



FACT SHEET: Grand Junction PRMP, ACECs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Study Areas

ACECs

The BLM identifies Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for their scientific, scenic, ecological, biological, geological, historical or prehistoric values for public benefit through the planning process.

ACECs are designed so that each one has specific guidance for protecting the identified sensitive resource in each area. The Proposed RMP identifies ACECs to protect rare plants, cultural resources, scenic values, unique fish or wildlife habitat and other sensitive resources. An ACEC designation is not required to protect these sensitive resources, but it does help identify the areas needing special management. Some examples of special management in ACECs includes reducing or restricting allowable surface disturbance and activities by applying protective measures such as controlled surface use (CSU), no surface occupancy (NSO), no fluid mineral leasing, right-of-way avoidance or exclusion, etc.

Specific management actions for each proposed ACEC begins on page 2-413 in Volume 1. All of the ACECs are managed to protect and maintain the unique ecological values that they contain; however the specific management actions for each ACEC varies according to specific resources in each area. While most of the ACECs are protected by an NSO restriction there are a few that are protected by CSU restrictions. All of the ACECs are closed to mineral material sales and non-energy solid leasable mineral exploration and development.

The Proposed RMP includes 13 ACECs, totaling 123,000 acres, which is a change of 17,400 acres from the preferred alternative in the draft plan. The primary change from the draft plan is the inclusion of the Roan and Carr Creek ACEC which was previously analyzed as an ACEC in Alternative C and a wildlife emphasis area in Alternative B of the draft plan. The Roan and Carr Creek ACEC is proposed to protect Greater sage-grouse habitat, unique riparian habitat, and genetically pure populations of cutthroat trout.

Wilderness Study Areas

The BLM would continue to manage four existing Wilderness Study Areas (Demaree, Little Book Cliffs, The Palisade, and Sewemup Mesa) totaling 96,500 acres to preserve their wilderness characteristics until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them for other purposes. Descriptions of proposed management for each WSA if it is released by Congress have been added to the proposed plan.

Wild and Scenic River Suitability

The Proposed RMP evaluates Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations on the 14 stream sections found to be eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation within the Grand Junction Field Office. The Proposed RMP identifies one of these eligible segments – a section of the the Dolores River -- as suitable. Even though some stream sections were determined not suitable there are numerous existing and proposed actions and restrictions that would protect these resources. Some of the protections that are in place or proposed to protect identified outstanding and remarkable values and the free flowing nature

of these streams include existing in stream flow rights, NSO for perennial systems and riparian areas, ACECs, lands with wilderness characteristics, visual resource management, closures to fluid mineral leasing, etc. Some of the reasons streams were determined not suitable because the segments are highly fragmented by private land that is open to development under county zoning, existing water diversion and water availability, Only Congress or the Secretary of the Interior (when petitioned by a Governor of a state) can formally designate a segment as Wild and Scenic. Appendix C is the Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Report, which includes details about the proposed management for segments that were determined non-suitable. Additional information is found on page 2-447 and Table ES-1 of Volume 4, Appendix C, page ES-3.