



NEWS RELEASE

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BLM releases draft management plan for 210,000-acre Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management is seeking public comment on a Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness.

The plan will provide a framework to guide subsequent management decisions on approximately 210,000 acres of BLM-administered land in Delta, Mesa and Montrose counties of western Colorado. Today's announcement begins a 90-day comment period.

“This draft plan is the culmination of more than two years of work by the BLM and members of the public,” said Katie Stevens, manager of the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. “These documents cover all aspects of our management of this special area, so this is a really important opportunity to make your voice heard about how the BLM will manage these lands. We’ve seen a high degree of public interest and engagement in each step of the planning process, and we expect that the interest in the area will continue through the rest of the planning process.”

The draft plan outlines a wide range of management alternatives as well as a detailed analysis of the potential impacts of each alternative. The five alternatives cover all aspects of BLM resource management within the National Conservation Area boundaries, including recreation, travel management, resource protection, wildlife habitat, special designations and livestock grazing.

Congress designated the National Conservation Area and Wilderness in 2009 in recognition of their unique and important resources, including geological, paleontological, archaeological, historical, cultural, wildlife, riparian, recreational, scientific, educational, natural, scenic and wilderness values, as well as the area's water resources.

The BLM will host two public open houses to provide information and an opportunity to comment on the draft plan. The public can stop by anytime between 4:30-7:30 p.m. for the following open houses:

- June 17 at the Colorado Mesa University Center

- June 19 at the Bill Heddles Recreation Center

The Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area Advisory Council, which is composed of ten members of the public who represent various communities and interests throughout the surrounding three-county area, will also hold meetings to discuss the draft plan. These meetings will provide opportunities for public input and comment to the Advisory Council and the BLM.

To be considered, comments must be received by August 15, 2013.

“We welcome all thoughts and comments, but specific comments will be particularly useful in helping us refine the draft into its final form,” Stevens said. “Comments that provide not just a preference or recommendation, but the basis for that preference or recommendation or information that helps us better understand the issues, are the ones that really help us refine the plan. New information is also helpful.”

The BLM will use the public comments to help develop a Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is scheduled for release in May 2014.

For additional information, including how to provide comments or obtain a copy of the draft plan, visit http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/denca/denca_rmp.html.

Before including address, phone number, email-address, or any other personal identifying information in your comments, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.

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