

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In March 2007, the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Kremmling Field Office (KFO) and the Colorado River Valley Field Office (formerly the Glenwood Springs Field Office; CRVFO) completed the eligibility phase of a Wild and Scenic River (WSR) evaluation as part of the resource management plan (RMP) revision process (BLM 2007a). In addition to the segments evaluated as part of the March 2007 study, 15 other segments were previously determined eligible in other studies. River segments within the Roan Plateau planning area were assessed as part of the Roan Plateau RMP process, which includes lands administered by the BLM's CRVFO and White River Field Office in Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado (BLM 2002). Additionally, Deep Creek was jointly analyzed by the BLM, and the Forest Service in 1995 (Forest Service and BLM 1995). The cumulative result of these three studies is 41 segments have been identified as eligible river segments in the KFO and CRVFO. One additional segment along the Blue River (Blue River Segment 1) was originally identified as eligible (BLM 2007a). A reexamination of the landownership and management status revealed that Segment 1 occurs on Forest Service land rather than on BLM land. As a result it has been dropped from consideration by BLM and was not studied for suitability in this report.

In addition to the above BLM river studies, in 2002 the WRNF completed the eligibility phase of the WSR evaluation process as part of the Land and Resource Management Plan revision process (Forest Service 2002). In 1995 Deep Creek was jointly analyzed by the BLM and the WRNF for eligibility (Forest Service and BLM 1995). Four of the eligible Forest Service river segments being studied for suitability as part of this process, are directly upstream or downstream to the same rivers that BLM is analyzing. Specifically, this study assesses the suitability of two Colorado River and two Deep Creek eligible segments on the WRNF. The *BLM Wild and Scenic River Manual 6400* (BLM WSR Manual 6400), Section 4.3 Coordinated Studies and Other Planning Efforts states: "...The BLM shall invite and encourage other agencies to participate and/or provide technical assistance in a joint study concurrently with the BLM's RMP process."

The following report is divided into two sections, to accommodate the differences in the BLM and Forest Service suitability assessment processes, and to facilitate future agency use of the report. The BLM process and segments are presented in the first section along with general WSR background information. The second section presents the Forest Service process where it differs from BLM, and the analysis of Forest Service segments.

## **Project Area**

### **Bureau of Land Management**

The project area for this suitability study includes all BLM-managed river segments in the KFO and CRVFO RMP planning areas that have been determined to meet the eligibility criteria for WSRs. This WSR suitability study also includes the eligible segments occurring in the Roan Plateau area of the CRVFO. All other aspects of the Roan Plateau management were evaluated in the Roan Plateau RMP and are not considered as part of this RMP revision process.

### **Forest Service**

The Forest Service project area for this suitability study is limited to four WRNF-managed river segments that have been determined to meet the eligibility criteria for WSRs. This includes the rivers and their associated WSR study corridors for two Colorado River segments with Glenwood Canyon, and two Deep Creek segments.

## **Suitability Phase**

The purpose of the suitability phase of the study process is to determine whether eligible rivers would be appropriate additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) by considering tradeoffs between corridor development and river protection. The suitability evaluation does not result in actual designation but only a suitability determination for designation. The BLM and the Forest Service cannot administratively designate a stream via a planning decision or other agency decision into the NWSRS, and no segment studied is designated or will be automatically designated as part of the NWSRS. Rivers found not suitable by the managing agency conducting the suitability study would be dropped from further consideration and managed according to the objectives and specific management prescriptions outlined in both agencies land use plans.

## Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Group Management Plan

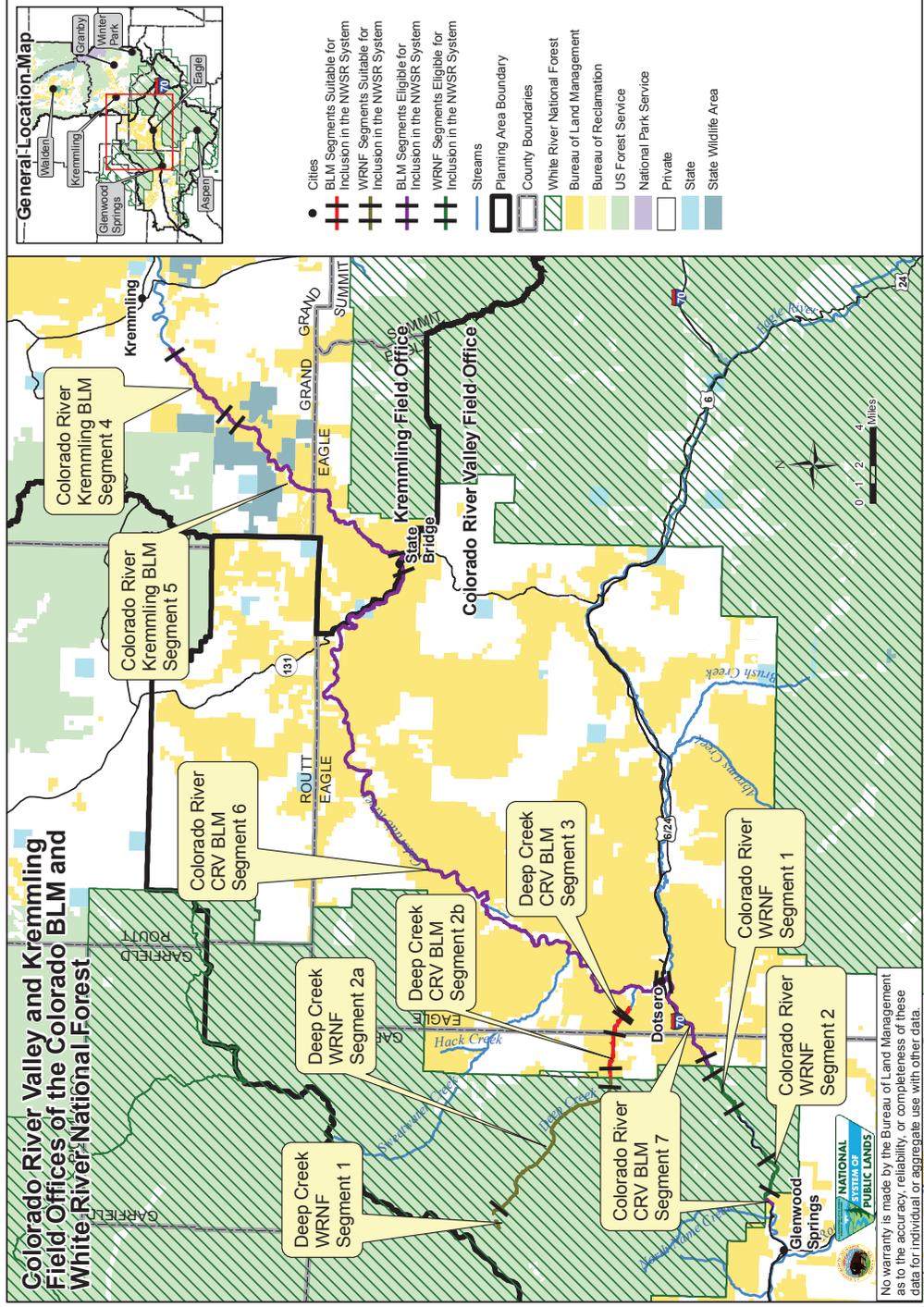
Before publication of the *BLM Draft RMP/EIS* for the KFO and CRVFO, the BLM and Forest Service received a proposal from the Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Group for a management plan designed to protect the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) associated with the Colorado River between Gore Canyon and No Name (BLM's Colorado River Segments 4 through 7 and Forest Service Colorado River Segments 1 and 2). The BLM and Forest Service included the *Stakeholder Plan* in the *BLM Draft RMP/EIS* under Alternative B2 for impact analysis and public comment purposes. In addition, both draft BLM RMPs included a copy of the full text of the *Stakeholder Plan*, which identifies members of the stakeholder group and actions proposed to maintain the ORVs. The BLM and Forest Service have made a decision to rely upon the *Stakeholder Plan*. As part of that decision, the BLM and Forest Service have elected to defer any suitability determination for the river segments addressed by the plan, which include Colorado River segments from Gore Canyon to No Name .

## Suitability Determinations

Table ES-1 shows the final suitability determination for each segment. Of the 41 stream segments determined to be eligible in the CRVFO and KFO planning areas, the BLM determined that two segments are suitable for WSR designation, four segments will remain in eligible status with no suitability determination and 35 segments are not suitable. Of the four WRNF eligible segments, two were determined to be suitable for WSR designation, while two segments will remain in eligible status. (Figure ES-1).

This page is intentionally left blank.

Figure ES-1 WSR Suitable and Eligible Segments and Project Area



Eligible and Suitable Segments and Project Area  
Colorado River Valley and Kremming Field Offices and White River National Forest, Colorado

This page is intentionally left blank.

Six segments on the Colorado River that are addressed by the *Stakeholder Plan* will remain in eligible status and any suitability determinations on these segments are deferred. Under the *Stakeholder Plan*, BLM and USFS intend to cooperate with the stakeholder group to protect the outstandingly remarkable values, free-flowing nature and water quality of these river segments. The cooperative process will complement BLM and USFS land management authorities and land use planning decisions in the river corridor to provide a comprehensive river management approach that also addresses flow management issues.

- Four segments on Deep Creek are determined to be suitable (two BLM and two WRNF). The BLM and Forest Service concluded that the multiple ORVs within these segments can be successfully managed as a WSR with very little conflict with other uses because most of the land is federal, and the likelihood of development is small. The BLM and Forest Service also concluded that a federal reserved water right would help protect the high number of water-dependent values in the streams.
- The BLM concluded that several major stream segments, including the Colorado River between Windy Gap and upstream of Gore Canyon, Eagle River, Blue River, and Muddy Creek, are not suitable. The BLM based its determination on the fact that it manages only a small fraction of the lands in the stream corridor, and local governments have not indicated an interest in managing lands under their jurisdiction as WSRs.
- The BLM concluded that several stream segments with multiple and pristine ORVs would be adequately managed under protective designations proposed in the RMP.
- A high number of the eligible stream segments have only one ORV. The BLM determined that existing protective laws and management prescriptions in the proposed plan are the best tools for managing these values. Streams in this category are those with paleontological, sensitive fish, and historical/cultural values.

**Table ES-1 Summary of Suitability Determinations**

<b>River</b>	<b>Segment</b>	<b>Segment Length (miles)</b>	<b>Suitability Determination</b>	<b>Classification</b>
<b>Kremmling Field Office</b>				
Blue River	Total of two segments	4.60 (total)		
	Segment 2	2.55	Not Suitable	
	Segment 3	2.05	Not Suitable	
Colorado River	Total of five segments	54.74 (total)		
	Segment 1	7.32	Not Suitable	
	Segment 2	2.44	Not Suitable	
	Segment 3	24.36	Not Suitable	
	Segment 4	5.36	Deferred – Remains Eligible	Recreational
	Segment 5	15.26	Deferred – Remains Eligible	Recreational
Kinney Creek	one segment	2.35	Not Suitable	
Muddy Creek	one segment	8.93	Not Suitable	
North Platte River	one segment	0.07	Not Suitable	
Piney River	one segment	2.30	Not Suitable	
Rabbit Ears Creek	one segment	4.24	Not Suitable	
Spruce Creek	one segment	0.97	Not Suitable	
Sulphur Gulch	one segment	3.04	Not Suitable	
Troublesome Creek	one segment	6.14	Not Suitable	
<b>Colorado River Valley Field Office (excluding Roan Plateau)</b>				
Abrams Creek	one segment	3.44	Not Suitable	
Battlement Creek	one segment	2.88	Not Suitable	
Colorado River	Total of two segments	71.38 (total)		
	Segment 6	45.38	Deferred – Remains Eligible	Recreational
	Segment 7	15.70 <sup>1</sup>	Deferred – Remains Eligible	Recreational

**Table ES-1 Summary of Suitability Determinations**

<b>River</b>	<b>Segment</b>	<b>Segment Length (miles)</b>	<b>Suitability Determination</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Deep Creek	Total of two segments	4.46 (total)		
	Segment 2b	3.60	Suitable	Wild
	Segment 3	0.86	Suitable	Recreational
Eagle River	one segment	25.69	Not Suitable	
Egeria Creek	one segment	8.31	Not Suitable	
Hack Creek	one segment	2.42	Not Suitable	
Mitchell Creek	one segment	0.89	Not Suitable	
No Name Creek	one segment	0.08	Not Suitable	
Rock Creek	one segment	4.78	Not Suitable	
Thompson Creek	one segment	4.76	Not Suitable	
<b>Roan Plateau</b>				
East Middle Fork Parachute Creek complex	Total of five segments	10.28 (total)	Draft Determination: Not suitable Final Determination Deferred to Roan Plateau SEIS and Record of Decision	
	East Middle Fork Parachute Creek (one segment)	1.10		
	Northwater Creek (one segment)	3.20		
	Trapper Creek Segment 1	0.78		
	Trapper Creek Segment 2	3.40		
	Trapper Creek Segment 3	1.80		
East Fork Parachute Creek complex	Total of eight segments	13.78 (total)	Draft Determination: Not suitable Final Determination Deferred to Roan Plateau SEIS and Record of Decision	
	East Fork Parachute Creek Segment 1	5.36		

**Table ES-1 Summary of Suitability Determinations**

River	Segment	Segment Length (miles)	Suitability Determination	Classification
	East Fork Parachute Creek Segment 2	2.21		
	First Anvil Creek Segment 1	0.60		
	First Anvil Creek Segment 2	1.65		
	Golden Castle Creek (1 segment)	1.05		
	JQS Gulch (1 segment)	1.14		
	Second Anvil Creek Segment 1	1.46		
	Second Anvil Creek Segment 3	0.31		
<b>White River National Forest</b>				
Colorado River	Total of two segments	6.48 (total)		
	WRNF Segment 1	3.35	Deferred – Remains Eligible	Recreational
	WRNF Segment 2	3.13	Deferred – Remains Eligible	Recreational
Deep Creek	Total of two segments	10.77 (total)		
	Segment 1	0.24	Suitable	Scenic
	Segment 2a	10.53	Suitable	Wild

<sup>1</sup>The length of Colorado River Segment #7 includes the two WRNF Colorado River Segments (6.48 miles); the BLM manages 3.4 miles of this segment.