3 – Animas & Lake Fork Rivers: The following are the physical, social and administrative settings that are necessary to provide the activity, experience, and benefit opportunities listed above. These prescriptions would be accomplished primarily by protecting and maintaining the existing recreation setting characteristics. Management actions may be required to improve the existing characteristics of the recreation setting, and as a result, better meet the management objectives of the RMZ (see Table 23.6 for definitions). This RMZ is primarily composed of the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River north of Lake City and the Animas River south of Silverton.

This RMZ would be managed for a predominantly natural setting particularly in the riparian corridor. Fishers are generally more sensitive to crowding while practicing their sport; management objectives would aim to keep use levels at no more than 5 fishers per river mile with a possibility of running into 2 or 3 other parties during a day's recreation. Some man-made structures or facilities such as highways, roads, campgrounds, restrooms, signs, utility lines, fences and private homes (developed on private land) may be located within or visible from this RMZ. The actual rivers and associated riparian areas would be managed to provide stable river channels in proper functioning condition. To the extent possible, habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife would be protected and maintained. Structures such as access trails, fence walkovers or boat launch ramps may be constructed, as feasible, and maintained to accommodate recreation opportunities for fishing, rafting and kayaking.
This RMZ does not usually attract large numbers of visitors but there are occasionally group sizes of up to 25 people associated with commercial rafting operations. It is possible that visitors could encounter from 5 to 10 other parties per day when they use this RMZ during the busy summer season. Group size and number of encounters tend to decrease during the shoulder seasons. Some evidence of visitor impacts may be visible in the form of vehicle tracks, footprints, and soil and vegetation impacts in popular areas. Unwanted levels of noise or litter are uncommon but may be present on rare occasions.

Table 3.6 Recreation Setting Prescriptions for RMZ 3 – Animas and Lake Fork Rivers

Prescribed Physical Setting Summary	• River areas will vary in remoteness by being on or near 4WD roads to on or near county roads and highways. • Natural riparian corridors will predominate except for obvious primitive roads in middle country areas and some structures and roads will be visible near towns. • Signs of human intrusion, both modern and historic, would be evident but not overpower the natural environment. • River channels, aquatic habitats, and riparian areas are managed to maintain or restore proper functioning condition. • Facilities and accessibility structures (trails, fence walkovers, and boat put-ins) may be constructed and maintained as simple, modest and rustic facilities to protect resource values and limit impacts from utilization in this area.
Prescribed Social Setting Summary	• Group sizes would vary by setting with a range of 7 – 50 people from middle to rural areas. • Social encounters would be anticipated and vary from area to area. Staging areas and campgrounds would have more encounters, but few social encounters would be anticipated in river areas by anglers. • Moderate utilization by commercial rafting operations would be anticipated during summer. • Evidence of human intrusion generally limited to acknowledged popular routes, staging areas, and campsites. • Signs of equipment, vehicles, and campers may be visible. • Evidence of use may include a range from vehicle tracks, occasional litter, and soil erosion in middle country to gravel and paved improvements, worn soils and vegetation, and litter in developed areas.
Prescribed Administrative Setting Summary	• Management commensurate with visitor utilization to minimize impacts to resources including occasional signing, motorized and mechanized use restrictions if necessary. • All motorized traffic (except snowmobiles) limited to designated routes. • Private land boundaries clearly delineated. • Marketing efforts would not seek to increase summer utilization • Visitor services would include informational and interpretive signs posted at key locations, including information on goals of resource conservation and stewardship. • Use restrictions only used to protect resources from known impacts. • Outfitter use and permitted activities could be managed for limited group size.

Facilities such as campgrounds, restrooms, trailheads, and boat launch ramps could be developed and maintained, as feasible, to meet visitor needs. Without proper planning and placement of facilities, increased recreation use in this zone will diminish the quality of recreation experiences. As a result, these facilities would not be constructed with the purpose of increasing visitation but instead to protect resource values or reduce the impacts of existing levels of recreation. All traffic would be limited to designated routes to prevent impacts to soils, vegetation, and scenic values in this fragile environment. Low profile log and rock barriers, and regulatory and directional signs may be used to remind visitors to stay on the designated roads. Interpretive signs would help them understand and appreciate the things they are seeing in the area and would include ethics messages to encourage them to help protect these values. Some maps or brochures and possibly other forms of visitor information could be developed to make the public aware of recreation opportunities, enhance visitor experience and promote stewardship in the area. An effort would be made to accurately mark the boundary between public and private land to reduce the possibility of trespass problems. Any marketing would seek to attract segments of the recreation market that are most likely to enjoy the opportunities provided in this RMZ. Marketing efforts would not aggressively seek to increase visitation to this RMZ during the busy summer season but some increase in visitation can be achieved during the shoulder seasons

without compromising resource values. Use restrictions for the general public would not be employed except as a last resort to resolve serious resource impacts or serious reduction in visitor satisfaction with the experiences being provided. Outfitters and special events using this RMZ would be managed in a way that supports our management goals for the area and may regularly be governed by group size limits to avoid social impacts to other recreationists. Management presence would consist of occasional patrols to contact visitors, offer information and education, maintain facilities, clean-up undeveloped campsites, and deal with violations of rules and regulations.

3.2 Management Common to all Recreation Management Zones

This section provides management direction that is not specific to an individual RMZ, but is instead applied across the entire Project Area. Furthermore, it organizes goals, objectives, management actions and supporting rationale by recreation management issue (i.e., travel management and access), and then under the broader topics of recreation management (e.g., summer use and winter use), marketing, monitoring, administration, and collaboration.

3.2.1 Travel Management and Access

Travel management and access addresses the system or network of roads and trails that would be open to the public to facilitate their use and enjoyment of public lands, and the rules that govern that use (e.g., season of use, type of vehicle(s) allowed). More specifically, items addressed under travel management and access include designating a specific travel management network, or system of roads and trails; identifying guidelines and/or limitations to properly maintain, manage, and monitor this system, identifying the types and locations of facilities (e.g., parking areas, trailheads, scenic overlooks) necessary to support the functions of the system; identifying criteria to assist in deciding if additional roads and trails should be added or removed from the transportation management network in the future; and identifying easements and rights-of-way needed to maintain the system.

Under this alternative, all of the Spring/Summer/Fall travel management and access items (e.g., travel management network) listed above are addressed for the entire Project Area. Decisions made in this RAMP will be carried forward into the larger BLM Gunnison Field Office Travel Management Plan, currently being developed. Decisions on winter travel will be made only for the Gunnison Field Office portion of the Project Area. Winter decisions for the BLM Columbine Field Office portion of the Project Area will be made in a separate planning process in the future.

Finally, all of travel management and access decisions outlined below would be constrained, as necessary, to both achieve and sustain the prescribed character of recreation settings; and produce the activity, experience, and benefit opportunities targeted in the management objectives above.

Goal: The BLM will work with a variety of partners to define, manage and maintain a travel management network (i.e., system of trails and roads), with supporting facilities (e.g., parking areas), that provides reasonable access to public lands, provides a variety of recreation opportunities for the public, and permits the agency to carry out its management activities on public land. This should be done in a way that minimizes the resource impacts that can occur from vehicle use.

Rationale: Vehicle recreation is and will remain among the most popular recreation activities in the Project Area, both as an activity itself and as a transportation mode for visitors to access other recreation opportunities. Improper vehicle use has the potential to seriously impact key resources that attract visitors to the area. Key causes of motorized and non-motorized vehicle impacts include driving off of designated roads and trails, driving around difficult areas on the roads, roadside parking for day use (e.g. Animas Forks, American Basin) or undeveloped camping (e.g. Burrow's Park, Eureka).

Motorized Recreation

Under both the Gunnison and Columbine Field Offices' RMPs, travel designations limit motorized vehicles (e.g., street legal vehicles, motorcycles, ATVs) to designated roads . It should be noted that no roads currently designated as open would be closed under the RAMP. No motorized vehicles may travel off designated roads unless authorized by BLM. As this RAMP is subordinate to the existing RMPs, no changes in the "Limited to Designated Routes" designation will be made through this planning process. Mountain bikes would be added to the list of equipment that must stay on designated roads and trails.

The discussion that follows identifies additional goals, rationale, objectives, and management actions for travel management and access, as appropriate.

Goal: Provide opportunities for different types of motorized recreation in a manner that protects resources and is challenging and safe.

Rationale: Motorized recreation is one of the dominant recreation activities in the Project Area, and primarily occurs along the Alpine Loop.

Objective: Require vehicles to drive on designated routes to avoid inappropriate impacts on the scenery and fragile high altitude ecosystems.

> ***Management Action 1:*** Sign trails so the public is clear where travel is allowed using the Colorado Inter-Agency Uniform Sign Standards. Provide travel maps at kiosks and partner with user groups to get maps and responsible riding messages to users and the public.

Travel Management Network

The current system of county roads and BLM roads and trails in the Project Area are effective at providing access to a variety of recreation opportunities. This system also provides opportunities for a variety of motorized recreation, including easy to moderate 4WD, ATV, and motorcycle activities. There are also opportunities for more difficult challenges at such locations as Poughkeepsie Gulch and Mineral Creek. The current and proposed transportation system is detailed in Figure 3.1 and associated facilities and special features are displayed in Figure 3.2.

The Project Area is best suited to provide outstanding opportunities for vehicle recreation in the form of slow speed driving on 2wd to moderate 4WD roads for visitors who come to appreciate the scenic, cultural and natural beauty of the San Juan Mountains. Full-sized vehicles, ATVs, and motorcycles are all appropriate for use within these parameters. It is not necessary to provide separate routes for these different types of uses. All motorized vehicles are able to use the same roads with the exception that ATVs and unlicensed motorcycles are not allowed to use state highways, city streets, or county roads not designated for that use.

The Project Area is not well suited to provide opportunities for vehicle recreation that seeks speed or extreme off route challenges. Excessive speed on these heavily used and narrow roads is a safety hazard and due to sensitive soils and vegetation in the area, any off route travel could cause significant resource damage. Impacts from this type of use could damage the values that the majority of visitors have come to enjoy and eventually erode the long term sustainability of this area as a tourist destination.

As part of this planning process a recommendation was made to add both the Corkscrew Gulch Road and Cement Creek Road to the Alpine Loop. These roads are existing designated roads that are regularly used by motorized vehicles, and connect Silverton with U.S. Highway 550 near Ironton Park. Adding these roads to the Alpine Loop would provide for a more comprehensive byway system with improved connectivity. A formal addition to the Alpine Loop cannot be completed through this planning process; however, a formal recommendation to the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Committee could be made.

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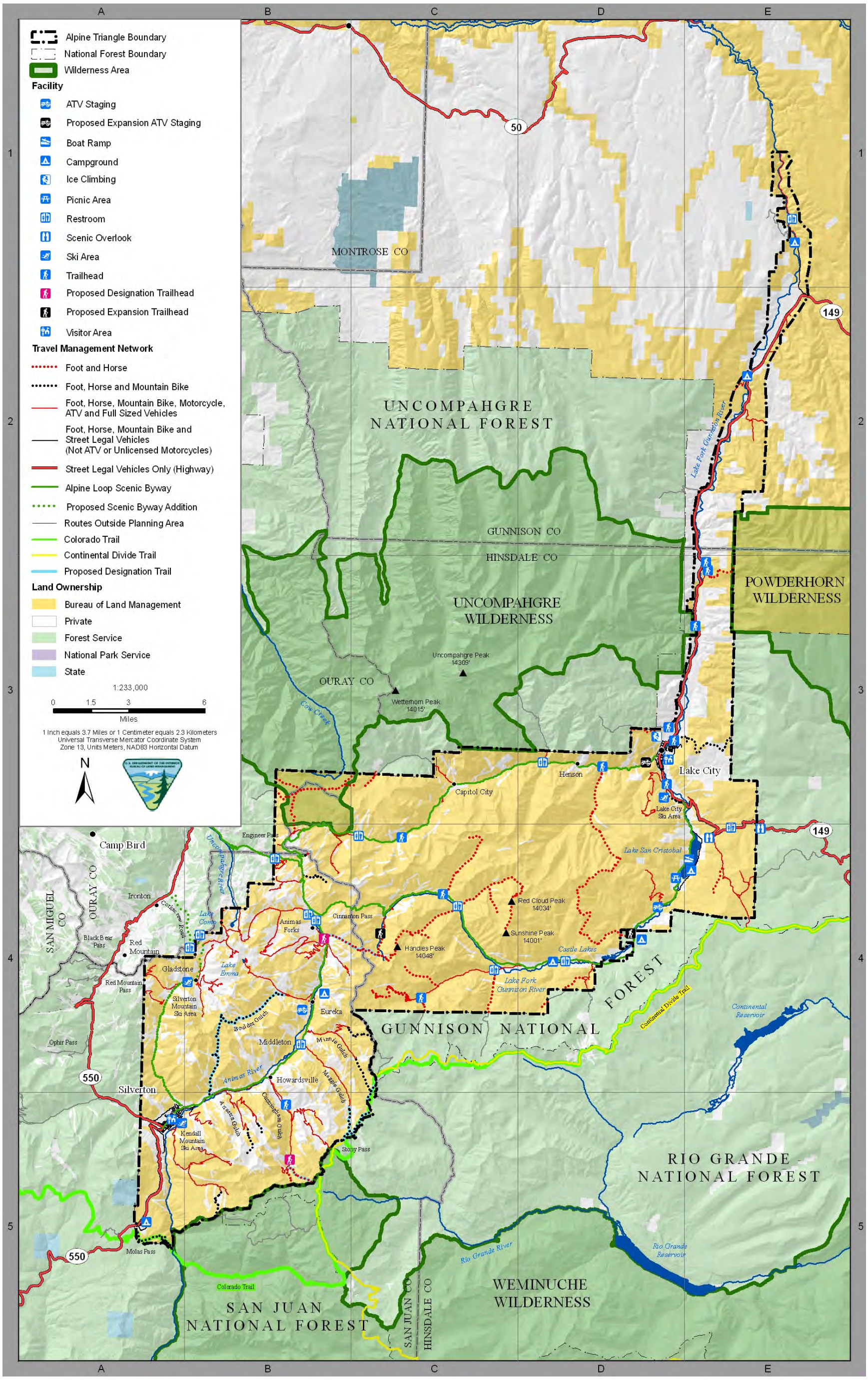

Figure 3.2 Proposed Travel Management Network and Facilities

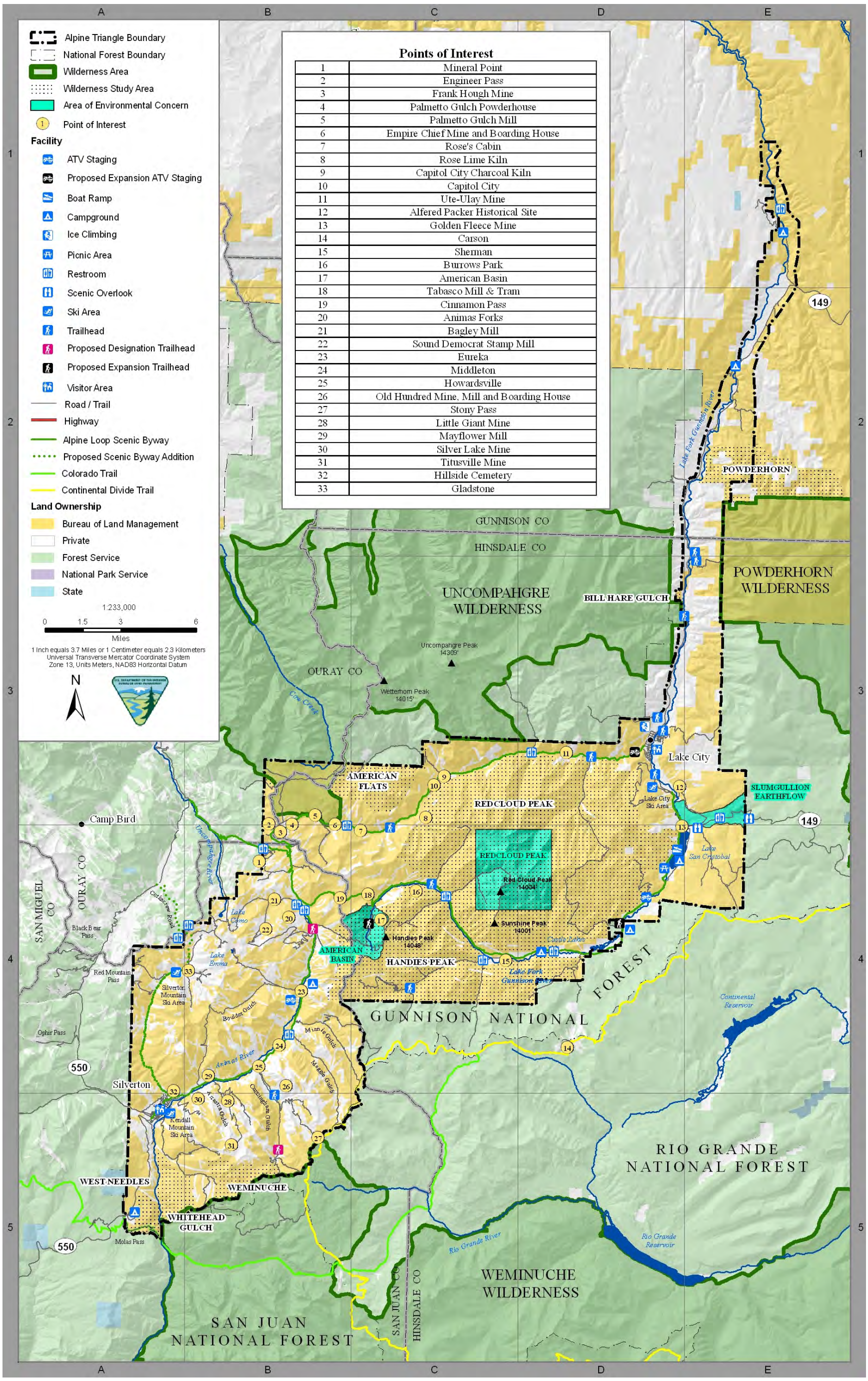

Figure 3.3 Alpine Triangle Facilities, Special Areas, and Points of Interest

Objective 1: Decide which routes will be designated as open for public use during the Spring/Summer/Fall seasons, which uses will be allowed on each route and identify any other management parameters (e.g., seasonal closures) that may be appropriate. To do this BLM will follow the travel management network methodology outlined in *BLM Land Use Handbook*. In summary, this methodology decides which routes best meet the public's need for access based on a variety of factors. Among others, these factors include environmental sustainability, level of use, importance of providing access to public lands, importance of providing desired recreation opportunities, and importance of reaching recreation destinations (e.g., scenic overlook, camping site).

Management Action 1: Roads and trails designated open to different types of motorized and non-motorized public access are illustrated in Figure 3.1. It should be noted that no roads or trails currently designated as open would be closed under the RAMP. However, 16.4 miles of additional existing roads and trails would be added as designated routes in the transportation management network system trails that would be managed and maintained for foot and horse use in the transportation system. Table 3.7 provides a summary of the roads and trails added to the transportation management network illustrated in Figure 3.1. County roads are included in Figure 3.1 in addition to being included in the miles of roads and trails open to designated uses listed below. Though the BLM does not have management jurisdiction over these roads they are included as part of the transportation management network, as they play an important role in the public's overall access to the Project Area and there are ample opportunities for the BLM and the county to work together in partnership to assure the objective is met.

Table 3.7 Additions and Designations to Travel Management Network

Description of the Additions as System Trails	Length (Miles)
1. The existing Boulder Gulch Trail north of Silverton. This trail would be maintained to provide seasonal foot and horse access.	7.4
2. The Continental Divide Trail that exists within the Columbine Field Office portion of the planning area. This trail would be maintained to provide seasonal foot, horse, and mountain bike access.	3.0
3. The Grouse Gulch to American Basin Trail to seasonal foot and horse use. Formally recognizing this route as part of the trail system would be contingent on obtaining a ROW across private property. Until this ROW is obtained from a willing landowner, this trail would not be formally managed or maintained for use by the public.	3.0
4. 1.5 miles of Maggie Gulch Trail in the Columbine Field Office portion of the planning area to seasonal foot and horse use. Formally adding this route as part of the trail system would be contingent on obtaining a ROW across private property. Until this ROW is obtained from a willing landowner, this trail would not be formally managed or maintained for public use.	1.5
5. 1.5 miles of the existing Cunningham Gulch Trail in the Columbine Field Office portion of the planning area as a system trail, open to seasonal foot and horse use only. No additional improvements, which would potentially cause impacts to soil or vegetation, would be needed to carry out this action.	1.5
Total Miles Added to the Travel Management Network	16.4

Under this RAMP, the transportation network, including the proposed additions and designations, equal 360.6 miles of routes (trails and roads), including county roads. Table 3.8 presents a summary of the mileage of routes, roads, and trails available to each mode of transportation under this alternative (including BLM and county roads).

Management Action 2: Recommend 15 miles of Cement Creek and Corkscrew Roads to the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Committee to become part of the Alpine Loop (Figure 3.2).

Table 3.8 Total Lengths of Available Routes by Use Category

Route Type	Length (Miles)
Open to Foot and Horse Use	58.9
Foot, Horse and Mountain Bike	31.9
Foot, Horse, Mountain Bike, Motorcycle, ATV and Full Sized Vehicles	189.5
Foot, Horse, Mountain Bike and Street Legal Vehicles (No ATV or Unlicensed Motorcycles)	48.4
Total Routes	325.7

Management Action 3: All newly proposed single track trails requested for other uses (e.g., foot, horse) outside of Wilderness and WSAs would also be evaluated for their potential and suitability for use by mountain bikes.

Management Action 4: Motorized vehicles would be encouraged to pull off roads or park in places designed for that use. If a suitable parking area is not available nearby then vehicles may only park immediately adjacent to the road, pulling off no more than necessary to prevent obstructing traffic on the roadway. Cross-country travel to access dispersed campsites or retrieve game would not be allowed.

Management Action 5: Mountain bikes would be added to the list of vehicles that must stay on roads and trails designated for that use. Cross-country travel with a mountain bike would not be allowed, and no new trails for mountain bikes may be created without authorization from the BLM.

Management Action 6: In order to maintain the balance between motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities across the Project Area, new and existing trails in RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry would be managed exclusively for non-motorized uses (e.g., hiking, backpacking and horseback riding).

Transportation Facilities

Objective 1: Identify the types and locations of facilities necessary to support the functions of the transportation management network.

Management Action 1: Facilities required to support the transportation management network are identified on Figures 3.1 and 3.2. These types of facilities include parking areas, trailheads, scenic overlooks, rest stops, campgrounds, and pullouts necessary to ensure public health and safety and a functioning transportation management network. There are 36 facilities that are managed by the BLM and 12 additional facilities are managed by cooperating partners for a total of 48 facilities. Of the 48 facilities identified in Figure 3.2, 45 currently exist, one exists but will be officially designated, and two are proposed to be constructed in this plan. Several other projects propose improvements on existing facilities. The new facility projects or proposals to improve existing projects are summarized below.

- Expand the existing ATV staging area at Henson Creek (5000 square feet) if demand regularly exceeds capacity at this facility. Continue to maintain the existing ATV staging areas at Henson Creek, Lake Fork of the Gunnison River, and town of Eureka along the Alpine Loop. Improve these ATV staging areas, as needed, using natural or constructed barriers to formally delineate the staging areas, along with information and educational signs.
- Expand parking at the American Basin Trailhead to accommodate up to 15 vehicles (1000 square feet). This would include using natural or constructed barriers to formally delineate the parking area, along with appropriate signage. As this parking area is located in the American Basin ACEC, special attention would be given to mitigating visual impacts from its expansion.
- Develop designated trailheads and associated parking areas at the entry points to Grouse Gulch Trail (5000 square feet or 0.10 acre). Designate the existing parking area at Cunningham Gulch Trail as a trailhead. Trailhead designation and development would include using natural or constructed barriers to formally delineate the parking areas and adding appropriate signage.

BLM will work in full cooperation with the Gunnison National Forest should the Forest choose to expand parking at Williams Creek Trailhead to accommodate up to six vehicles. While the Williams Creek Trailhead is on USFS lands, the trail is under BLM management. Prior to implementation of this RAMP, all Forest Service-particular environmental requirements, including MIS surveys, would be completed. The proposed expansion of approximately 0.02 acres would include using natural or constructed barriers to formally delineate the parking area, along with appropriate signage.

Management Action 2: Designate access routes and parking at undeveloped campsites spots in the Project Area. Delineate these camping pullouts or parking areas to prevent them from increasing in size and unnecessarily impacting resources. This would be particularly important near riparian areas where vehicles often push down to the water's edge impacting vegetation and reducing bank stability.

Management, Maintenance and Monitoring of the Transportation System

Management

Goal: Routes in the Transportation System would be managed to support the overall recreation management goals of this RAMP, provide benefits to the public in the form of access and recreation opportunities, and avoid inappropriate impacts to other resources.

Rationale: BLM retains the authority to make allocations that support the overall management prescription for an area or zone. Providing opportunities and avoiding unnecessary and undue degradation to the environment is all considered during the planning process.

Management Action 1: Figure 3.2 shows the routes that make up the official transportation system along with the types of use appropriate on each route. A "Designated Route" sign strategy would be employed. Motorized and mechanized use may only occur on routes designated for that use. All open roads and trails would be indicated with a sign that shows what uses are authorized for them. Any road or trail that does not have a sign or is not identified on the official Transportation System Map (see Figure 3.1) would not be open for travel by the public. A priority would be placed on preserving the 4WD opportunities that currently exist in the area.

Management Action 2: Any road or trail not identified on Figure 3.2 would be managed as closed to the public; however, they could be authorized for administrative use or as legitimate access to private land. In all cases, roads and trails used solely for administrative purposes would be managed to prevent or discourage the general public from using them.

Management Action 3: Use barriers or signs at the end of designated roads to ensure that vehicles don't travel further than what is allowed to access undeveloped campsites.

Management Action 4: Closed roads and trails would be blocked or rehabilitated, as funding permits. Restoration of closed roads and trails would be prioritized based on actual and/or probable impacts to resources, and levels of use. The least intrusive method for restoration would be selected based on the geography, topography, soils, hydrology and vegetation in the area. Other options that could be incorporated in this strategy include: 1) not repairing washed out roads and trails; 2) using natural barriers, such as boulders; 3) using dead and down wood to obscure route entry ways; 4) using fencing, when necessary, to prohibit access; and 5) ripping up the road or trail bed and reseeding with vegetation natural to the area.

Management Action 5: For administrative uses, access would only be granted for legitimate and specific purposes. Authorized users could include grazing permittees, researchers, contractors, State or Federal agencies, and others carrying out authorized activities under a permit or other authorization. If the administrative purpose of a road ceases, the road would be evaluated for closure. The BLM would work with any individual operating within the Project Area under existing permits or authorizations to document where access must continue in order to allow operations of a current permit or authorization.

Management Action 6: Prioritize enforcement of the travel management designations.

Management Action 7: Pursue additional funding and/or partnerships to improve travel management capabilities to contact visitors, offer information and education about responsible use, deal with violations, establish and maintain signing, and close illegal routes.

Management Action 8: Work cooperatively with county and other agency law enforcement officials. Update existing law enforcement agreements with the Hinsdale, Ouray, and San Juan County Sheriffs. Through these agreements, county and agency law enforcement officials would coordinate their patrols within the Project Area, jointly enforce travel management restrictions, and clarify enforcement capabilities. Furthermore, this coordination would focus on increasing patrols along the Alpine Loop during the high use season (i.e., July and August), during special events (e.g., Colorado 500), and in areas experiencing high levels of unauthorized, cross-country travel. Last, BLM would look for opportunities to jointly fund county law enforcement positions and programs (e.g., Alpine Ranger Program) that focus their efforts and attention toward the Project Area.

Management Action 9: Train law enforcement personnel, permanent staff, seasonal employees, and volunteers who work in the Project Area about the management goals, and rules and regulations that apply. They should all be expected, as part of their job, to maintain a visible presence, contact visitors as much as possible, recognize proper behavior and deal with irresponsible behavior. These employees would not have full law enforcement capabilities, but they could gather information and take pictures to turn over to law enforcement personnel for appropriate action.

Management Action 10: The BLM and its partners would inform riders to register their ATVs with the State's ATV registration program. Staff will periodically conduct patrols on an ATV to better relate to riders.

Management Action 11: Encourage law enforcement personnel to attend the Archaeological Resource Protection Training Program, to allow them to better enforce cultural resource laws, regulations and policy.

Management Action 12: Motorized users of the Alpine Loop would be encouraged to travel in a single direction (i.e., clockwise) to reduce problems with passing on narrow roads. This recommendation would be communicated to users at visitor contact stations, through publications and brochures discussed in Section 3.2.7, Recreation Information, Education, and Marketing.

Management Action 13: Roads and trails on public land that are not designated as open to the public would be managed to minimize resource impacts and prevent their unauthorized use.

Management Action 14: Work with the USFS to cooperatively manage trails located on both BLM and USFS lands. To this end, share information with the USFS on trail conditions, and coordinate trail maintenance activities.

Management Action 15: No new roads or trails may be created without specific authorization from the BLM, and after site specific environmental analysis has been completed.

Management Action 16: Design, build, and maintain system trails to standards for primitive, backcountry trails, unless a higher standard is necessary to ensure public health and safety or mitigate resource impacts. Standards for primitive, backcountry trails include:

- 18- to 24-inch tread;
- natural dirt surfaces;
- branch and brush trimming out to 3 feet from the centerline on both sides of the trail;
- vertical clearance of 8 feet on foot and mountain bike trails, but up to 10 feet on horse trails;
- average grades no greater than 10 percent, but with the possibility of short stretches with grades up to 20 percent; and
- design trails and water control structures to provide adequate drainage and minimize erosion – rolling dips would be preferred over artificial waterbars.

Management Action 17: Consider the feasibility of building and maintaining a limited number of trails in the urban interface to Silverton and Lake City. To the extent possible, these trails would be connected with existing or future systems of trails surrounding these towns. These trails would provide residents and visitors with relatively easy access to less strenuous recreation experiences. In some cases, these trails could be designed to meet the needs of the handicapped or mobility impaired. Construction of any new trails on public lands would require site specific environmental analysis and resource inventories.

Maintenance

Goal: The transportation management network should be periodically maintained to ensure reasonable public access, minimize resource impacts and reduce safety hazards.

Rationale: Periodic maintenance of the roads and trails comprising the transportation management network is necessary to ensure public safety; preserve recreation settings, experiences and benefits; and mitigate impacts to soils, water and vegetation. At present, there are limited funds, personnel and resources available to adequately maintain this network. Within the transportation management network there are roads maintained by Hinsdale, San Juan, and Ouray Counties or the BLM. The BLM periodically meets with these counties to discuss a variety of topics related to recreation management, including road maintenance. Maintenance of roads on public lands, not under county jurisdiction, is the responsibility of the BLM. All trails in the transportation management network are maintained solely by BLM and its partners. Among others, these partners include the Hinsdale Trails Commission, Outward Bound, Western State College, the Hardrock 100 volunteers, and the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative.

Counties typically acquire funding from the State of Colorado and federal government to conduct road maintenance. It is up to them to set their priorities, determine the maintenance standards they want to follow, and carry out that maintenance with the available staff, funding and equipment. The BLM has an interest in how county roads are maintained, as most of them cross public lands, affect public resources, and affect recreation settings and experiences.

Management Action 1: Work cooperatively with partners to develop a common vision for road and trail maintenance, and to effectively use available funds, personnel and resources in achieving it. Periodically meet with commissioners and road supervisors from Hinsdale, San Juan and Ouray counties to discuss county road maintenance issues, and how to cooperatively address them. Manage roads for safety and providing reasonable access to public lands. Ensure road maintenance levels achieve and sustain the prescribed character of recreation settings; and produce the activity, experience, and benefit opportunities targeted in BLM's management objectives. Assess the need for passing and camping pullouts, signage, the need for winter or spring road closures, dates and responsibilities for opening roads in the spring, and the location and extent of dust retardants (e.g., magnesium chloride). The results of these discussions should be recorded for future reference. Once these objectives and priorities have been established, identify approaches for implementing them with available funds, staff and equipment. Work with partners to research grants or other funding mechanisms to assist counties in completing maintenance activities.

Management Action 2: As funding permits, maintain BLM roads to allow access, preserve recreation settings, experiences and benefits, and mitigate resource impacts. Cooperatively work with counties towards making emergency repairs to damaged roads. Prioritize maintenance on roads with problem spots that visitors are tempted to drive around, and potentially impact natural and cultural resources outside the disturbed travel surface. Another priority for maintenance would be to repair areas where vehicles have driven off the designated road including blocking or signing the illegal route, if appropriate, and rehabilitate impacts as quickly as possible to prevent other visitors from continuing to drive off road.

Management Action 3: BLM roads open for administrative use would be maintained to the minimum level necessary to keep them open for the appropriate use.

Management Action 4: Non-designated roads (i.e., not part of BLM's transportation management network) providing access to private lands shall be the maintenance responsibility of the private landowner under the terms of a right-of-way agreement. If no right-of-way agreement is in effect then no maintenance would be allowed by the private landowner, and maintenance would be at the discretion of the BLM.

Management Action 5: As much as possible, plan, develop, and maintain trails in cooperation with partners (e.g., Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, Outward Bound, Hinsdale County Trails Commission). Maintain only designated trails to provide a clear path (see Management Action 7 directly below) for visitors to follow, and reduce the resource impacts that could come from hikers following multiple paths. When use or maintenance is not sufficient to keep a trail clear, rock cairns or other natural markers would be used to ensure they are

reasonably easy to follow. Establish adopt-a-trail programs, as opportunities present themselves, to strengthen partners' stewardship of favorite trail(s).

Management Action 6: As much as possible, plan, develop, and maintain motorized routes in cooperation with partners (e.g., Western Slope Four Wheelers, Jeepers Creepers). Establish adopt-a-road programs, as opportunities present themselves, to strengthen partners' stewardship of favorite routes(s).

Management Action 7: BLM maintenance of routes that are not officially part of the transportation management network and have unacceptable resources impacts will be closed and rehabilitated rather than maintained by the BLM.

Management Action 8: Maintenance problems or unauthorized routes would be evaluated based on jurisdiction, and level of concern or impact. If the BLM is responsible for the road or trail then the situation would be resolved, as budget and staffing allow, with a priority based on the severity of the problem. If the counties or other entities are responsible for a road then the BLM would notify those partners within a reasonable timeframe. If the problem is simple (e.g., tree down across a county road) and can be resolved in a safe manner, the BLM would do so even if not their responsibility.

Monitoring

Goal: BLM's primary focus in monitoring the transportation management network is to ensure that the system of designated roads and trails remains open and accessible during the normal seasons of use. A second priority for monitoring would be to ensure that closed roads and trails are not getting used, and that no unauthorized roads or trails are being established. Findings of the monitoring program will be documented and recorded.

Rationale: Periodic monitoring is necessary to ensure that we are achieving our recreation management objectives, avoiding unnecessary impact to resources and detecting and dealing with problems before they cause undesirable effects. A number of comments received during the planning process stressed that BLM needs to increase its patrol and enforcement presence to encourage compliance with existing rules and regulations. Given present funding levels and the relatively short tourism season it is unlikely that BLM would be able to afford to hire new law enforcement personnel. As a result, BLM is going to have to look for ways to stretch its current capabilities to address this concern.

Management Action 1: Encourage all permanent, seasonal, and volunteer recreation staff working in the Project Area to monitor road and trail conditions as they carry out their daily work activities. The BLM would maintain regular communication with county road crews, visitor center staff, outfitters and other sources of information to stay informed about current road and trail conditions.

Management Action 2: Provide backcountry patrols to protect WSAs consistent with the BLM's IMP until legislation takes effect to change their status.

Management Action 3: Improve patrol and enforcement presence in the Project Area by encouraging all permanent, seasonal and volunteer recreation staff working in the Project Area to keep an eye out for violations of vehicle designations as well as unsafe behavior and deal with those problems as much as possible. Staff that does not have law enforcement authority would gather appropriate information on problems and share it with law enforcement personnel for further action. Patrol and law enforcement personnel would keep an eye out for vehicles driving off the designated roads and deal with those problems as soon as they are detected.

Management Action 4: Provide support for the San Juan Mountain Association (SJMA) Colorado Site Steward Program (CSSP) to monitor the condition of key historic/heritage tourism resources and those along vehicle transportation routes and assist where needed with preservation efforts at these sites.

Winter Transportation System

Goal*:* Identify, manage, maintain and monitor a transportation system for winter recreation activities such as snowmobiling, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Rationale: There is increasing demand for winter recreation opportunities for local and regional residents. There is also a desire to increase winter business in the surrounding communities by providing recreation opportunities that attract visitors to these towns.

Management Action 1: Groomed snowmobile trails would be managed near Silverton and Lake City. At present, BLM does not have the necessary equipment, personnel or funding to groom winter snowmobile trails. As such, BLM would continue to work cooperatively with such groups as the Continental Divide Snowmobile Club in Lake City, and the Silverton Snowmobile Club in Silverton to allow them to groom authorized routes on public land. This is done with financial assistance from the State Snowmobile Fund. Grooming and signing would be completed to provide safe and enjoyable snowmobiling experience for visitors, and to reduce the potential for resource impacts. Proposals to add additional routes for grooming may be considered, but must be analyzed for their potential impacts to wildlife and other recreation. No other routes in the Project Area may be groomed without written authorization from the BLM.

Management Action 2: Outside of the groomed routes identified in Figure 3.2 snowmobiles would be allowed to operate in most of the rest of the Project Area except for Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas where prohibitions against motorized vehicles are established by federal policy. Snowmobiles would generally be encouraged to use routes that are designated for motorized use during the summer, but may venture off those routes as long as they do not cause resource damage. The cutting of vegetation to open up areas for riding would not be allowed.

Management Action 3: Non-motorized uses such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding and winter mountaineering may be practiced throughout the Project Area. They may use routes groomed for snowmobile activities, but must recognize that they are sharing those trails with other uses. No routes may be groomed for these activities without written authorization from the BLM.

Management Action 4: The winter transportation system would be monitored periodically to ensure that it is meeting established recreation goals for the area, and to ensure that inappropriate impacts to other resources are minimized or eliminated.

***Management Action 5*:** Maintain and improve partnerships with cross-country skiing organizations to addressing such issues as trail grooming, safety, and skier education.

Management Action 6: Demand for groomed ski trails would best be directed to mixed use trails that are authorized for grooming for both snowmobiles and skiers.

Management Action 7: Work with the snowmobile community to educate snowmobile operators on Wilderness restrictions and boundaries. Patrol the boundaries of designated Wilderness and WSAs to identify and resolve illegal snowmobile incursions into these areas.

Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future

Goal: Provide guidelines that may be used in the future to evaluate proposals for new roads or trails that ensure decisions are based on criteria that support the overall management goals for the area.

Rationale: As part of this RAMP a system of roads and trails (i.e., transportation management network), offering the best mix of public access, recreation opportunities and resource protection, is identified. However, over the life of the RAMP circumstances may change that make it necessary or appropriate to designate additional roads or trails for public use, or close an existing one. It would not be necessary to amend this RAMP to make appropriate changes to the transportation management network. However, it would be necessary to evaluate the proposed change based on the management goals and objectives for an area, and to complete site-specific environmental analysis, as determined necessary.

Objective 1: Identify factors that would assist in deciding if additional roads or trails should be added or removed from the transportation management network in the future.

Management Action 1: The list below provides some factors to consider when deciding if roads or trails should be added or removed from the transportation management network in the future. The authorized officer would use these "factors" while considering the unique circumstances associated with each road and trail in arriving at a decision to either open or close them.

1. Does the road or trail provide essential access to an area or destination that currently does not have adequate access?
2. Does the road or trail provide the opportunity for a quality recreation experience? Particular emphasis could be placed on suitable recreation opportunities that are not currently offered elsewhere in the Project Area?
3. Is the development and use of the road or trail in agreement with management goals for the Project Area, as well as the RMZ that it is located within?
4. Is the road or trail necessary and appropriate for use by the general public or is it more appropriate for administrative use only?
5. Would development and use of the road or trail disrupt or degrade other desirable recreation experiences in the area?
6. Would development and use of the road or trail cause undesirable impacts to natural, scenic or cultural resources? If so, could the road or trail be rerouted to resolve such impacts, instead of requiring closure?
7. Is the proposed road or trail designed to be sustainable over time?
8. Are adequate resources available (e.g., funding, staffing, cooperative relationships) to ensure the road or trail is properly maintained?
9. Does the road or trail have legal public access for its entire length?
10. Does the road or trail adequately support the designated or desired uses (e.g., ATV)?
11. Is the use of this road or trail consistent with uses on adjacent land managed by the USFS or communities of Lake City, Silverton, and Ouray?

Public Access Easements

Goal: Acquire easements from willing private landowners to ensure or improve access to public lands.

Rationale: Public lands in the Project Area are peppered with private inholdings that date back to patented mining claims from 100 years ago. Sometimes access to public lands can be blocked by these private inholdings. If the BLM wants to secure public access to these areas it requires negotiating with the landowner to secure a public access easement. These easements can be purchased (i.e., permanent acquired easements) or donated (i.e., permanent or temporary permissive easements). Each of these public access easements relies on landowners who are willing to sell or donate an easement to the BLM or other entity. There are some places where roads and trails cross private lands that the public has used for many years, and are not covered by an easement. These may be across land where the landowner doesn't mind public use across their land; however, if these parcels are sold to another owner the historic access may be lost if they decide to block public access. State law says that if roads or trails have been used without interruption for 18 years or more that their access across private land is considered historic, although this can sometimes be challenging to prove.

Management Action 1: Develop a process for identifying those easements which are currently needed to support the transportation management network, or may be needed to support public access in the future. This process should include identifying areas where a road or trail crossing private land could pose an access problem, determining if access across that parcel is essential to maintain or improve access or recreation opportunities, and assess the potential to negotiate with willing landowners to formalize legal public access.

Management Action 2: Prioritize the acquisition of these easements across private lands from willing landowners considering the 11 factors identified in the previous Section, Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future, Management Action 1. In addition, other factors including the willingness of landowners

to grant easements, the availability of staffing and funding to process and purchase the easement, and the potential consequences of losing that access should be considered.

Management Action 3: Pursue public access easements, with willing landowners, on private property that is crossed by Grouse Gulch Trail and Maggie Gulch Trail. As noted in Table 3.7, formally designating Grouse Gulch Trail and Maggie Gulch Trail in the transportation management network would be contingent on obtaining public access easements across private property. These are existing trails that have never been formally designated, and that cross parcels of private property. Until these easements are obtained from willing landowners, these trails would not be formally designated or maintained.

Rights-of-Way

Goal: Public lands within the Project Area will be open to the location of rights-of-way, subject to stipulations in Management Unit prescriptions and standard terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in records of decision issued for each application. Rights-of-way allowing private landowners to use, maintain or construct an access route across public land to access their property would be allowed, but managed in a way that reduces or eliminates negative impacts to recreation opportunities, scenic integrity, and other resource values.

Rationale: Many parcels of private property occur throughout the Project Area and landowners regularly need to use an existing route or construct a new route across public land to access these properties. The rules and process for evaluating and granting rights-of way are well established. This RAMP would not change those procedures, but it would emphasize the importance of considering impacts to recreation and scenery as part of the environmental analysis for these right-of-way proposals.

Management Action 1: A variety of issues would be considered when determining if a right-of-way should be granted. Among them are the questions of public access and the need to protect the quality of visual resources. In evaluating right-of-way proposals, determine if the road should be open to the general public. To answer this question, consider the 11 factors identified in Section 3.2.1, Travel Management, under Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future, Management Action 1. For the second issue, ensure that proposals to improve existing rights-of-way or create new ones meet all visual resource objectives.

Management Action 2: It is usually the BLM's policy to retain ownership of public lands in the Project Area, though in rare cases small parcels may be considered for disposal if disposal serves the public interest. Public lands in the planning area classified as Category 1 and Category 2 for disposal and multiple use management purposes. Category 1 lands will be considered for disposal through public sale under criteria in Section 203 of the FLPMA. Category 2 lands or other public lands in the planning area and will be managed by BLM for multiple use. Category 2 lands will be considered for disposal on a case-by-case basis to assist with exchange, boundary adjustments, state indemnity selection, Recreation and Public Purpose Act applications, or other appropriate statute or authority.

3.2.2 Recreation Management – Spring, Summer, and Fall Use

The discussion that follows identifies additional goals, objectives, and management actions for spring, summer and fall recreation activities.

Visiting Cultural Sites and Heritage Tourism

Objective 1*:* Protect and stabilize historical and archaeological sites that support Heritage Tourism to sustain or improve the quality and diversity of the visitor experiences.

Management Action 1*:* Cooperate with agency Cultural Program Specialists and other partners to identify, document and prioritize the cultural resources on public land that attract visitors and residents or are marketed as heritage tourism sites and can benefit from improved management and stabilization. Prepare Public Use and Preservation Plans for these sites and stabilize historic structures to prevent their deterioration. Repair damage from public use and natural causes where feasible or necessary to resolve or maintain safety issues and assure site accessibility/interpretability for public use. All stabilization should meet federal preservation standards and seek to retain the same or similar construction materials and methods that were used in the original construction

to preserve the historic character of the site. Continue to cooperate with a variety of interests including historical societies, individuals and groups in surrounding towns as well as national and state conservation groups and educational institutions to carry out these projects. Look for opportunities to take advantage of grants or other assistance from the State Historic Fund and other sources to help BLM accomplish this high priority work in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation. Investigate marketing strategies to get this work done through the recreation industry. Update the CRMP to direct and schedule implementation to assure sustainable heritage tourism.

***Management Action 2**:* Work with agency Cultural Resource Specialists to initiate a Site Steward program with volunteers to help monitor and preserve high priority heritage tourism sites in Hinsdale County. Continue to support the San Juan Mountain Association's Cultural Site Steward Program to provide a cadre of trained monitors and preservation volunteers for San Juan County.

Management Action 3: Identify high priority cultural resource sites on private land that are in reasonably good condition, played an important role in the history of the area, and are currently visited by the public or have the potential to be an interesting site that the public could visit. Be open to opportunities to cooperate with private landowners to protect or stabilize these structures, particularly if public access can be ensured. Be aware of opportunities to acquire these sites through exchange or purchase.

Management Action 4: Prohibit camping or fires within 100 feet of historical structures to minimize modern impacts to these resources from vandalism or damage from inappropriate activities. Review undeveloped campsites for impacts to cultural resources. Close or dismantle campsites that have been established too close to cultural sites.

Management Action 5: Development on private land can have the effect of destroying the historical buildings on that parcel. To the extent allowed by budget and staffing, consider the possibility of acquiring private parcels through purchase or exchange to help ensure the protection of high value historical buildings or sites.

Management Action 6: Develop educational recreation programs targeted at discovering, protecting, interpreting and enhancing cultural resource sites through stewardship activities at heritage tourism sites.

Management Action 7: Work with recreation outfitters that visit historic sites to include authorized historic preservation practices and education in their offerings.

Management Action 8: Document and preserve the historic landscape on BLM (and adjacent visible USFS lands) and work with counties and private landowners to eliminate or minimize impacts to the quality of heritage tourism.

Hiking/Trail Running/Backpacking

Guidelines for managing hiking, trail running, and backpacking activities are discussed in Section 3.3, Management Unique to Each Recreation Management Zone.

Hunting and Shooting

Objective: Reduce recreation impacts to wildlife habitat in order to maintain or improve wildlife habitat and quality hunting opportunities.

Management Action 1: Continue and improve coordination with CDOW regarding hunting. This includes sharing information and ideas, cooperating on law enforcement, identifying issues and concerns, and developing affordable strategies for dealing with them.

Management Action 2: Continue regular patrols during hunting season to contact hunters, offer information, make sure hunters understand the rules, encourage responsible behavior, and identify and resolve inappropriate activities.

Management Action 3: The use of motorized and mechanized vehicles (e.g., game carts) off of designated roads or trails for game retrieval would not be permitted. Stay informed about the availability of legal outfitters that are willing to provide horse packing services to assist hunters in removing their game from backcountry areas.

Management Action 4: Target shooting would continue to be permitted, to a limited extent, in the Clauson Mesa meadow. For safety reasons, shooters would have to defer to other users and not practice their sport if other visitors are in the area. To reduce the hazard to residences in the area, shooting should only occur from the northwest corner of the meadow into the hillside on the southeast corner of the meadow. Shooters must remove all their targets and trash. Competitive events such as the annual Turkey Shoot must be held only during the off season when the likelihood of conflicts with other visitors is reduced. Such events should be managed to reduce the possibility that lead from shotgun shells or bullets do not enter the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River to reduce the chances of lead contamination to water and wildlife. If safety concerns or trash problems increase considerably beyond current levels the area may be closed to shooting completely.

Fishing

***Objective 1*:** Reduce conflicts between anglers and other recreationists, as well as with adjacent private land owners.

Management Action 1: The boundaries of isolated parcels of public land that offer good opportunities for fishing should be clearly marked both on the road that accesses them, and on the riverbanks to avoid trespass situations on adjacent private land. Fence walkovers could be built and maintained to allow easier access into these parcels.

Objective 2: Preserve, improve and expand fishing opportunities on public land, when possible.

Management Action 1: Quality fishing opportunities rely on good fish habitat. This should include good water quality and food supply, reduced sediment load, healthy riparian vegetation and stable substrate and topographical structures in the stream to improve aeration and provide resting and hiding cover. Look for opportunities to maintain and improve these factors in streams with good fishery potential. Continue ongoing efforts to identify point source pollution coming from old mines and remediate those problems to improve water quality. Work with county road crews and other partners to reduce the amount of sediment that flows into streams. In particular, the road along Henson Creek has been identified as a source of excess sediment into the creek especially the site near Whitmore Falls. Reduce the amount of impacts to riparian vegetation from recreation and other causes to provide shade, hiding cover and food sources. Look for opportunities to cooperate with the CDOW and interest groups (e.g., Trout Unlimited) to carry out appropriate habitat improvement projects.

Management Action 2: Encourage visitors to practice catch and release fishing, whenever possible, to help maintain quality fishing opportunities even when it is not required by regulation. Participate in discussions with the CDOW regarding the most appropriate regulations and stocking strategies for the waters in the Project Area to achieve both healthy fish populations, and a quality fishing experience.

Management Action 3: Cooperate with the CDOW to establish and maintain populations of native species (e.g., Colorado Cutthroat Trout). Discourage the introduction of non-native species whenever possible.

Management Action 4: Continue working with Hinsdale County on their proposal to reroute County Road 30, to provide safer fishing opportunities along the shore of Lake San Cristobal if it can be done without impacting known cultural sites in the area.

Management Action 5: To maintain high quality fishing experiences along the Lake Fork authorizations for fishing outfitters should be carefully balanced with public use to avoid overcrowding. Continue our current policy of limiting each outfitter to 15 client days each year on the 'Smock Property' just upstream from the Red Bridge Campground. No proposals for new guided fishing on the Lake Fork will be addressed until/unless one of the current outfitters relinquishes their permit.

Management Action 6: Livestock grazing will continue to be authorized in the Project Area within the capabilities of the ecosystems involved. In the riparian area along Henson Creek, from the North Fork of Henson Creek downstream to Lake City, livestock grazing in this important fishery will continue to not be authorized in order to maintain fishery and streamside conditions, including soils and vegetation.

Camping

***Objective 1*:** Provide adequate opportunities for camping in developed campgrounds

***Objective 2*:** Reduce the impact to resources from camping in both developed and undeveloped sites.

***Objective 3*:** Reduce conflicts between visitors and wildlife at campgrounds by providing visitor education and the appropriate use of prevention practices and devices.

***Objective 4*:** Explore the possibility of San Juan County developing a campground in the townsite of Eureka .

***Objective 5*:** Provide adequate opportunities for undeveloped camping in appropriate locations around the Alpine Loop. Along with routine cleaning of sites, fire rings and restrooms, this should include evaluation and removal of hazardous trees that could pose a safety threat to visitors.

Management Action 1: Continue to provide maintenance for developed and undeveloped sites. Along with routine cleaning of sites, fire rings and restrooms, this should include evaluation and removal of hazardous trees that could pose a safety threat to visitors.

Management Action 2: Recruit and support volunteer campground hosts to help with maintenance and to offer information and education to visitors.

Management Action 3: Acquire and install bear boxes at all sites in campgrounds where bears are becoming a problem. Garbage dumpsters in campgrounds should be designed to be resistant to bears. Educate visitors about the appropriate steps for handling food and trash to avoid problems with bears and other wildlife.

Management Action 4: Patrol the Project Area to detect and resolve problems with campers staying beyond the 14-day limit.

Management Action 5: Continue discussions with San Juan County concerning the possibility of developing a campground near the historic townsite of Eureka, currently determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, that would take into account the fragile and unique nature of this heritage tourism site and the special management measures that would be needed to adequately protect its national significance while improving the visitor experience.

Management Action 6: Suitable places for undeveloped camping have been developed over time throughout the Project Area and are currently meeting demand. These sites should be designated as appropriate for vehicle based dispersed camping and managed to reduce impacts from parking and camping activities. The established access routes to these dispersed campsites would be designated as open to allow vehicle based dispersed camping and managed to reduce impacts from parking and camping activities. Dispersed camping outside these designated sites would be discouraged and the establishment of new user created vehicle route to access dispersed camping sites would not be allowed. See Section 3.2.1, Travel Management Network, for additional guidance on dispersed camping with vehicles.

Rock Climbing

***Objective 1*:** Due to the limited number of rock climbing sites, associated parking at these sites, and the potential for climbers to trespass on private property, this is not an activity that BLM would actively promote. Instead, BLM would manage the climbing that is occurring, and reduce associated impacts on soil, vegetation, and wildlife.

Management Action 1: Periodically monitor known climbing areas to evaluate the amount of use they are receiving, and to detect problems or resource impacts.

Management Action 2: Climbing areas that are discovered to have active cliff nesting birds should be temporarily closed to climbing within 100 yards on either side of the nest, until the birds have left the nest for the season.

Management Action 3: Undesignated trails leading to climbing areas would be evaluated following the objectives and management actions prescribed under Section 3.2.1, under Management, Maintenance and Monitoring of the Transportation System, and Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future. Known climbing areas would be periodically monitored to evaluate the amount of use they are receiving, and to detect problems or resource impacts. User created rock climbing access trails would be evaluated for stability and sustainability to reduce resource impacts.

Management Action 4: Clean climbing practices should be encouraged as much as possible. BLM would not be responsible for evaluating or assuring the integrity of artificial anchors, bolts, chains or cables.

Management Action 5: No permanent artificial anchors would be allowed in designated Wilderness or WSAs. Those anchors that are found in these areas would be removed without further notice.

Horseback Riding and Pack Animals

***Objective 1*:** Work in partnership with both horseback riders and other pack animal users to ensure these activities are practiced in a sustainable fashion, with minimal impact to cultural and natural resources.

Management Action 1: Encourage recreation stock use to use designated roads and trails included as part of the travel management network in Section 3.2.1, and as illustrated in Figure 3.1. At present, both the Gunnison and San Juan RMPs allow for stock use to occur off of designated roads and trails. As such, this use can continue to occur. However, if concentrated stock use off of designated roads and trails creates undesignated trails, objectives and management actions addressing this situation under Section 3.2.1 under Management, Maintenance, and Monitoring of the Transportation System, and Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future would be followed.

Management Action 2: Any feed that is used on public lands must be certified weed free hay or pellets to reduce the chances of spreading invasive weeds.

Management Action 3: At trailheads receiving regular stock use (e.g., Independence Gulch, Williams Creek) the BLM should consider options to establish hitching racks, adequate parking for vehicles with horse trailers or other horse related accommodations.

Whitewater Boating

Guidelines for managing whitewater boating activities are discussed in Section 3.3, Management Unique to Each Recreation Management Zone.

Geocaching

***Objective 1*:** Manage geocaching to reduce the potential for resource impacts from surface disturbance, social trailing, and other associated activities.

Management Action 1: Remove artificial cache materials established in designated Wilderness or WSAs.

Management Action 2: Periodically review the location of existing caches on public land to identify those that may be steering increased use to sensitive areas or encouraging trespass on private lands. Work with those establishing caches to suggest alternate locations that are less problematic. If unable to negotiate a reasonable settlement, then remove the cache.

Management Action 3: Consider identifying existing cache locations that are in appropriate places and providing information on those caches to visitors to provide an additional activity for them to enjoy in this area.

Management Action 4: If there are potential cache locations that could be interesting to the public, consider establishing those caches as a way of educating geocachers about this area, and to model acceptable behavior for others.

Mountain Biking

Guidelines for managing mountain biking activities are discussed in Section 3.2.1, Travel Management and Access. As discussed under that section, mountain bikes would be added to the list of vehicles that must stay on designated roads and trails appropriate for that use. Mountain bikes would not be allowed to travel cross-country.

3.2.3 Recreation Management – Winter Use

The discussion that follows identifies additional goals, objectives, and management actions for winter recreation activities.

Snowmobiling

***Objective 1*:** Provide opportunities for snowmobiling on both groomed and ungroomed routes outside of Wilderness and WSAs that are reasonably safe and minimize impacts on other resources.

Management Action 1: Reduce conflicts between snowmobilers and cross-country skiers on shared trail systems by encouraging both groups to be careful and respectful of each other.

Management Action 2: Continue to work with our partners in the snowmobile clubs to decide which trails may be groomed, apply for grant funding from the State Snowmobile Fund and permit them to carry out grooming operations on approved trails.

Management Action 3: Continue to manage and maintain trailhead facilities (e.g., parking, restrooms, interpretive displays) for winter recreation activities.

Management Action 4: Less traditional downhill activities such as hybrid skiing/snowboarding that are supported with snowmobiles may continue, but should be monitored to detect and resolve any resource impact, skier conflicts, or safety concerns that may be occurring. Visitors participating in hybrid skiing/snowboarding activities would have to follow the appropriate vehicle designations (e.g. not driving in designated Wilderness or WSAs).

Developed Downhill Skiing, Snowboarding, Cross-country Skiing, and Snowshoeing

***Objective 1*:** Develop downhill skiing and snowboarding opportunities in appropriate places, and manage them in a way that reduces resource impacts and encourages safe and enjoyable experiences. Proposals for new developments would be evaluated based on their consistency with the management goals for the unit, the necessity of the development and the impact that they may cause to the area's resources.

Management Action 1: Monitor the operations at Silverton Mountain Ski Area to ensure that they are following the terms of the lease.

Management Action 2: Monitor the operations at Kendall Mountain Ski Area and Lake City Ski Hill to ensure that they are following the terms of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease.

Objective 2: Provide opportunities for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in areas that are appropriate for that use and communicate with the public to help them find the best place for these winter experiences.

Management Action 1: These activities may be practiced on the system of trails groomed for snowmobiling. They may also be practiced on any other public lands on ungroomed routes.

Management Action 2: At this time we are not authorizing any routes to be groomed specifically for these activities. Proposals for such grooming may be considered in the future but an environmental analysis must occur that evaluates the potential for impacts to other resources such as Canada lynx.

Management Action 3: Continue to authorize the Hinsdale Haute Route System as long as the system remains viable to facilitate multiday hut to hut skiing opportunities. The facilities for these huts will be dismantled in the spring and set up in the late fall to avoid year round impacts to the sites.

Heliskiing

Guidelines for managing this activity are covered under Section 3.2.6, Recreation Administration, Outfitters and Special Events.

Dog Sledding

As stated in Section 2.3.4, dogs not under the control of their owners have the potential to harass or bite visitors or their dogs. The goal and objective discussed in 2.6.4 reduces conflicts betweens dogs, recreationists, and wildlife by encouraging owners to leash their dog(s) or control them by voice command. Guidelines for managing dog sledding activities are discussed under Management Action 3 in Section 3.2.1, under Winter Transportation System, which states that dog sledding activities may use routes groomed for snowmobile activities, but must recognize that they are sharing those trails with other uses.

Ice climbing

Additional guidelines for managing this activity are covered under Specific Management for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads Facilities and Signs.

***Objective 1*:** Identify opportunities for natural and developed ice climbing activities and appropriate places, and manage them in a way that reduces resource impacts and encourages safe and enjoyable experiences.

Management Action 1: Evaluate natural ice climbing areas to determine their suitability for regular use by climbers. Factors such as legal access, resource impacts, and safety would be considered. If appropriate, the BLM would consider marking the best access routes to these areas to avoid trespass or inappropriate resource impacts. These opportunities would be communicated to the public to help them find the best place for the experience they are looking for.

3.2.4 Recreation Management – Resource Protection

The discussion that follows identifies additional goals, objectives, and management actions for protecting both natural and cultural resource from recreation associated impacts.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species

Goal: Ensure that recreation activities in the Project Area have minimal to no impact on the health or survival of threatened, endangered or sensitive species.

Rationale: Non-discretionary law, regulation and policy.

Management Action 1: Continue to manage recreation to minimize or eliminate impacts to federally listed threatened, endangered, or otherwise protected species in accordance with the ESA. At present, federally endangered species include Mexican spotted owl, southwestern willow flycatcher, Canada lynx, and Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly. One federal candidate species, the Western United States Distinct Population Segment of yellow billed cuckoo, has the potential to occur within lands managed by the BLM, but is not suspected to occur within the Project Area. If other plant or animal species residing in the Project Area are listed as federally threatened or endangered in the future, recreation management may have to be altered to reduce potential impacts.

Management Action 2: Manage recreation to prevent or reduce associated impacts from contributing to future need to federally list current sensitive species known to be in decline. At present, there are 14 sensitive wildlife

and plant species including six bat species, five bird species (including the bald eagle), one fish species, and two milk vetches; and eight species of concern including two ungulates (desert bighorn sheep and pronghorn antelope), four whitlow-grasses (*Draba* spp.), one cotton-grass (*Eriophorum* spp.), and Rothrock's Townsend daisy (*Townsendia rothrockii*) with potential to occur in the Project Area. Other species of concern in the Project Area include mule deer, elk, and white-tailed ptarmigan (to view all listed species see the Alpine Triangle 2008 Biological Assessment).

Management Action 3: Comply with Canada lynx conservation measures as required by USFWS that are applicable to management of recreation activities (i.e. winter recreation activities and events). These measures are "intended to conserve the lynx, and to reduce or eliminate adverse effects from the spectrum of management activities on federal land" (Ruediger et. al. 2000). In particular, proposals for new winter activities have the greatest potential to impact lynx.

Management Action 4: The upper part of the hiking trail to Redcloud Peak should continue to be managed to reduce off-trail travel that could impact habitat for the endangered Uncompaghre fritillary butterfly that occurs there. Outfitters would be required and the public would be encouraged to camp below 12,000 feet in the Silver Creek drainage.

Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas

Goal: Protect and manage designated Wilderness and WSAs to maintain their natural character and facilitate appropriate forms of recreation in a primitive and unconfined setting within RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry Zone.

Rationale: Non-discretionary policy requires these lands be managed to meet the non-impairment criteria.

Management Action 1: Manage WSAs in the Project Area under the BLM's IMP until legislation takes effect to change their status. The major objective of the IMP is to manage lands under wilderness review in a manner that does not impair their suitability for designation as Wilderness.

***Management Action 2*:** Manage all designated Wilderness according to the BLM Wilderness Management Policy. At present, all designated Wilderness and WSAs are located within RMZ 1.

Management Action 3: The use of motorized vehicles including street legal vehicles, ATVs, motorcycles, snowmobiles, heliski operations, and other motorized uses are prohibited in designated Wilderness or WSAs. Mechanized uses such as mountain bikes and game carts are also prohibited in these areas. As such, these activities would not be managed for in these areas.

Management Action 4: The non-motorized, backcountry experience that is offered in WSAs is an important part of the variety of recreation experiences in the Project Area. As a result, if the U.S. Congress decides that these areas should not be designated as Wilderness then the BLM would continue to manage them in a way that preserves their backcountry values.

Management Action 5: Competitive events (e.g., trail running and equestrian endurance rides) would not be permitted in Wilderness areas. They may continue in WSAs with the understanding that if the areas are designated the courses would have to be moved. The BLM would work with race organizers to find alternative routes outside of designated Wilderness for their events.

Management Action 6: Commercial outfitter use in designated Wilderness and WSAs would be managed to reduce crowding, and to maintain the desired social settings for RMZ 1. To achieve desired social settings commercial outfitters could be limited in their use of popular areas (e.g., trails to the Fourteeners and limiting group size at fragile historic sites). Commercial outfitters could also be encouraged to use less visited areas of RMZ 1, to ensure quality backcountry experiences are maintained.

Management Action 7: The maximum group size for activities in designated Wilderness or WSAs would be 25 heartbeats. A heartbeat includes clients, guides, and any animals (e.g., horses, llamas, or dogs) within a group.

Lands & Realty

Goal: Manage land and realty actions to support recreation goals, and help sustain the integrity of public land resources to enhance the public's enjoyment of these resources.

***Rationale**:* Management of private lands is beyond the scope of this document. However, partnerships and working with the land owners can lead to actions supportive of BLM management allocations.

> ***Management Action 1:*** Work with willing landowners to reduce impacts that threaten the Project Area's recreation potential on private inholdings by means of education, conservation easements, donation, exchange, or acquisition. As part of this process, the BLM would work in partnership with organizations, such as the San Juan Alpine Task Force and Red Mountain Project, who are actively working to protect and preserve historic landscapes and structures within the Project Area through acquisition from willing sellers If available, selected non-federal lands containing representative examples of thematic historic period sites, structures, or resources could be acquired through exchange or purchase.
>
> ***Management Action 2:*** If private inholdings are acquired from willing landowners, the BLM would strive to acquire both surface and subsurface rights to avoid the creation of split estates.
>
> ***Management Action 3:*** Whenever possible, and desirable, the BLM would retain fishing and/or access easements on all public lands selected for sale or exchange within the Project Area.
>
> ***Management Action 4:*** Where desirable and possible, secure public access to public lands "landlocked" by private ownership.
>
> ***Management Action 5:*** When possible, configure land exchanges to result in no net loss of property tax base for counties.

Local Land Use Planning

Goal: Be an active participant and collaborative partner in local land use planning efforts.

Rationale: As a collaborative partner with local counties and communities the BLM should not only ask them to participate in BLM planning processes but also be willing to participate in their planning processes to ensure that public land management perspectives are understood and considered.

> ***Management Action 1:*** Participate, as appropriate, in local land use planning efforts to ensure that public land perspectives are considered. This could include participating in public meetings, working with decision makers to develop a full range of options, providing appropriate data to assist with project development, helping decision makers understand the environmental consequences of management options, reviewing draft plans, and working cooperatively to implement final plans. Under this action, the BLM would serve in a support role only, recognizing the lack of legal jurisdiction to direct or manage development on private land.

Visual Resources

The BLM manages public lands according to Visual Resources Management classes contained within Management Unit prescriptions of the RMPs and other plans. The BLM would continue to manage the majority of the Project Area as VRM II to protect the integrity of scenic resources. VRM II is defined as, "Change is visible but does not attract attention to the casual observer", which encourages management to place a high value on protecting the integrity of scenic resources. Additionally, an analysis of Historic Context is currently in process (funded under a grant from the Colorado Historical Fund) that recognizes and interprets the Upper Animas historic mining landscape, and is nominating several historic sites (also heritage tourism sites) as a National Register Historic District with landscape values (visual integrity) being contributing elements. Wilderness areas, WSAs, and other special areas would be managed as VRM I to preserve the existing character of the landscape.

Goal: Manage Wilderness and WSAs as VRM Class I and the majority of the Project Area as VRM Class II to protect the integrity of scenic resources. VRM Class II is defined as, "Change visible but does not attract attention."

Additionally, refer to the San Juan RMP for general guidance and design guidelines for visual resource management for this area.

Rationale: This is an area of extraordinary natural beauty and a world class cultural landscape. Both public land values and local and regional economics demand that the intrinsic scenic values be protected for current and future generations to enjoy.

Management Action 1: Work with local municipalities, land trusts and other willing partners to acquire lands or conservation easements on lands that are key scenic assets as viewed from the Alpine Triangle.

Management Action 2: Educate local land owners, municipalities and other willing partners concerning best management practices for protection of scenic qualities of the natural and cultural landscape.

Management Action 3: Conduct a visual resource inventory of the Alpine Triangle to assess current visual resource conditions, to identify valued cultural components and landscapes, and to identify areas for enhancement and restoration.

Management Action 4: Design of modern visitor facilities should employ the use of local native materials such as stone, weathered steel, and wood in order to achieve a visual harmony with the natural landscape and to blend in with the historic architectural and landscape features.

Management Action 5: Continue to manage visual resources through special designations and policies. To protect these resources the BLM has withdrawn lands along the Alpine Loop from mineral entry in the 1986 RAMP. The BLM designated the American Basin ACEC to protect scenic quality on this 1600 acre area and manages vehicle recreation in a way that reduces the chances for user created routes to compromise scenic quality. Finally, firewood cutting for commercial or domestic use would continue to be prohibited along the Alpine Loop to protect the visual quality of that corridor.

Other Resources

***Goal*:** Maintain the integrity of other resource values in the Project Area by managing recreation use in a way that minimizes the impacts caused by visitors. These resource values include soil, water, vegetation, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife, historical and archeological sites, air quality, grazing, ACECs and the natural soundscape. Specific management actions to support this general goal are listed below.

Rationale: BLM retains the authority to make allocations that support the overall management prescription for an area or zone. Providing opportunities and avoiding unnecessary and undue degradation to the environment is all considered during the planning process.

Management Action 1: Comply with the cultural resource standard operating procedures when conducting any recreation management activities in or near cultural sites.

Management Action 2: Identify incentives and options for willing landowners to protect cultural resources located on their private property. If possible, work with landowners and local governments to create these incentives or options.

Management Action 3*:* Avoid contamination of water sources, including municipal water supplies, from recreation associated activities.

Management Action 4: Look for opportunities to improve water quality to help ensure healthy fisheries within the Project Area.

Management Action 5: Require weed free hay to be used by all livestock users on public lands to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive weeds.

Management Action 6: Known weed infestations should be treated, to the extent that budget and staffing allows, to reduce the potential for recreation activities to spread seeds to other parts of public land.

Management Action 7: Recreation or other projects that disturb the soil should be managed to reduce the likelihood that invasive weeds could get started on the site.

Management Action 8: Reduce conflicts between grazing and recreation by working with livestock operators to exclude or minimize the time that livestock spend in and around popular recreation sites and facilities (e.g., restrooms, trailheads, campgrounds). If possible, include such provisions in Allotment Management Plans when revised or updated.

Management Action 9: Coordinate the annual release and collection of domestic sheep to be sure it does not occur on weekends or over holidays during July and August to reduce conflicts with recreationists during busy times.

Management Action 10: Livestock operators may be granted periodic access to areas not open to the general public under the terms of their grazing permit to maintain facilities and access sheep camps. These access routes should be managed to reduce their visibility and prevent the general public from venturing onto these routes. The BLM will work with livestock operators to ensure that sheep camps are 500 feet from historic structures and require livestock operators to educate their employees on the laws protecting cultural resources, which includes prohibiting the use of wood from historic structures as firewood.

3.2.5 Recreation Management – Facilities, Signs, and Interpretation and Education

The discussion that follows identifies additional goals, objectives, and management actions for facilities and signs in the Project Area (see Figure 3.2).

Goal*:* Work in partnership with Federal and state agencies, local communities and organizations to provide facilities (e.g., campgrounds, restrooms) and signs on public lands that support recreation goals, are in character with desired settings, help ensure public safety, meet reasonable visitor needs and help reduce resource impacts.

Rationale: Recreation is a valid use of public lands. The extent, location, and allocation of uses are within BLM's authority to manage in a manner consistent with multiple use and sustained yield.

Facilities

Management Action 1: In an effort to protect natural and cultural resources within the Project Area and provide economic opportunities in the local communities (i.e., Silverton, Lake City and Ouray), commercial facilities and the services associated with them would be located in these communities rather than on public lands, and they should be managed by the private sector rather than by the BLM.

Management Action 2: Continue to manage the BLM visitor contact station in Lake City in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and USFS.

Management Action 3: Continue to manage the BLM visitor contact station at the Silverton Public Lands Center in cooperation with the SJMA and USFS.

Management Action 4: Work in partnership with the USFS to continue to provide informational and educational materials to the Visitor Information Centers in Ouray, Montrose and Durango for distribution to visitors.

Management Action 5: Work in cooperation with local communities (e.g., Chambers of Commerce), counties and other stakeholder groups to identify and prioritize the need for additional facilities.

Management Action 6: All facilities would be designed to be unobtrusive and to meet the visual resource objectives contained within the existing RMPs for both of the BLM Gunnison and Columbine Field Offices.

Management Action 7: As possible, facilities would be built and maintained in a manner that is consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968.

Management Action 8: Maintain facilities using the following guidance:

- provide regular cleaning and maintenance at all developed facilities during the peak use and shoulder seasons;
- utilize permanent and seasonal employees and/or volunteers for maintenance, but explore the possibility of other partnerships that can expand BLM's capability to carry out maintenance tasks; and
- provide for repair, reconditioning, and replacement of facilities, prioritizing those problems that pose a safety threat to the public or are creating unacceptable resource impacts.

Signs

Management Action 1: Maintain an inventory of all signs in the Project Area, and regularly evaluate their necessity and effectiveness.

Management Action 2: Work in cooperation with local communities, counties (e.g., roads departments) and other stakeholder groups to develop and maintain an effective sign program using the following criteria:

- provide adequate directional signs at intersections, junctions, and turnoffs;
- provide informational or interpretive signs located at major points of interest (e.g., historical sites), and recreational facilities (e.g., restrooms, trailheads);
- provide regulatory signs necessary to inform the public of travel management and other (e.g., camping) restrictions;
- provide boundary signs to identify, where appropriate, the boundary between public and private lands, as well as the boundary of Wilderness and WSAs, and fishing easements;
- provide educational signs targeted at improving the public's understanding and stewardship of their public lands and resource values ; and
- provide safety signs to identify and educate the public about hazardous areas or conditions.

Management Action 3: Maintenance as part of this sign program would include:

- inspecting the condition of signs and sign posts at the end of each use season, ordering replacements over the winter and replacing them at the beginning of the next use season, as necessary; and
- replacing signs and posts as soon as possible in the event of vandalism, theft, or accidental breakage.

Management Action 4: To avoid cluttering natural landscapes with too many signs, use only signs that are essential to achieving overall management goals. All signs would be designed to be unobtrusive and to meet the visual resource objectives contained within the existing RMPs for both the BLM Gunnison and Columbine Field Offices.

Interpretation and Education

Guidelines for managing these activities are discussed under Section 3.2.7, Recreation Information, Education, and Marketing.

3.2.6 Recreation Administration

The discussion that follows identifies goals, objectives, and management actions for recreation administration in the Project Area.

Outfitters and Special Events

Objective: Manage commercial outfitters and special events to encourage safe and professional services are offered to the public, and to minimize impacts to resources and other visitors.

Management Action 1: Continue to authorize and monitor a variety of commercial recreation activities to provide essential service for the public. These activities could include hunting, fishing, rafting, jeep tours, backpacking, horse packing, Heli-skiing, rock climbing, snowmobiling and more. The number of outfitters

permitted, the areas they would be allowed to use, and the number of service days they would be granted may be regulated to maintain desirable experiences, avoid resource impacts, avoid overcrowding and reduce conflicts with other visitors.

Management Action 2: The approval of an SRP is at the discretion of the Field Manager for each office. Only approve proposals that are submitted 180 days prior to the planned event and are in agreement with management goals in the Project Area, and that are unlikely to cause undesirable resource impacts or conflicts with other visitors. Special stipulations may be added to an SRP to ensure operations are conducted in a manner that reduces potential problems. All operating guides are required to have annually approved operating plans with stipulations specific to their operations.

Management Action 3: Monitor all SRP's to ensure that they are following the terms of the permit and additional stipulations that are attached to the permit.

Management Action 4: Outfitters that offer scenic or historic jeep tours would be required to get an SRP even if their use occurs primarily on County Roads.

Management Action 5: Businesses that rent jeeps, ATVs, horses or snowmobiles to visitors would not be required to obtain an SRP as long as they do not offer services on public land. BLM would encourage these businesses to offer accurate information to their clients about the rules that apply to vehicle use in the area to avoid violations or inappropriate impacts. Ethics and responsibility messages would also be encouraged. To the extent possible, BLM would help provide appropriate materials for distribution to their customers.

Management Action 6: Special events such as jeep jamborees that organize tours in the area would be limited to group sizes of no more than ten vehicles in a group and spaced out one hour apart to avoid crowding in high use areas.

Management Action 7: All permittees would be strongly encouraged to incorporate interpretive/educational components into their trips. To further this effort, a training program would be developed to assist outfitters and guides in understanding and presenting Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace, local history, cultural site etiquette and other topics that would help them get these ethics messages across to their clients. Additionally, the BLM or partners, such as the SJMA CSSP, should provide periodic training opportunities to the permittees and their employees on appropriate and sensitive site visitation etiquette and accurate historical information to provide to their clients.

Management Action 8: No SRPs would be granted for air tours over the Project Area, except for heliskiing in the winter time from December 1 to April 30.

Management Action 9: The maximum group size for outfitted activities in designated Wilderness or WSAs would be 25 heartbeats. A heartbeat includes clients, guides and any animal within the group (e.g., horses, llamas or dogs).

Management Action 10: The current use by the general public and existing outfitters on popular trails to the Fourteeners is already enough that it is difficult to maintain the social settings managed for in these areas. Avoid increasing the number of social encounters on popular trails to the Fourteeners by limiting the amount of additional commercial use authorized on these trails.

Management Action 11: Withing the Redcloud ACEC, camping above 12,000 feet would not be authorized for commercial outfitters and would be discouraged by the general public to avoid danger from lightning on the exposed tundra, and to avoid potential impacts to endangered species habitat.

Competitive Events

***Objective*:** Consider competitive events on public land if they are in agreement with management objectives, can be conducted safely, minimize impacts to resources, and don’t cause conflicts with other visitors.

Management Action 1: Competitive race events using motorized vehicles would not be authorized anywhere in the Project Area.

Management Action 2: Events (e.g., poker runs) using motorized or mechanized vehicles that are not timed and do not encourage participants to drive or ride fast may be considered.

Management Action 3: Competitive events not using motorized vehicles (e.g., trail running) could be allowed if the activity is consistent all management objectives. These types of events would generally be permitted only on designated roads and trails.

Management Action 4: Encourage organizers of competitive events to schedule them during shoulder seasons (i.e., June and mid-August through September) to reduce crowding during the peak use season (i.e., July to mid-August), and to bolster business for the local communities during slow times of the year.

Fees

***Objective*:** Apply use fees at established facilities (e.g., campgrounds), when necessary, to ensure sufficient funds are available to maintain and operate them safely.

Management Action 1: Existing use fees currently charged at developed campgrounds (e.g., Mill Creek, The Gate and Red Bridge Campgrounds) would continue to be charged. Fees would be reevaluated periodically to ensure that they are at or near fair market value.

Management Action 2: A fee system for the entire Project Area would not be developed without first conducting a feasibility analysis in partnership with local communities and the USFS.

Dogs

***Objective*:** Reduce conflicts between dogs, and recreationists, and wildlife.

Management Action 1: Encourage owners to leash their dog(s) or control them by voice command.

3.2.7 Recreation Information, Education, and Marketing

The BLM works with its partners in developing the vision and role of marketing for the Project Area. For the purposes of this plan, recreation marketing is defined as *communication with the potential recreationist to match recreation opportunities and setting character conditions with the recreationists' preference for activities, outcomes, and areas that are consistent and appropriate as defined in the RAMP management goals*. Marketing is used as a tool to guide prospective visitors to the areas that are managed to provide the experience and benefit opportunities that they seek. The BLM does not anticipate a heavy emphasis for aggressive promotion campaigns however, the BLM may participate with its partners to attract new target audiences or redirect visitor use in ways that are in agreement with plan goals.

Goal*:* Provide easily accessible information to visitors that will help them find and enjoy recreation opportunities and experiences, learn more about their public land resources, understand regulations and serve as stewards to the area.

Rationale: The recreating public expects information available in a variety of formats including written and Web based. By providing information to the public they become active partners in managing natural resources on public lands.

Management Action 1: Cooperation – work with community partners to develop, produce, fund and distribute a variety of appropriate information and marketing materials. Among others, these community partners would include county and municipal governments, the Silverton, Ouray, and Lake City Chambers of Commerce, visitor center staff, interpretive associations, the Alpine Triangle Recreation Task Force, various business owners and organizations (e.g., Animas Stakeholders Group), special interest groups, land development groups, the Colorado Byway Commission, and the USFS. In general this collaborative management partnership would

work toward developing and reviewing information and marketing materials to ensure consistency with the management objectives and framework identified above, and to ensure that information is accurate.

Management Action 2: Scope – information and marketing materials should typically focus on the entire Project Area (e.g., *Alpine Explorer*); however, in some cases RMZ-specific information materials that highlight particular opportunities in an RMZ may be offered.

Management Action 3: Audiences **–** information and marketing materials should be suitable for the wide spectrum of recreationists (i.e., novice to expert) that frequent the area. Monitor visitor demographics to determine if information and marketing materials should be revised to reach new users (e.g., providing materials in languages other than English).

Management Action 4: Media – use a variety of media to distribute messages including maps, brochures, signs, interpretive center displays, phone, fax, email, interpersonal communication, audio, video, and web based information. Consider such factors as effectiveness, usability, durability and affordability when determining which media should be used. Ensure funding is available to sustain the production and distribution of media by selling items (e.g., maps, brochures) to visitors, developing partnerships, seeking grants, etc.

Management Action 5: General Messages – convey the following "general messages" through a variety of media:

- **Information** – Help visitors understand what recreation opportunities are available and where to find those opportunities. Include suggestions for best time of day and year to do them, and how to do them safely.

- **Rules and Regulations** – Inform visitors of the guidelines they must follow while recreating, and, if possible, explain why a rule or regulation is necessary to encourage better compliance.

- **Education and Interpretation** – Teach visitors about natural and cultural history to improve their experience, and create a better understanding and appreciation of the area. Craft this message with the goal of providing the general public with the information they need to become better stewards of their public lands.

- **Promotion and Advertising** – Attract visitors interested in the types of activities, experiences and benefits provided for in the three RMZs, and that would support maintaining or achieving prescribed recreation settings. Levels of visitation during the peak use season (July to mid-August) are high enough to not place a high priority on attracting more visitors during this time. If additional visitors are desired, then promotion efforts should be focused on shoulder seasons in June and mid August through September. Adding visitors during these seasons would offer better experiences for visitors and help broaden the business season for business owners in surrounding communities. As facilities are also underutilized during the winter season, the BLM will cooperate with local businesses to attract more visitors during this time of year if it could be done without negatively impacting resources.

Management Action 6: Specific Messages – convey the following activity-specific messages through a variety of media:

- **Motorized Vehicle Recreation –** Develop and distribute a variety of media aimed at educating visitors about requirements prescribed under the travel management network. Use of existing programs such as Tread Lightly and Stay the Trail will be incorporated as appropriate.

- **Fishing –** Develop and distribute information informing anglers of fishing opportunities in the Project Area. This information could be in the form of photocopied handouts, printed brochures, maps in visitor centers and web based maps and information. Visitor center staff who are not familiar with the sport should also be oriented enough about fishing to be able to offer good advice to their visitors. Along with information about where to go for the type of fishing experience they are looking for; include information on regulations related to fishing, the best flies or fishing techniques to use in this area and the ethics messages that encourage anglers to take good care of the river environment.

- **Hunting –** Strive to educate and encourage hunters to reduce the impacts associated with their activity. Convey messages about Tread Lightly, Stay the Trail, and Leave No Trace through brochures, hunter education classes, web based information, newspaper articles, and personal communication. Offer information to help hunters find legal access routes to hunting areas to reduce the chances for trespass on private land and reduce the creation of illegal vehicle routes.

- **Boating –** Inform and educate boaters about the need to be respectful of private lands and landowners to reduce potential conflicts between them. At all places where boaters access the river, post information on the boating opportunities that are available as well as educational messages about how to reduce impacts on river resources, and reduce conflicts with private landowners. Similar information may be made available to boaters in web based information or brochures.

- **Cultural Resources** – Develop and expand the information and education materials available to help visitors locate, understand and appreciate historical and archeological resources in the Project Area. This should be done using a variety of media including maps, visitor guides, brochures, signs, web based information, personal communication and visitor center information. All these materials should include key messages about protecting and preserving cultural resources.

- **Mountain Biking –** Promotional efforts should consider the possibility of promoting opportunities for mountain biking tours on the Alpine Loop during the fall shoulder season (September).

- **Camping –** Produce visitor information materials to inform the public about opportunities for camping in both developed and undeveloped sites, along with information about the principles of Leave No Trace camping.

- **Rock Climbing –** Information for climbers may be provided in appropriate locations, especially at climbing sites, and should focus on safety, reducing impacts to resources, and avoiding trespassing on adjacent private land.

- **Geocaching –** Information on geocaching should strongly encourage people establishing caches on public lands to use natural or historical features rather than leaving manmade articles.

- **Horse Use –** Visitor information distributed for the Project Area should include appropriate opportunities for recreation stock use. It would also include messages about low impact techniques to reduce the resource damage that can come from this activity.

- **Snowmobiling –** Maps, brochures, and trailhead information for snowmobilers in this area would include information on the location of groomed trails, safety, how to get along with other trail users and how to reduce impacts to wildlife.

- **Cross-country Skiing –** Information and education should be provided for skiers about appropriate trails or areas for their use, suggestions for reducing conflicts with other user groups, advice on winter safety, and tips about reducing the impacts of their activity.

- **Ice Climbing –** Once acceptable ice climbing opportunities have been identified consider working with the Chambers of Commerce to include these sites on visitor information materials. If sites have unresolved concerns they should not be included in these information materials.

- **Noise –** Visitor information and education materials would include guidelines to encourage recreationists to reduce the level and extent of noise generated impacts on wildlife, other recreationists, and local residents from their activities.

- **Interpretation and Education –** Continue to follow the guidance provided under the Interpretive Plan for the Alpine Loop, and implement this plan as funding and staffing allow. The Interpretive Plan should be

updated periodically to be sure efforts continue to focus on interpretive and educational activities that the public enjoy, as well as those that help reduce resource impacts.

- Maintain existing interpretive sites.
- Continue to cooperate with local schools to offer educational programs and field trips for students.
- Consider using educational programs such as heritage tour stops on the Alpine Loop to attract visitors during shoulder seasons when additional business would help local communities.

Management Action 7: Develop, review, update, and distribute the materials discussed below to achieve management goals. Continue to produce the following brochures updating them periodically to be sure the information is correct:

- The Alpine Loop two-fold lure piece (free distribution)
- The Alpine Explorer (sale piece)
- The Alpine Loop, ATV's and Unlicensed Motorcycles Summer Travel Routes (free distribution);
- Guided Tour of Animas Forks and the Sound Democrat Mill (sale pieces)
- Alpine Wildflowers brochure (sale piece)
- Wildlife of the Alpine Loop

These materials would be distributed through visitor contact stations in Lake City, Ouray, and Silverton, area businesses, Chambers of Commerce, and BLM field offices in Gunnison, Montrose, Silverton and Durango, Colorado.

- Develop a brochure similar to the Summer ATV piece for winter visitors to cover both motorized (e.g., snowmobiles), and non-motorized (e.g. skiing, snowshoeing) activities. This brochure would include messages on recreation opportunities, winter safety and minimizing impacts to wildlife. The BLM would consider developing separate brochures for Lake City and Silverton to highlight winter recreation opportunities in close proximity to these towns.
- Develop a single website for the Project Area including information contained in the existing publications and brochures discussed above, as well as any additional information that needs to be distributed to visitors in a timely manner to ensure their safety, and protection of natural and cultural resources. Work closely with community partners to develop this website, and provide links to it from their individual websites, if appropriate. This website should include information for visitors planning to visit, and/or learn more about the cultural and natural resources in the area.
- Information and maps for designated trails would be provided as free photocopied handouts available at visitor contact stations.
- Examine the feasibility of providing educational programs on area history, ecology, and resource protection at established camp grounds (e.g., Mill Creek) or other appropriate venues along the Alpine Loop or in local communities.
- Offer the opportunity for visitor center staff, outfitters and guides, and employees of local businesses to meet with BLM staff, learn about the resources in the Project Area, understand the importance of protecting these resources to ensure a sustainable tourism destination, and become familiar with the key messages they should be conveying to their clients. At the same time BLM would listen to questions and concerns brought forward by these individuals and groups, and learn from their perspectives.
- Training for seasonal employees and volunteers working for the agencies should include focused discussions of common problems on public lands, the messages BLM wants to get across to the public as they are contacted in the field and the best way to deal with violations if they are found.
- Work with web page authors like Trailsource, guidebook authors and others who promote recreation use in the Project Area to encourage them to include accurate information in their write-ups. To the extent possible, encourage them to tell their readers that the shoulder seasons would be less crowded and more enjoyable for them. They should also be encouraged to include ethics and responsibility messages in their materials.

Management Action 8: Work with local clubs, Chambers of Commerce, USFS and others to actively promote winter recreation activities (e.g., snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, ice climbing) as a means of drawing additional business to local communities during the slow winter season.

3.2.8 Recreation Monitoring

The BLM would continue to periodically monitor and document a variety of factors to evaluate whether management goals are being achieved. The discussion that follows identifies goals, objectives, and management actions for recreation monitoring in the Project Area.

Goal: Periodically monitor and document a variety of factors to evaluate whether management goals are being achieved.

Rationale: Monitoring is required as part of the iterative planning process used by BLM to ensure assumptions used during the NEPA process are valid and reasonable. Monitoring allows feedback and the use of adaptive management so that resources are better protected.

Management Action 1: Develop a monitoring strategy that uses key indicators to evaluate social, environmental, and administrative standards and documents findings (Appendix B).

Management Action 2: Continue to work with a variety of partners including the counties, county historical societies, SJMA, Colorado Historical Society, and willing private land owners to assist with identifying, monitoring and preserving heritage tourism sites. The CSSP in San Juan County is an excellent example of how this collaboration may work, and the recreation program should explore ways to assist the Cultural Resources program and BLM partners to develop and implement a similar program in Hinsdale County as a means of documenting, protecting, and monitoring archaeological and historic resources throughout the Project Area. This program would target heritage tourism sites on public, county, and private lands within the Project Area. Such programs would work with these volunteers to complete such tasks as site mapping, structure documentation, site monitoring, and stabilization. This program would primarily target heritage tourism sites on public and county lands though cooperative projects with willing property owners could be considered.

Management Action 3: Assess and managing vehicle-use in the Project Area applying the following monitoring strategy:

- install an appropriate number of traffic counters on major roads and trails to identify changes and trends in vehicle use;
- periodically tally vehicle types to capture the relative numbers of each vehicle class used in the Project Area;
- work with the County Sheriffs to review accident statistics annually to identify trends, changes and issues of concern; and
- monitor to detect areas where vehicles are getting off the designated roads and trails.

Management Action 4: Implement the monitoring described as part of the RMZ-specific discussion above. One measurement used to determine if BLM and its partners are successful in providing these experiences and benefits is that by the year 2013 the mean (average) response in a survey of visitors would result in at least a "moderate" (i.e., 3.0 on a probability scale where 1= not at all, 2= somewhat, 3= moderate, 4= complete/total) attainment of the experiences and benefits listed below. In addition, conduct monitoring of physical, social and administrative conditions to ensure that the settings described below are being managed for. Monitoring of physical, social and administrative conditions would be carried out as staff and funding allow. Priorities would be placed on resources or situations that pose the greatest threat to critical resources and values in the area. These could include monitoring impacts at historical sites with the help of site stewards, evaluating impacts to Threatened & Endangered species, detecting infestations of noxious weeds and ensuring that Wilderness and WSAs remain in a natural condition.

3.2.9 Recreation Collaboration

The discussion that follows identifies goals and management actions for furthering the collaborative management of recreation resources in the Project Area. For decades, the BLM has formed successful relationships with local communities to develop a shared vision for recreation and heritage resource management in the Project Area. This collaborative approach has grown over time, in proportion to the demand for recreation in the Project Area. Recognizing the importance of this approach, a driving force behind the RAMP would be to determine and pursue ways to sustain and further develop these partnerships.

Public lands are used by and provide benefits for a variety of individuals, groups and entities. Under the RAMP, the BLM would continue to seek input and foster cooperation with varied constituencies to achieve the best management for public lands. Many organizations recognize the benefits related to public lands and work with the BLM to maintain or improve those opportunities. This cooperation would assist the BLM to execute a collaborative vision for public land management and would contribute labor, funding, equipment, and materials toward mutually beneficial projects.

Over the years, the BLM has worked in partnership with several entities including local towns and counties, their chambers of commerce, historical societies, commercial outfitters, and the Colorado State Scenic and Historic Byways Committee. Furthermore, a variety of non-profit or recreation advocacy groups have been active partners including the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, San Juan Mountain Association, Alpine Triangle Recreation Task Force, Western Colorado Interpretive Association, Colorado State OHV Fund, State Snowmobile Fund, Colorado Mountain Club, Colorado Trail Foundation, Outward Bound, the Hardrock 100 racers, Mountain Studies Institute, and the Ghost Town Club.

In future years, the BLM will maintain and improve these efforts to collaborate and work closely with its partners at a variety of levels. Specific opportunities to enhance collaboration between the BLM, local communities, and other agencies are highlighted throughout this RAMP in each section. Examples of BLM efforts include the actions to work with communities to identify trail networks, resolve complex land ownership issues and continue R&PP leases. Additionally, the RAMP includes efforts to work with outfitters and guides, to provide climbing areas and winter activities, and to provide opportunities and other concentrated use areas for recreationists.

***Goal**:* Work cooperatively with Federal, state, and local governments and agencies, non-profit organizations, and private entities to achieve the goals and management objectives contained in this RAMP.

Rationale: The BLM does not have adequate resources to carry out all the management that this area needs. By working cooperatively with local Communities and Counties we help ensure that their perspectives are considered in public land management and gather resources and funding to carry out management.

> ***Management Action 1:*** Look for opportunities to build, maintain, and improve partnerships with agencies, groups and individuals that have an interest in recreation and recreation resource management in the Project Area. The goal of these partnerships should be to discuss and build consensus on strategies for management, pool scarce resources, and work cooperatively to carry out priority actions to achieve mutually beneficial goals.
>
> ***Management Action 2:*** Work toward entering into cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations (e.g., Mountain Studies Institute), citizens and user groups that have adequate resources and expertise to assist in the management of public lands in the Project Area. Assistance could include, among other things, resource monitoring, site cleanups, and construction of authorized projects.
>
> ***Management Action 3:*** Consider, where appropriate, contracting with private sector businesses, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or State and local agencies to accomplish essential studies, monitoring, or project development.

3.3 Management Unique to Each Recreation Management Zone

The discussion that follows identifies additional management activities under the topics of recreation management, and administration. These management actions are specific to one of the three RMZs in the Project Area, and further support the goals and objectives previously identified.

3.3.1 Specific Management for RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry

Adding and Removing Roads and Trails in the Future

Management Action 1: New and existing trails in RMZ-1 - Alpine Backcountry would be generally managed for non-motorized uses during the summer, spring, and fall (e.g., hiking, backpacking and horseback riding). During the winter the Alpine Backcountry would be managed the same with the addition of one permitted heli-sking operation.

Facilities and Signs

Management Action 1: Limited signs could be allowed for resource protection or public safety. Small directional signs may be needed, but these would be kept to an absolute minimum and would be uncommon.

Management Action 2: A sign would be installed along Silver Creek Trail, where it descends from Redcloud Peak, educating visitors to stay on the trail to avoid endangered species habitat located in the area.

Management Action 3: Trails would be periodically maintained to provide access for recreation but no additional water, restrooms, or other visitor amenities or facilities would be provided unless they are necessary to protect resource values.

Resource Protection

Management Action 1: In order to protect potential habitat for the Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly no ground disturbing activities, associated with recreation management, would be allowed in snow willow patches above 12,500 feet in elevation.

Recreation Administration

Campfires

Management Action 1: Campfires would not be allowed above 12,000 feet in the alpine tundra within the Redcloud Peak ACEC. Where campfires are allowed the use of fire pans or fuel stoves would be encouraged and dead and down wood could be collected in areas where campfires are allowed. Camping/campfires would not be authorized within 100 feet of historic resources.

3.3.2 Specific Management for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads

Recreation Management- Winter Use

Management Action 1: Work in partnership with Hinsdale County to formally develop man-made ice climbing opportunities outside the town of Lake City on the south side of Henson Creek canyon as far up as the Henson Creek ATV Staging Area (~0.5 mile). Within this area, multiple ice climbing routes could be created. Small trails, mostly on snow could be allowed to access these routes. Parking for this use would be primarily along the County Road. The development of specific areas for parking would only be considered when the capacity of roadside parking is regularly exceeded. Informational signs may be placed to let climbers know what opportunities are available and to encourage safe and responsible use of the area. A restroom would be considered to serve the ice climbing area if the level of use starts to create sanitation problems. Ice climbing would be allowed under the terms of a letter of authorization as long as no fees are charged. Insurance coverage that names the BLM as additionally insured must be in force before the area can be used each year. If fees were charged in the future then commercial guiding and climbing activities would be authorized under a Special Recreation Use Permit.

Management Action 2: Work in partnership with San Juan County to formally recognize and improve the existing parking area near Eureka ice climbing area north of Silverton. Within this area, multiple ice climbing routes would be recognized. Construction of small spur trails could be allowed to access these routes, along with the parking area or other facilities. Trails would not be paved. A single parking area would be constructed to accommodate up to twelve vehicles. This would include using natural barriers to formally delineate the parking area, along with appropriate signage. Parking areas would not be paved. A temporary restroom may be installed during the winter season (i.e., December through February).

Facilities, Signs, Interpretation and Education

Management Action 1: Facilities and signs would be added as necessary for visitor use, safety, and the protection of sensitive resources. Facilities would include rustic campgrounds, picnic areas, and restrooms.

Management Action 2: Develop a designated camping area at Cunningham Gulch. This camping area would include up to 10 designated camping areas that could accommodate 2-3 vehicles. One larger area would be designated for group camping that accommodates 8-10 vehicles. A universal access vault restroom and picnic tables would be provided at these sites. Most of these sites would be located in areas already used for camping. Natural barriers would be used to formally delineate the parking areas, along with appropriate signage. Parking areas would not be paved.

Management Action 3: A designated camping area would be developed in close proximity to the Eureka townsite. However, this facility would only be developed if San Juan County partners with BLM toward funding its construction and long-term maintenance.

Management Action 4: Information kiosks approximately 3- by 5-foot panels would be located at the four main access points to the Alpine Loop from the towns of Lake City, Ouray, and Silverton. Information at these kiosks would include travel management restrictions, interpretation of cultural and natural resources, Leave No Trace and other land use ethics, and visitor safety information.

Management Action 5: Examine the necessity of installing a universal access vault restroom near the entrance to American Basin. Until a restroom is installed at this location or it is determined not to be feasible, construct a sign at the existing restroom in Burrows Park informing visitors that it is the last restroom before reaching American Basin.

Recreation Administration

Campfires

Management Action 1: Campfires would be allowed within this zone. Visitors would be encouraged to camp in existing campsites and use existing fire rings, fuel stoves, or fire pans as practical Camping/campfires would not be authorized within 100 feet of historic resources.

3.3.3 Specific Management for RMZ 3 – Animas/Lake Fork River Corridor

Whitewater Boating

***Objective 1*:** Manage boating recreation in river corridors to minimize impacts to the integrity of soil, riparian vegetation, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife and water resources. Any surface disturbing activity, such as boat ramps, put-ins, or access, may not be created without specific authorization from the BLM, and after site-specific environmental analysis has been completed

Management Action 1: Look for an opportunity to identify and secure a legal put-in for boaters in or near Lake City that includes some parking and reasonable access to the river.

Management Action 2: Improve boater access to the river at the Devil's Creek Bridge area by clearing a path down to a suitable launch site on the river.

Management Action 3: Improve boater access to the river at or near the Red Bridge Campground. This could be accomplished by improving the current site or developing a new put-in facility upstream of the campground.

Management Action 4: Construct a put-in for boaters and kayakers along the Animas River. This access point to the river would be located in close proximity to the railroad, and would use natural or constructed barriers to formally delineate the parking area, along with appropriate signage.

Management Action 5: The BLM would conduct periodic patrols during the early boating season to determine if there are obstructions on private land that might lead to trespass if boaters portage around these obstacles. Gather information from boaters that have traversed the river sections for updates on current conditions. Information gathered about obstructions or hazards would be posted at the pertinent put-in points to alert visitors of possible problems.

Management Action 6: Continue to work with volunteers during National Rivers Week in May to conduct cleanup, rehabilitation or improvement of the river and riparian corridors.

Management Action 7: Work cooperatively with the Colorado River Outfitters Association to educate boaters and/or improve the river and riparian corridors under the existing Memorandum of Understanding that BLM has signed with them.

Management Action 9: If fences come down and legal access is once again established on Section 3 of the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River, BLM would be open to requests from commercial outfitters to use public land to access those stretches of river.

Management Action 10: Make reasonable attempts to inform the general public about current access situations on the rivers BLM manages, and encourage them to follow the law and avoid trespassing. On rivers where public access is still allowed, continue to encourage commercial outfitters and private boaters to treat private land with respect to keep these conflicts from becoming widespread.

Management Action 11: Encourage future channel or habitat improvements that are planned for boatable waters to be designed in a way that ensures relatively easy access and passage by boaters.

Travel Management and Access

Management Action 1: Maintain and improve public access to fishing and boating opportunities, whenever possible.

Facilities and Signs

Management Action 1: Facilities and signs would be added as necessary for visitor use, safety, and the protection of sensitive resources. Facilities would include rustic campgrounds, picnic areas, interpretive sites and restrooms.

Management Action 2: In cooperation with state and county agencies, BLM would seek to augment and improve public fishing opportunities by appropriately signing existing public land and public fishing easements.

Resource Protection

Management Action 1: Work in cooperation with CDOW to evaluate the need to institute a mandatory catch and release program.

Management Action 2: Comply with conservation measures for wintering bald eagles required by the USFWS.

Recreation Administration

Campfires

Management Action 1: Campfires would be allowed within this zone. Visitors would be encouraged to camp in existing campsites and use existing fire rings, fuel stoves, or fire pans as practical. Camping/campfires would not be authorized within 100 feet of historic resources.

4.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

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APPENDIX A

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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APPENDIX A

Management Action Implementation Schedule

Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS (Section 3.2.1)						
Motorized Recreation						
Install trail signage to clearly indicate authorized travel.			X		BLM & Counties	Medium
Provide maps at kiosks; partner with user groups to distribute maps and responsible riding ethic materials to users and the public.	X				BLM & Counties, Tread Lightly, Stay the Trail	High
Travel Management Network						
Designate and sign 16.4 miles of existing roads and trails as open to different types of motorized and non-motorized public access as illustrated in Table 3.7 and shown in Figure 2-2.				X	BLM	Medium
Recommend 15 miles of Cement Creek and Corkscrew Roads to the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Committee to become part of the Alpine Loop (Figure 2-1).			X		BLM & Byway committee members	Medium
Evaluate all new single track trails proposed for other uses (e.g., foot, horse) outside of Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas for their potential and suitability for use by mountain bikes.		X			BLM & mountain bikers	Low
Manage new and existing trails in RMZ-1 - Alpine Backcountry exclusively for non-motorized use.		X			BLM	Medium
Transportation Facilities						
Monitor existing ATV staging area at Henson Creek; expand facility if demand regularly exceeds capacity.	X				BLM & Hinsdale County	Low
Maintain and improve, as necessary, the existing ATV staging areas at Henson Creek, Lake Fork of the Gunnison River, and town of Eureka along the Alpine Loop.	X				BLM	Medium
Expand parking at Williams Creek Trailhead to accommodate up to six vehicles. Prior to implementation of this proposed action, all Forest Service-particular environmental requirements, including MIS surveys, would be completed.	X				Full cooperation with GNF.	
Expand parking at the American Basin Trailhead to accommodate up to 15 vehicles, with special attention to mitigation of visual impacts the expansion.			X		BLM	Low
Develop designated trailheads and associated parking areas at the entry points to Grouse Gulch and Cunningham Gulch Trails.					BLM	Medium

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Designate access routes and parking at various undeveloped campsites locations in the Project Area and delineate pullouts and parking areas to prevent them from increasing in size and unnecessarily effecting resources.	X				BLM	Medium
Monitor undeveloped campsites for impacts to cultural resources and close campsites that are impacting cultural resources or are within 150 feet of historic structures.	X				BLM	High
Management, Maintenance and Monitoring of the Transportation System						
Management						
Install barriers or signs at the end of designated roads.			X		BLM & Counties	Medium
Block and/or rehabilitate closed roads and trails, as funding permits, with the most appropriate site-specific strategy.			X		BLM	Medium
Prioritize enforcement of the travel management network by keeping all types of use (e.g., street legal motorized vehicle, bicycle, ATV) on designated roads and trails.	X				BLM	Medium
Pursue additional funding and/or partnerships to improve management.	X				BLM & Counties	High
Work cooperatively with county and other agency law enforcement officials to increase patrols along the Alpine Loop during the high use season (i.e., July and August), during special events (e.g., Colorado 500), and in areas experiencing high levels of unauthorized, cross-country travel.	X				BLM	Medium
Train law enforcement personnel, permanent staff, seasonal employees, and volunteers who work in the Project Area about the management goals, and rules and regulations that apply.	X				BLM & Counties	High
Encourage law enforcement personnel to attend the Archaeological Resource Protection Training Program.	X				BLM	High
Manage roads and trails on public land that are not designated as open to the public to minimize resource impacts and prevent their unauthorized use.	X				BLM	Medium
Work with the Forest Service to cooperatively manage trails located on both BLM and Forest Service lands, share information on trail conditions, and coordinate trail maintenance activities.	X				BLM	Medium
Evaluate the feasibility of building and maintaining a limited number of trails in the urban interface to Silverton and Lake City. To the extent possible, connect these trails with existing or future systems of trails surrounding these towns.	X				BLM	Medium
Maintenance						
Periodically maintain the transportation management network be to ensure reasonable public access, minimize resource impacts, and reduce safety hazards.	X				BLM & Counties	High
Monitoring						
Encourage all permanent, seasonal, and volunteer recreation staff working in the Project Area to monitor road and trail conditions as they carry out their daily work activities.	X				BLM	High

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Maintain regular communication with county road crews, visitor center staff, outfitters and other sources of information to stay informed about current road and trail conditions.	X				BLM & Counties & Visitor Centers	Medium
Provide backcountry patrols to protect WSAs consistent with the BLM's Interim Management Policy (IMP) until legislation takes effect to change their status.	X				BLM	High
Improve patrol and enforcement presence in the Project Area.	X				BLM & Counties	High
Provide support for the SJMA CSSP to monitor the condition of key historic/heritage tourism resources and those along vehicle transportation routes and assist where needed with preservation efforts at these sites.	X				BLM & Historic Societies	Medium
Winter Transportation System						
Work cooperatively with such groups as the Continental Divide Snowmobile Club in Lake City and the Silverton Snowmobile Club in Silverton to allow them to groom authorized routes. .	X				BLM	High
Monitor the winter transportation system periodically to ensure that it meets recreation goals for the area, and to ensure that inappropriate impacts to other resources are minimized or eliminated.	X				BLM & Snowmobile Clubs	Medium
Maintain and improve partnerships with cross-country skiing organizations to address such issues as trail grooming, safety, and skier education.	X				BLM & Nordic Skiers	Low
Work with the snowmobile community to educate snowmobile operators on wilderness restrictions and boundaries.	X				BLM & Snowmobile Clubs	High
Patrol the boundaries of designated wilderness and WSAs to identify and resolve illegal snowmobile incursions into these areas.	X				BLM	Medium
Public Access Easements						
Develop a process for identifying those easements which are currently needed or may be needed in the future in order to support the transportation management network.	X				BLM & Counties	Medium
Prioritize the acquisition of these easements across private lands from willing landowners.	X				BLM & Counties	Medium
Pursue public access easements, with willing landowners, on private property that is crossed by Grouse Gulch Trail and Maggie Gulch Trail.	X					

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
RECREATION MANAGEMENT – SPRING, SUMMER, AND FALL USE (Section 3.2.2)						
Visiting Cultural Sites and Heritage Tourism						
Cooperate with cultural program specialists and other partners to identify, document and prioritize the cultural resources on public land that attract visitors and residents or are marketed as heritage tourism sites and can benefit from improved management and stabilization.	X				BLM	Medium
Prepare Public Use and Preservation Plans for these sites and stabilize historic structures to prevent their deterioration.			X		BLM	Medium
Repair damage to historic structures from public use and natural causes where feasible or necessary to resolve or maintain safety issues and assure site accessibility/interpretability for public use.	X				BLM & Historical Societies	Medium
Continue to cooperate with a variety of interests including historical societies, individuals, and groups in surrounding towns as well as national and state conservation groups and educational institutions to accomplish cultural resource programs.	X				BLM & many partners	Medium
Look for grant opportunities, assistance from the State Historic Fund, and other funding sources to help accomplish cultural resource programs in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation.	X				BLM & Historical Societies	Medium
Investigate marketing strategies to get cultural resource program work done through the recreation industry.						
Update the Alpine Triangle CRMP to direct and schedule implementation to assure sustainable heritage tourism			X?		BLM	Medium
Work with agency Cultural Resource Specialists to initiate a Site Steward program in Hinsdale County with volunteers to help monitor and preserve high priority heritage tourism sites.	X				BLM & Historical Societies	Medium
Continue to support the San Juan Mountain Association's Cultural Site Steward Program to provide a cadre of trained monitoring and preservation volunteers for San Juan County.	X				BLM & Historical Societies	High
Identify high priority cultural resource sites on private land that are in reasonably good condition, played an important role in the history of the area, and are currently visited by the public or have the potential to be an interesting site that the public could visit.		X			BLM	Medium
Prohibit camping or fires within 150 feet of historical structures.		X			BLM	Medium
Review undeveloped campsites for impacts to cultural resources and close or dismantle campsites that have been established too close to cultural sites.	X				BLM	Medium
Acquire private parcels through purchase or exchange, to the extent allowed by budget and staffing to help ensure the protection of high value historical buildings or sites.	X				BLM	Medium

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Develop educational recreation programs targeted at discovering, protecting, interpreting and enhancing cultural resource sites through stewardship activities at heritage tourism sites.	X				BLM	Medium
Work with recreation outfitters that visit historic sites to include historic preservation practices and education in their offerings.	X				BLM	Medium
Document and preserve the historic landscape on BLM (and adjacent visible FS lands).	X				BLM	Medium
Work with counties and private landowners to eliminate or minimize impacts to the quality of heritage tourism.	X				BLM & Counties & landowners	Medium
Hunting and Shooting						
Continue regular patrols during hunting season.	X				BLM	High
Fishing						
Clearly mark boundaries of isolated parcels of public land that offer good opportunities for fishing.	X				BLM	High
Maintain and improve streams with good fishery potential. Look for opportunities to cooperate with the CDOW and interest groups (e.g., Trout Unlimited) to carry out appropriate habitat improvement projects.	X				BLM & DOW & Trout Unlimited	Medium
Reduce the amount of impacts to riparian vegetation from recreation and other causes to provide shade, hiding cover and food sources.	X				BLM	Medium
Continue ongoing efforts to identify point source pollution coming from old mines and remediate those problems to improve water quality.	X				BLM & CO Mined Land Reclamation	High
Work with County Road crews and other partners to reduce the amount of sediment that flows into streams.	X				BLM & Counties	Medium
Camping						
Provide maintenance for developed and undeveloped campground sites.	X				BLM & volunteers	High
Recruit and support volunteer campground hosts to help with maintenance and to offer information and education to visitors.	X				BLM & volunteers	Medium
Acquire and install bear boxes at all sites in campgrounds where bears are becoming a problem.			X		BLM	High
Patrol the Project Area to detect and resolve problems with illegal squatters and campers staying beyond the 14-day limit.	X				BLM	High
Continue discussions with San Juan County concerning the possibility of developing a campground near the historic townsite of Eureka.						
Designate already established vehicle-based dispersed camping sites as appropriate and manage them to reduce impacts from parking and camping activities.			X		BLM	Low

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Rock Climbing						
Monitor known climbing areas to evaluate the amount of use they are receiving and to detect problems or resource impacts.	X				BLM	Medium
Close climbing areas where active cliff nesting birds are present within 100 yards on either side of the nest until the birds have left the nest for the season.	X					Medium
Evaluate undesignated trails leading to climbing areas following the objectives and management actions prescribed under Travel Management and Access.	X					Medium
Remove anchors found in wilderness areas.						
Horseback Riding and Pack Animals						
Consider establish hitching racks, adequate parking for vehicles with horse trailers or other horse related accommodations at trailheads receiving regular stock.	X				BLM	Low
Geocaching						
Remove artificial cache materials established in designated wilderness or WSAs.	X				BLM	Low
Review the location of existing caches on public land to identify those that may be steering increased use to sensitive areas or encouraging trespass on private lands.	X				BLM	Medium
Consider identifying existing cache locations that are in appropriate places and providing information on those caches to visitors.	X				BLM	Low
RECREATION MANAGEMENT – WINTER USE (Section 3.2.3)						
Snowmobiling						
Continue to work with snowmobile clubs to decide which trails may be groomed. Apply for grant funding from the State Snowmobile Fund to support grooming future trails as they are identified.	X				BLM & Snowmobile clubs	High
Review and permit grooming operations on approved trails, as appropriate.	X				BLM & Snowmobile clubs	Medium
Manage and maintain trailhead facilities for winter recreation activities.	X				BLM & Snowmobile clubs	Medium
Monitor less traditional downhill activities (i.e., hybrid skiing) that are supported with snowmobiles to detect and resolve any resource impact, skier conflicts, or safety concerns that may be occurring.	X				BLM	Low
Developed Downhill Skiing, Snowboarding, Cross-country Skiing, and Snowshoeing						
Monitor the operations at Silverton Mountain Ski Area to ensure that they are following the terms of their lease.	X				BLM	High

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Monitor the operations at Kendall Mountain Ski Area and Lake City Ski Hill to ensure that they are following the terms of their Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease.	X				BLM	Medium
Ice Climbing						
Evaluate natural ice climbing areas to determine their suitability for regular use based on legal access, resource impacts, and safety.			X		BLM & Ice Climbers	Medium
Consider marking access routes to ice climbing areas to avoid trespass or inappropriate resource impacts.	X				BLM & Ice Climbers	Medium
RECREATION MANAGEMENT – RESOURCE PROTECTION (Section 3.2.4)						
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species						
Manage recreation to minimize or eliminate impacts to federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA).	X				BLM	High
Manage recreation to prevent associated impacts from pushing sensitive species on to the list of federally threatened, endangered, or candidate species.	X				BLM	High
Comply with Canada lynx conservation measures as required by USFWS.	X				BLM	High
Continue to manage the upper part of the hiking trail to Redcloud Peak to reduce off-trail travel that could impact habitat for the endangered insect that occurs there.	X				BLM	High
Outfitters would be required and the public would be encouraged to camp below 12,000 feet in the Silver Creek drainage.	X				BLM	Medium
Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas						
Manage WSAs in the Project Area as directed by the BLM's IMP Handbook.	X				BLM & Volunteers	High
Manage commercial outfitter use in designated wilderness and WSAs to reduce crowding and to maintain the desired social settings for RMZs.	X				BLM & Outfitters	Medium
Lands & Realty						
Work with willing landowners to reduce impacts that threaten the Project Area's recreation potential on private inholdings by means of education, conservation easements, donation, exchange, or acquisition.	X				BLM & Landowners	Medium
Work in partnership with organizations, such as the San Juan Alpine Task Force and Red Mountain Project, to protect and preserve historic landscapes and structures within the project area through acquisition from willing sellers.	X				BLM & Alpine Task Force, Red Mt. Project	Medium
Local Land Use Plans						

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Participate in local land use planning efforts to ensure that public land perspectives are considered.	X				BLM & Counties & Towns	High
Visual Resources						
Work with local municipalities, land trusts and other willing partners to acquire lands or conservation easements on lands that are key scenic assets as viewed from the Alpine Triangle.	X				BLM & many partners	Medium
Educate local land owners, municipalities and other willing partners concerning best management practices for protection of scenic qualities of the natural and cultural landscape.	X				BLM & landowners	Medium
Conduct a visual resource inventory of the Alpine Triangle to assess current visual resource conditions, to identify valued cultural components and landscapes, and to identify areas for enhancement and restoration.						
Other Resources						
Identify incentives and options for willing landowners to protect cultural resources located on their private property. If possible, work with landowners and local governments to create these incentives or options if they do not exist.	X				BLM, Historical Societies & landowners	Medium
Look for opportunities to improve water quality to help ensure healthy fisheries.	X				BLM & CO DRMS	High
Treat known weed infestations to reduce the potential for recreation activities to spread seeds.	X				BLM	High
Work with livestock operators to exclude or minimize the time that livestock spend in and around popular recreation sites and facilities to reduce conflicts between grazing and recreation.	X				BLM & ranchers	Low
Coordinate the annual release and collection of domestic sheep to be sure it does not occur on weekends or over holidays during July and August.	X				BLM & ranchers	High
Work with livestock operators to ensure that sheep camps are 500 feet from historic structures, and require livestock operators to educate their employees on the laws protecting cultural resources, which include prohibiting the use of wood from historic structures as firewood.	X				BLM & ranchers	Medium
RECREATION MANAGEMENT – FACILITIES, SIGNS, AND INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION (Section 3.2.5)						
Facilities						
Continue to manage the BLM visitor contact station in Lake City in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Forest Service.	X				BLM, FS & Chamber	High
Continue to manage the BLM visitor contact station at the Silverton Public Lands Center in cooperation with the San Juan Mountains Association and U.S. Forest Service.	X				BLM & FS	High

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Continue to work in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to provide informational and educational materials to the Visitor Information Centers in Ouray, Montrose and Durango for distribution to visitors.	X				BLM & Chambers	Medium
Work in cooperation with local communities (e.g., Chambers of Commerce), counties, and other stakeholder groups to identify and prioritize the need for additional facilities.	X				BLM & Chambers	Low
Maintain facilities using the guidance outlined in Section 3.2.5 of the RAMP.	X					
Signs						
Maintain an inventory of all signs in the Project Area, and regularly evaluate their necessity and effectiveness.	X				BLM & Counties	Medium
Work in cooperation with local communities, counties, and other stakeholder groups to develop and maintain an effective sign program using the criteria outlined in Section 3.2.5 of the RAMP.	X				BLM & various partners	Medium
Maintain and monitor signs, including replacing/repairing at the beginning of each season, as necessary.	X				BLM & Counties	Medium
Outfitters and Special Events						
Encourage outfitter permittees to incorporate interpretive/educational components into their trips.	X				BLM & Outfitters	Medium
Develop and offer training programs, as necessary, to assist outfitters and guides in understanding and presenting Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace, local history, cultural site etiquette and other topics to their clients.	X				BLM & Outfitters	Medium
Fees						
Reevaluate fees periodically to ensure that they are at or near fair market value.	X				BLM	Medium
RECREATION INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND MARKETING (Section 3.2.7)						
Work with community partners to develop, produce, fund, and distribute a variety of appropriate information and marketing materials, including periodic review of these materials, to ensure consistency with the management objectives and framework identified and to ensure that information is accurate.	X				BLM, FS & Chambers	Medium
Develop general message materials using a variety of media for the following: information, rules and regulations, education and interpretation, and promotion and advertising.	X				BLM, FS & Chambers	Medium
Develop specific message materials using a variety of media for the following activities: motorized vehicle recreation; hunting; fishing; boating; cultural resources; mountain biking; camping; rock climbing; geocaching; horse use; snowmobiling; cross-country skiing; ice climbing; noise; interpretation; and education.	X				BLM, FS & Chambers	Medium

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Continue to develop, review, update, and distribute the following marketing materials: Alpine Loop two-fold lure piece; Alpine Explorer; The Alpine Loop, ATV's and Unlicensed Motorcycles Summer Travel Routes; Guided Tour of Animas Forks and the Sound Democrat Mill; Alpine Wildflowers brochure; Wildlife of the Alpine Loop.	X				BLM, FS & Chambers	Medium
Work with local clubs, Chambers of Commerce, U.S. Forest Service and others to actively promote winter recreation activities (e.g., snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, ice climbing) as a means of drawing additional business to local communities during the slow winter season.	X				BLM, FS & Chambers	Medium
RECREATION MONITORING (Section 3.2.8)						
Develop a monitoring strategy that uses key indicators to evaluate social, environmental, and administrative standards and documents findings (Appendix A).	X				BLM	Medium
Continue to work with a variety of partners including the counties, county historical societies, San Juan Mountain Association, Colorado Historical Society, and willing private land owners to assist with identifying, monitoring and preserving heritage tourism sites.	X				BLM & various partners	Medium
Assess and managing vehicle-use in the Project Area applying the monitoring strategy outlined in Section 3.2.9 of the RAMP.	X				BLM	High
Monitor physical, social, and administrative conditions of each RMZ to ensure that the desired settings are being managed for.	X				BLM	Medium
RECREATION COLLABORATION (Section 3.2.9)						
Build and maintain partnerships with agencies, groups, and individuals that have an interest in recreation and recreation resource management in the Project Area.	X				BLM & various partners	High
Work toward entering into cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations (e.g., Mountain Studies Institute) and citizens and user groups that have adequate resources and expertise to assist in the management of public lands in the Project Area.	X				BLM & various partners	Medium
Consider, where appropriate, contracting with private sector businesses, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, or State and local agencies to accomplish essential studies, monitoring, or project development.	X				BLM & various partners	Medium
MANAGEMENT UNIQUE TO EACH RECREATION MANAGEMENT ZONE (Section 3.3)						
Specific Management for RMZ 1 – Alpine Backcountry						
Facilities and Signs						
Allow a limited number of signs for resource protection or public safety.	X				BLM	Medium

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Install a sign would along Silver Creek Trail, where it descends from Redcloud Peak, educating visitors to stay on the trail to avoid Uncompahgre Fritillary Butterfly colonies located in the area.		X			BLM	High
Periodically maintain trails to provide access for recreation but no additional water, restrooms, or other visitor amenities or facilities would be provided unless they are necessary to protect resource values.	X				BLM & various partners	Medium
Resource Protection						
No ground-disturbing activities would be allowed in snow willow patches above 12,500 feet in elevation in order to protect potential habitat for the Uncompahgre Fritillary Butterfly.	X				BLM	High
Specific Management for RMZ 2 – Heritage Roads						
Facilities and Signs						
Facilities and signs would be added as necessary for visitor use, safety, and the protection of sensitive resources.	X				BLM	Medium
Develop a designated camping area at Cunningham Gulch to include up to 10 camping areas that could accommodate 2-3 vehicles and one larger area for 8-10 vehicles; install vault toilets and picnic tables.						
Develop a designated camping area in close proximity to the town of Eureka only if San Juan County partners with BLM toward funding its construction and long-term maintenance.						
Work in partnership with Hinsdale County to formally develop manmade ice climbing opportunities outside the town of Lake City on the south side of Henson Creek canyon as far up as the Henson Creek ATV Staging Area (~0.5 mile).			X		BLM & Ice Climbing group	Medium
Work in partnership with San Juan County to formally designate and improve the existing Eureka ice-climbing area, outside the historic town of Silverton.						
Examine the necessity of installing a universal access vault restroom near the entrance to American Basin.	X				BLM	Low
Specific Management for RMZ 3 – Animas/Lake Fork River Corridor						
Whitewater Boating						
Look for an opportunity to identify and secure a legal put-in for boaters in or near Lake City that includes some parking and reasonable access to the river.	X				BLM, Town & County	Medium
Improve boater's access to the river at the Devil's Creek Bridge area by clearing a path down to a suitable launch site on the river.		X			BLM	Medium
Improve boater access to the river at or near the Red Bridge Campground.			X		BLM	Medium
Construct a put-in for boaters and kayakers along the Animas River.						
Conduct periodic patrols during the early boating season to determine if there are obstructions on private land that might lead to trespass if boaters portage around these obstacles.	X				BLM & River outfitters	Medium

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Action Item	Timeframe Within				Lead & Partners	Priority
	On Going	2 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs		
Work with volunteers during National Rivers Week in May to conduct cleanup, rehabilitation or improvement of the river and riparian corridors.	X				BLM & Volunteers	Medium
Work cooperatively with the Colorado River Outfitters Association (CROA) to educate boaters and/or improve the river and riparian corridors under the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that BLM has signed with them.	X				BLM & River Outfitters	Medium
Travel Management and Access						
Maintain and improve public access to fishing and boating opportunities, whenever possible.	X				BLM	Medium
Facilities and Signs						
Add facilities and signs as necessary for visitor use, safety, and the protection of sensitive resources.	X				BLM	Medium
Improve public fishing opportunities by appropriately signing existing public land and public fishing easements.	X				BLM	High
Resource Protection						
Work in cooperation with CDOW to evaluate the need to institute a mandatory catch and release program.	X				BLM & DOW	Low
Comply with conservation measures for wintering bald eagles required by the USFWS.	X				BLM	Medium

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF DRAFT MONITORING PLAN STRATEGY FROM GUNNISON FIELD OFFICE

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MONITORING PLAN- *EXAMPLE*

DRAFT STRATEGY FOR TRAVEL DESIGNATIONS

Management Goal – Motorized and mechanized vehicle users are expected to comply with BLM travel designations. During the spring, summer and fall all motorized vehicles and mountain bikes will stay on routes designated as open for those uses and vehicle type. During the winter, snowmobiles, snowcats, tracked ATVs and other motorized vehicles may travel over the snow, but must not operate within the boundaries of designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas.

Monitoring Actions – BLM staff and volunteers will be made aware of the vehicle and route designations in the SRMA by formal training and on-the-job training. During regular duties of patrol, maintenance and visitor contact BLM staff and volunteers will make observations and routinely monitor for evidence of non-compliance with designations. BLM Rangers, the cooperative Alpine Ranger, and the local sheriff office will be encouraged to periodically patrol the routes in the SRMA looking for conditions generally and violations of travel designations. . Periodic patrols during the winter would be carried out to detect inappropriate snowmobile use in closed areas as resources allow. Reports of inappropriate use from the staff/volunteers/public would be followed used to determine patterns of use or reported to BLM Rangers for investigation if necessary

Indicators That Will Be Monitored – Staff will look for vehicles parked or driving off the designated routes. They will also look for evidence such as tracks, disturbed soil or crushed vegetation that indicates patterns of vehicles traveling off designated routes.

Locations and Times BLM Plans to Monitor – The land immediately adjacent to all designated routes are the most likely places to detect inappropriate use. The boundaries of Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas will be high priority areas for regular patrols to detect and deal with inappropriate uses. A recurring problem spot that should be regularly monitored is the Snare Creek Road. Particular attention should also be paid to the boundaries between public land and private land where unauthorized access routes can often develop. Popular camping areas such as Burrows Park and the Eureka Townsite are also likely locations for vehicles to push into areas that they should not be. Popular, scenic or sensitive areas such as American Basin or Animas Forks are also areas that should be regularly monitored. The peak of the summer season (July 1st to August 20th) and the hunting season (Sept 1st to November 15th) will be a priority for patrols.

Limits of Acceptable Change – Isolated instances of vehicle violations rarely cause enough damage to be of significant concern though violations in wet or muddy conditions can be more noticeable. These isolated violations will be treated as an enforcement issue. Patterns of repeated violations occurring in the same area require corrective management action. Areas with repeated violations can start to create a noticeable route that other recreationists follow. With increased use on a particular unauthorized route, impacts to soils, vegetation and scenery are more noticeable. These would be considered unacceptable changes since these types of impacts are often slow to heal in alpine and subalpine ecosystems. Our goal would be to curtail repeated use before these noticeable impacts develop.

Corrective Actions To Be Taken – BLM will continue to be sure that information about vehicle designations and responsible use are included in visitor information materials. All observed violations of vehicle designations should be dealt with immediately. If vehicles are noted in areas they should not be the staff will make an attempt to contact the owner or operator of the vehicle either directly or with a written warning to encourage compliance with the rules. If the violation is blatant or causes significant damage then staff will be encouraged to record pertinent information such as name, location, date, time, license number and photographs so that law enforcement can follow up. Violations detected after the fact should be repaired or obliterated as much as possible to discourage repeated use. Areas where repeated violations are starting to occur should be physically blocked with rocks, logs or other barriers. Signs reminding visitors to stay on the designated routes may also be appropriate. These areas would also benefit from increased patrol.

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APPENDIX C

Corridor Management Plan Action Table

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The Project Area includes the Alpine Loop, which are both a National Backcountry Byway and a State Scenic & Historic Byway. The National Scenic Byway Program identifies six intrinsic qualities that distinguish scenic byways, Scenic; Historic, Cultural, Recreational, Archaeological, and Natural. To be designated a National Scenic Byway, a road must possess characteristics of regional significance within at least one of the intrinsic qualities. Land Managers are encouraged to be "careful and sensitive" when manipulating the landscape and to enhance "its uniqueness and character". The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Design and Planning Manual include design guidelines and management strategies to promote the preservation of these six qualities. These guidelines aim to preserve the scenic, historic, and other intrinsic values important to the integrity of the scenic byway.

The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program encourages use of existing documentation and plans when developing a Corridor Management Plan (CMP). "It is not always necessary to create a corridor management plan from scratch. There are many existing planning documents that already have identified and developed most of the information required for CMPs. Evaluate and use the planning documents then summarize them into brief but self-explanatory paragraphs" (DOT 1996).

The following table summarizes the information contained in the EA and RAMP and essentially fulfills the requirements for the CMP for the Alpine Loop Back Country Byway which connects the town of Lake City, Ouray, and Silverton (State Highway 110, Engineer Pass Road, and Cinnamon Pass Road).

REQUIREMENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION (RAMP/EA)	SUMMARY OF FINDING
LOCATION			
Corridor Map	Show the boundaries, location of intrinsic qualities, different land uses	Figure 2-2: Proposed Travel Management Network. Corridor denoted in RMZ-2	The Alpine Loop Back Country Byway connects the high mountain towns of Lake City, Ouray, and Silverton (State Highway 110, Engineer Pass Road, and Cinnamon Pass Road). The 65-mile route winds its way to an elevation of 12,800 feet, crossing Engineer and Cinnamon Passes among five of Colorado's spectacular "Fourteeners."
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION			
General Review of Road Safety	Discuss any design changes, proposed modifications, shape, length, width	Travel network described in Section 3.X	The Alpine Loop Scenic Byway is unpaved, and constructed from native materials. Routes vary from well-maintained multi-lane gravel roads to highly challenging narrow mountain passes. Approximately 60% of the Corridor is suitable for two-wheel drive vehicles, but to complete the drive, high-clearance four-wheel drive vehicles are necessary. The mountain passes – Engineer, Cinnamon and Mineral Creek – are not accessible to standard street vehicles. Three "ghost towns" and several historic mining sites are generally accessible to standard street vehicles. The route is typically open from late May through October, depending on snow depths and road damage from spring run-off.
Highway Design & Maintenance	Standards: Review safety and identify	Travel network	• Users are encouraged to travel clockwise only.

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	any hazards.	described in Section 3.X	• Portions of this road are four-wheel drive only. • The Byway is not appropriate for wheeled vehicle use during winter months. • Maintenance is generally prioritized by rate of utilization.
INTRINSIC QUALITIES			
Intrinsic Quality Assessment:	Evaluate intrinsic qualities identifying their context and if they are local, regional, or national importance.	Throughout document.	• **Scenic**: Spectacular high-elevation scenery and numerous historical markers explain the mining history of the area as the route travels through the towering San Juan Mountains. Corridor passes by "ghost towns", historic hard-rock mining sites, cascading waterfalls, masses of alpine wildflowers and spectacular mountain viewscapes and overlooks. • **Natural**: Corridor provides access to meadows of wildflowers, mountain streams and waterfalls, pristine mountain views, and seemingly untouched wilderness areas. Travel passes through clear transition zones between alpine tundra and spruce/fir forests and the Slumgullion Landslide, a *National Natural Landmark*. • **Historic**: Travel routes within Corridor are all historic mining roads or trails. Routes pass through and by mining sites, towns and cabins. • **Cultural**: Thirteen sites along the Corridor are listed on the *National Register of Historic Places.* • **Archeological**: Historic mining trails and camps are thought to be overlaid upon prehistoric Native American hunting trails and seasonal camps. (reference: BLM 1994 AL CRMP & EA added to ref section of EA) • **Recreational**: Hundreds of miles of hiking trails are accessible from Corridor. Four developed campgrounds and one developed picnic area are also readily available. Corridor provides access to backcountry wilderness areas for camping or hiking, stocked mountain lakes and natural streams fishing, and over 80 miles of groomed snowmobile trails in the winter.
Intrinsic Quality Management Strategy	Show how intrinsic qualities will be managed and	• EA 2.3.2, description of RMZ 2	• Off-road mechanized travel is prohibited throughout the Byway area, helping to prevent impacts to the intrinsic qualities from

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	identify the tools that are used to do this.	• EA 3.3.2 cultural resources - existing environment. • EA 3.3.5 transportation – existing maintenance	unauthorized travel and access. • Thirteen listed historic sites are interpreted and monitored to manage and protect the resources. • Road maintenance is prioritized by utilization, and by resource protection. (Areas with high use will be repaired first, to avoid impacts from avoidance of the hazards.)
Interpretation Plan	Describe plans within communities that interpret the significance of resources (museums, festivals, etc) EA and RAMP both reference the Alpine Loop Back Country Byway Interpretive Overview and Sign Plan (1998) and the Alpine Triangle Cultural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Analysis (1994)	• EA 2.1.9 recreation monitoring • RAMP 2.3.1.7 recreation information, interpretation and marketing	• The Alpine Loop towns of Lake City, Ouray and Silverton host events commemorating and celebrating the significance of the Alpine Loop. • The BLM partners with the historic societies of the three towns, for interpretation, education and public awareness of the significance of resources within the Alpine Loop.
VISITOR NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS			
Visitor Experience Plan	Discuss efforts to minimize any intrusions and plans to enhance experience.	• EA Chapter 2, descriptions of RMZs.	• See "Intrinsic Quality Management" (above) • Development of RMZ plan is to maximize the ability to manage for multiple experiences through specific management to highlight and emphasize desired visitor qualities. • RMZ-1 is proposed to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in challenging and educational summer backcountry activities such as hiking, mountain climbing, and backpacking. • RMZ-2 is proposed to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in scenic driving, heritage tourism, and motorized recreation on rough, but relatively safe roads in the Project Area. The centerpiece of these activities would be the Alpine Loop, but other areas with roads could also provide these opportunities. • RMZ-3 is proposed to provide opportunities for local and regional visitors (i.e., Colorado and the Four Corners Region) to engage in summer river related activities such as whitewater rafting, kayaking, and fishing.
Development Plan	Existing development is enhanced and new	• EA 2.3.5, description of travel	• Existing developed recreational areas will continue to be maintained. Existing roads will continue maintenance by counties and BLM.

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	development accommodated.	management and access under Proposed Action.	• Under the Proposed Alternative, the BLM would recommend 15 miles of Cement Creek and Corkscrew Roads to the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Committee to become part of the Alpine Loop (EA Figure 2.2). • Several pull out and parking areas are proposed to enhance utilization of Corridor.
Commerce Plan	Evaluate how to accommodate commercial traffic.		• Commercial traffic accesses the Byway via one of three towns. Commerce is generally handled through these towns.
Sign Plan	Discuss number and placement of signs.	• EA 2.3.9 Recreation Management Facilities, Signs, Interpretation and Education	• Information kiosks approximately 3 foot by 5 foot panels would be located at the four main access points to the Alpine Loop from the towns of Lake City, Ouray, and Silverton. Information at these kiosks would include travel management restrictions, interpretation of cultural and natural resources, Leave No Trace and other land use ethics, and visitor safety information.
Outdoor Advertising Control Compliance	Discuss control of outdoor advertising.		• No outdoor advertising is permitted within public lands.
MARKETING AND PROMOTION			
Marketing Narrative	How will Byway be marketed and publicized.	• EA 2.1.8 Recreation Marketing, Information and Outreach • RAMP 3.2.7 Recreation Marketing, Information and Outreach	• For the purposes of this plan, recreation marketing is defined as communication with the potential recreationist to match recreation opportunities and setting character conditions with the their preference for activities, outcomes, and areas that are consistent and appropriate as defined in the RAMP management goals. • Any marketing would seek to attract segments of the recreation market that are most likely to enjoy the opportunities best provided along the Corridor. Marketing efforts would not aggressively seek to increase visitation to this area during the busy summer season, but some increase in visitation can be achieved during the shoulder seasons without compromising resource values
Multi-Lingual Information Plan	Discuss multi-lingual needs and resources	EA 2.3.11	• Monitor visitor demographics to determine if information and marketing materials should be revised to reach new users (e.g., providing materials in languages other than English).
Tourism Plan	How will increased tourism be accommodated?	EA 2.3.2 Discussion of RMZ 2	• Since RMZ 2, the Alpine Loop, receives the highest level of visitors to the Project Area, it would also have the highest level of management inputs to accommodate visitors and reduce the impacts on resources.

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PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT & RESPONSIBILITY			
Public Participation Plan	How will on-going public participation be achieved?	EA 1.4 Planning Process and Public involvement	• Numerous meetings have been held dating back to 1999. Additionally, public participation required by NEPA has included scoping and public comment on management alternatives. BLM will continue to work with community partners (i.e. historic societies) to insure interested public involvement.
Responsibility Schedule	List all agency, groups, and individual responsibilities that are part of the team.	RAMP 3.2.7 Recreation Marketing, Information and Outreach	• In general this collaborative management partnership would work toward developing and reviewing information and marketing materials to ensure consistency with the management objectives and framework identified above, and to ensure that information is accurate.