



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **BLM releases Grand Junction Resource Management Plan Includes 700,900-acre Shale Ridges and Canyons Master Leasing Plan**

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. –The Bureau of Land Management today released the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the approximately one million-acre Grand Junction Field Office in northwestern Colorado. The Grand Junction Field Office includes some of the public’s most diverse landscapes and provides some of the nation’s premier recreational opportunities.

The plan includes a 700,900-acre Shale Ridges and Canyons Master Leasing Plan with oil and gas restrictions ranging from limiting visual impacts to no surface disturbance and timing limitations to protect wildlife. The MLP also includes two Wilderness Study Areas and three additional Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Approximately 70 percent of the MLP is already leased.

The BLM developed the RMP with close coordination from local and state government, regional interest groups and public input.

“We understand how important public land is to our community and we have listened to your input,” Grand Junction Acting Field Manager Wayne Werkmeister said. “This area of rural western Colorado is an amazing place to live because of the popular recreation, energy and public land resources right in our back yards. We’ve worked hard to strike a balance between resource use, development and conservation that will allow us to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

Key decisions in the proposed plan include managing five areas for specific recreation opportunities, including the Grand Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Special Recreation Management Area for cross-country riding and adventure. The RMP also identifies 10 areas where wildlife habitat will receive focused emphasis and priority.

The proposed plan also includes travel management decisions that provide public access to quality recreational opportunities and commercial use of public lands while protecting sensitive resources. The BLM will defer route-by-route decisions on the North Fruita Desert and DeBeque areas for further analysis and input from cooperators.

Lands managed by the Grand Junction Field Office provide some of the best, most diverse, OHV recreation experiences in the nation. This plan strikes a balance among multiple current and foreseeable uses while creating the foundation for sustainable and high-quality recreation for years to come. The planning process identified trends and public expectations for their public lands. The BLM can now act on user expectations within the framework of a plan that can stand the test of time.

The BLM estimates that this plan supports decisions that could create nearly 7,500 jobs by 2029 in livestock grazing, recreation and energy development. Local government agencies provided critical assistance to develop this plan through feedback, constructive comments and working groups.

“We appreciate the time and effort so many people took to provide their input, and we look forward to their continued help in managing their public lands,” said Werkmeister.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS was published today for a 30-day public protest period and 60-day Governor’s consistency review. The BLM expects to release a final decision later this year.

The Proposed RMP can be found at the Grand Junction Field Office and online at <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gjfo.html>

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