

Record of Decision
FOR
Approved
Resource Management Plan
and
Approved Travel Management Plan
for the
Bureau of Land Management
Grand Junction Field Office

BLM/CO/PL-15/016

Prepared by

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	Area of critical environmental concern
APD	Application for permit to drill (oil and gas)
BLM	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
BLM lands	Surface acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best management practice
BOR	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation
CDOW	Colorado Division of Wildlife (In 2011, this agency changed its name to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW).)
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COA	Condition of approval
CPW	Colorado Parks and Wildlife (formerly CDOW -- Colorado Division of Wildlife.)
CSU	Controlled surface use
GJFO	Grand Junction Field Office
DOE	United States Department of Energy
DOI	United States Department of the Interior
EA	Environmental assessment
EIS	Environmental impact statement
EO	Executive order
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended
FS	United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
FR	<i>Federal Register</i>
GIS	Geographic information system
GJFO	Grand Junction Field Office

IBLA	Interior Board of Land Appeals
IDT	Interdisciplinary team
IM	Instruction memorandum
LUP	Land use plan
MDP	Master development plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
NOA	Notice of availability
NOI	Notice of intent
NSO	No surface occupancy or surface-disturbing activities
NWSRS	National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
RAC	Resource advisory council
RMP	Resource management plan
RMPA	Resource management plan amendment
ROD	Record of decision
ROW	Right-of-way (lands and realty)
RSC	Recreation setting characteristics
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SRMA	Special recreation management area
T&E	Threatened and endangered
U.S .	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOI	United States Department of the Interior
USFS	United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
USFWS	United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
WSA	Wilderness study area
WSR	Wild and scenic river

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (Approved RMP) were prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) in Grand Junction, Colorado. These documents are the culmination of a multi-year planning effort to revise the 1987 Grand Junction Resource Area RMP, as amended. BLM prepared these documents in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), implementing regulations, the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), and other applicable law and policy. The management of BLM lands and Federal mineral estate administered by BLM within the GJFO boundaries (from this point forward referred to as the GJFO) is the subject of this document. This ROD documents the approval of the attached Grand Junction RMP, which provides overall direction for management of all resources on BLM lands and Federal mineral estate within the GJFO.

1.1.1 Purpose and Need for the RMP Revision

The purpose of this RMP revision is to ensure that public lands are managed in accordance with the intent of Congress, as stated in the FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. This will be accomplished by establishing desired goals, objectives, allowable uses, and management actions needed to achieve the desired conditions for resources and resource uses. The RMP incorporates new data, addresses land use issues and conflicts, specifies where and under what circumstances particular activities would be allowed on BLM-administered lands, and incorporates the mandate of multiple uses in accordance with the FLPMA. The RMP does not describe how particular programs or projects would be implemented or prioritized; rather, those decisions are deferred to more detailed implementation-level planning.

The FLPMA requires that the BLM “develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans” (43 USC 1712 [a]). The BLM-administered lands within the GJFO planning area are currently managed in accordance with the decisions in the 1987 Grand Junction RMP (BLM 1987). The BLM has completed approximately 50 maintenance actions and 12 RMP amendments since the 1987 Record of Decision (ROD) was signed. There is a need to revise the GJFO RMP due to new issues that have arisen since the original plan was prepared. Major issues contributing to the RMP revision include the following (additional planning issues identified for this plan are outlined in Section 1.6.1):

- Management of BLM-administered land to support numerous wildlife species and their habitats
- Management of BLM-administered lands containing both wilderness character and oil and gas potential, including areas not designated as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)
- Management of energy and mineral resources, including identifying areas and conditions in which mineral development can occur

- Management of increased visitation by way of off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and nonmotorized uses (e.g., mountain biking and hiking) that have led to increased concerns regarding resource protection and conflicting uses
- Completion of Wild and Scenic River (WSR) eligibility and suitability studies on river segments within the GJFO planning area
- Consideration of opportunities for land tenure adjustment to improve public land manageability
- Expansion of communities and the urban interface
- Consideration of right-of-way (ROW) exclusion areas and corridors
- The needs of local government and citizens to be heard on an array of issues regarding both traditional and emerging uses of BLM-administered land and their potential social and economic effects on local communities and values

In addition, new resource assessments and scientific information was available to help the GJFO in revising previous decisions. Specifically, there was a need to evaluate management prescriptions and resource allocations to address the increase in uses and demands on BLM-administered lands (such as natural gas development and recreation), as well as the interest in protecting natural and cultural resources. The revised RMP also provides updated BLM management direction, guidance, and policy. Land use plan decisions included in the Approved RMP may only be changed through the amendment or revision process.

1.1.2 Lands within the GJFO Administrative Boundary

The GJFO is located in north-central Colorado and is an administrative unit in BLM Colorado's Northwest District (Figure 1.1). The GJFO administrative boundary comprises lands managed by the BLM; the USFS; the United States Department of the Interior (USDOI) National Park Service (NPS); the USDOI Bureau of Reclamation (BOR); the United States Department of Energy (DOE); and the State of Colorado. The GJFO also includes private land. Together, the Federal, State, and private lands within the GJFO include over 2.9 million acres. Table 1.1 shows acres of surface land ownership within the GJFO administrative boundary.

Figure 1.1. Location of Grand Junction Field Office

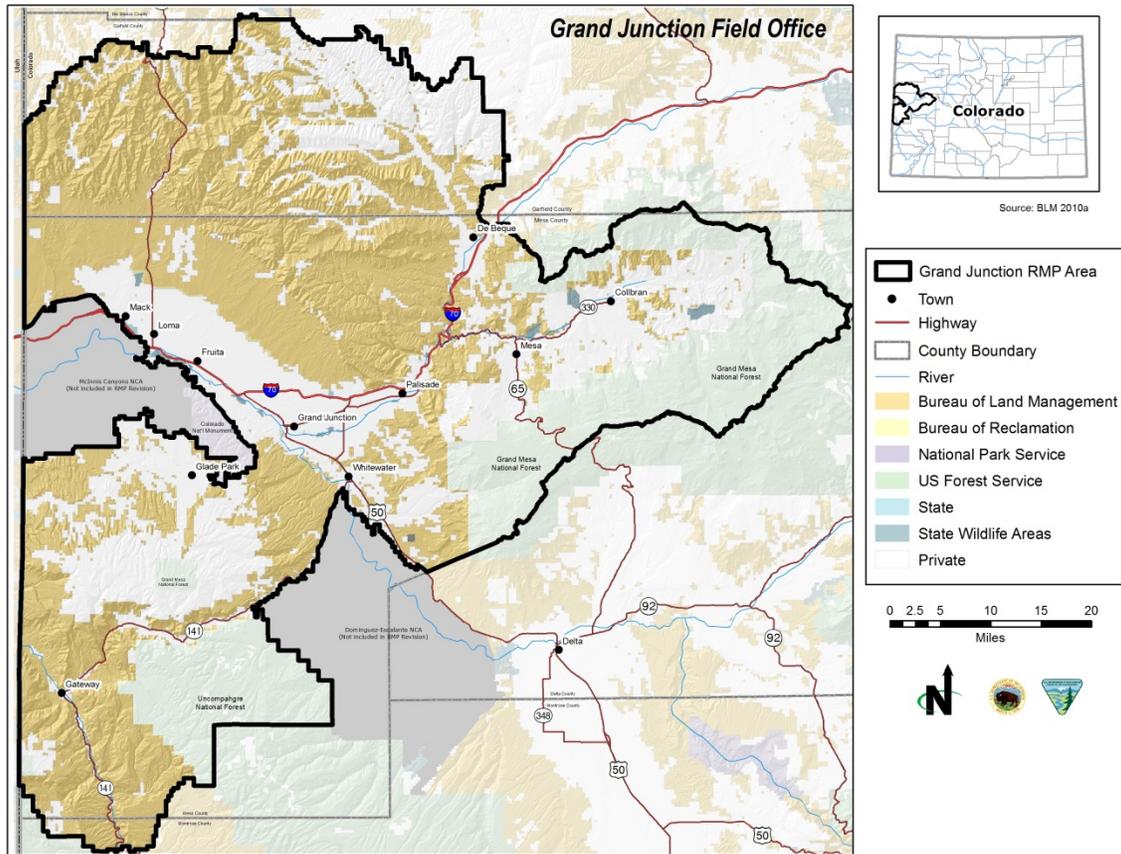


Table 1.1. Acres by Surface Land Status within the Grand Junction Field Office Administrative Boundary

Land Status	Acres	Percentage of Area
BLM	1,061,400	50%
USFS	380,000	20%
BOR	7,900	<1%
State Wildlife Areas and State Recreation Areas (Colorado Parks and Wildlife [CPW])	1,400	<1%
Local (State, County, and City)	3,400	<1%
Private	714,100	30%
Other	370	< 1%
TOTAL	2,168,600	100%

1.2 ALTERNATIVES

NEPA requires the development and consideration of a reasonable range of management

alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, to analyze impacts and guide decision makers in developing and selecting Approved RMP. All alternatives must be viable and reasonable.

1.2.1 Draft RMP/Draft EIS

Four management alternatives were developed for the Draft RMP/Draft EIS to fulfill the purpose and need, to meet the multiple use mandates of the FLPMA; (43 U.S.C. 1716), and to address identified planning issues. Each action alternative was designed to respond to the planning issues differently, providing a range of possible management approaches that the BLM could implement. That difference between alternatives was created by varying possible goals, objectives, allowable use, and management action decisions, and to a lesser degree, by varying implementation decisions such as travel route designations. Each alternative stood alone as a potential RMP.

1.2.2 Proposed RMP/Final EIS

Based on substantive comments from other governmental agencies and the public on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, the BLM prepared a Final EIS, which includes identification of a Proposed RMP. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS was revised as the result of evaluating comments received on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, and was identified as the Proposed RMP (Alternative B). The Final EIS also incorporated the other alternatives (Alternatives A, C, and D) analyzed in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, with editorial changes, technical changes, and factual corrections made as appropriate. The BLM also added supplemental information to the affected environment section (Chapter 3), and improved the analysis of alternatives (Chapter 4) based on external and internal comments. Planning decisions only apply to BLM managed surface and subsurface estate.

1.2.3 Alternatives Considered, But Not Further Analyzed

The following alternatives and management options described in Volume 1 of the Proposed RMP (PRMP) on pages 2-17 through 2-20 were considered as possible ways of resolving resource management issues and conflicts but were eliminated from detailed analysis because they were unreasonable or not practical for technical, legal, or policy reasons. Specific alternatives considered but not carried forward for detailed analysis are as follows:

- Implement Exclusive Use or Protection
- Designate Entire Decision Area as either Open or Closed to Off-Highway Vehicle Use
- No Oil and Gas Leasing for the Entire Decision Area
- No Herbicide Use
- Designate Additional Wilderness Study Areas
- Close Entire Decision Area to Livestock Grazing

- Complete Inclusion of the Greater Sage-Grouse National Technical Team Report Recommendation

1.2.4 Alternatives Considered in Detail

The basic goal of developing alternatives is to prepare different combinations of resource uses and protections to address the identified major planning issues, enhance or expand resources or resource uses, and resolve conflicts among resources and resource uses. Alternatives must meet the purpose and need; be reasonable; provide a mix of resource protection, management use, and development; be responsive to the issues; meet the established planning criteria; and meet federal laws, regulations, policies, and standards, including the multiple use mandates of the FLPMA.

Following the close of the public scoping period in January 2009, the BLM began developing alternatives by assembling an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists in the GJFO. The BLM's Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council chartered a subgroup in August 2008, whereby they appointed 11 members of the public to provide advice on developing a reasonable range of alternatives that adequately reflect public concern. The BLM coordinated with cooperating agencies and the Northwest Resource Advisory Council subgroup beginning in August 2008 and continuing throughout the planning process. Between June 2009 and February 2010, the BLM interdisciplinary team developed management goals and objectives and management actions to meet those goals and objectives. Four management alternatives were developed to fulfill the purpose and need, to meet the multiple use mandates of the FLPMA, and to address the 17 planning issues. The four alternatives included the following: the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and three action alternatives, Alternatives B, C, and D. The following sections provide some key components of the alternatives. The alternatives offered a range of management options that address the issues identified in the scoping process and other outreach activities, including, but not limited to: input from Cooperating Agencies, the Northwest Resource Advisory Council subgroup, visitor studies, focus groups, informal interviews, and reports, such as the Wild and Scenic River eligibility study (BLM 2009c) and Wild and Scenic River suitability study, ACECs evaluation (BLM 2010b), and Visual Resource Inventory study (Otak 2009).

The Proposed RMP and alternatives proposed direction for resource programs based on the development of specific goals, objectives, and management actions. Specific direction influencing land management with an emphasis on different combinations of resource uses and protections, allowable uses, and restoration measures to address issues and to resolve user conflicts were included in each alternative. Resource program goals were met in varying degrees across alternatives. Resources or resource uses not tied to planning issues or mandated by laws and regulations often contain few or no differences in management between alternatives. Alternatives may also result in different long-term conditions.

Based on substantive comments from other governmental agencies and the public on the Draft RMP/EIS, the BLM prepared a Final EIS which included identification of a Proposed RMP. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative B in the Draft RMP/EIS) was

revised as the result of evaluating comments received, and was identified as the Proposed RMP (Alternative B). The Proposed RMP included elements of all alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS also included the other alternatives (Alternatives A, C, and D) analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS, and incorporated editorial changes, technical changes, and factual corrections as appropriate. Summaries of the management alternatives from the Final EIS are presented below. A complete description of all decisions proposed for each alternative was included in Chapter 2 of the Proposed RMP.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

The “No Action” alternative, Alternative A, is the continuation of present management direction and current prevailing conditions based on existing planning decisions and amendments. This alternative meets the requirements of the NEPA (40 CFR Part 1502.14) that a no-action alternative be considered. “No action” means that current management practices, based on the existing GJFO RMP (BLM 1987), RMP amendments, and activity- or implementation-level plans, would continue. Goals and objectives for BLM land resources and resource uses would be based on the existing GJFO RMP, RMP amendments, and activity- or implementation-level plans. The emphasis would be on maintaining the existing land management direction for physical, biological, cultural, and historic resource values along with recreational, social, and economic land uses.

Direction contained in laws, regulations, and BLM policies superseding provisions of the existing RMP and amendments would be implemented.

The appropriate development scenarios for allowable uses (such as mineral leasing, locatable mineral development, recreation, timber harvest, utility corridors, and livestock grazing) would stay the same. There would be no change in goals, objectives, allowable uses, or management actions that are allowed, restricted, or prohibited on BLM lands and mineral estate. The BLM would not establish additional criteria or change present criteria to guide the identification of site-specific use levels for implementation activities.

Alternative B (Proposed RMP)

Alternative B (the Proposed RMP) uses the Alternative B (Preferred Alternative) from the Draft RMP/EIS as its foundation. It carries forward the same theme as the Preferred Alternative found in the Draft RMP/EIS, but also includes elements of the other four alternatives analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS. Alternative B seeks to allocate limited public land resources among competing human interests, land uses, and the conservation of natural and cultural resources. Goals and objectives focus on environmental, economic, and social outcomes achieved by strategically addressing demands across the landscape. Management direction would be broad to accommodate a variety of values and uses. Decisions under this alternative would seek to provide an overall balance between the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural and cultural values, while allowing resource use and development in existing or properly analyzed locations. The Proposed RMP contains the Shale Ridges and Canyons Master Leasing Plan.

Alternative C

Alternative C emphasizes non-consumptive use and management of resources through protection, restoration, and enhancement, while also providing for multiple uses, including livestock grazing and mineral development. This alternative would establish the greatest number of special designation areas, with specific measures to protect or enhance resource values within these areas. Goals and objectives focus on environmental and social outcomes achieved by sustaining relatively unmodified physical landscapes and natural and cultural resource values for current and future generations.

Management direction would generally be ecologically based; existing uses would be recognized but would likely be limited to ensure the protection of natural and cultural values, including intangible Native American landscape values encompassing plant communities, wildlife, viewsheds, air, and water. The appropriate development scenarios for allowable uses, such as mineral leasing, locatable mineral development, recreation, and livestock grazing, are contingent on meeting the essential conditions of natural and heritage resources.

Alternative D

This alternative emphasizes active management for natural resources, commodity production, and public use opportunities. Resource uses, such as recreation, livestock grazing, mineral leasing and development, would be emphasized. Management direction would recognize and give precedence to existing uses and accommodate new uses to the greatest extent possible while maintaining resource conditions. The appropriate development scenarios for allowable uses would emphasize social and economic outcomes while protecting land health.

1.3 NOTICE OF CLARIFICATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

1.3.1 Notice of Clarifications to the Proposed RMP and Adopted by this ROD and Approved RMP

The following clarifications and modifications are made to the information included in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The clarifications and modifications are reflected in the attached Approved RMP.

1.3.1.1 Editorial and Technical Changes to the Approved RMP and Appendices

Geographic information systems (GIS) information (e.g., acreage and the associated quantifications, route data) were checked and updated. Editorial changes were made to improve clarity and technical changes were made to correct inaccuracies and inconsistencies. For example:

- Management Action SSS-SG-A19 (SSS-SGR-MA-19) was rephrased to include Timber Ridge wildlife emphasis area that is also being managed for Gunnison Sage-Grouse.

- Allowable Use REC-AU6 (REC-AU-06) and Management Action REC-A13 (REC-MA-13) were updated to remove the West Creek Picnic Site. This recreation site is located within the Dolores River SRMA and management of the SRMA would adequately protect this site.
- The second bullet was removed from REC-SRMA-AU40 (REC-SRMA-AU-40) to make this allowable use consistent with CTTM-A-19 (TRV-MA-18) which is the intended management that allows for over-the-snow travel on the Tabeguache Trail.
- Updated CTTM-A2 (TRV-MA-03) to list the Tabeguache OHV Play Area, which is an existing authorized open area carried forward in the Approved RMP. This action is also described in REC-SRMA-AU-22 and was included in the Proposed RMP.
- Travel management actions CTTM-A27– CTTM-A35 (TRV-MA-25 - TRV-MA-33) were revised to be consistent with the actions in the cultural resource section that were updated prior to the release of the PRMP. This change was intended to be completed in the PRMP.
- Management Action CTTM-A14 was updated to reflect the correct acres from the GIS and mapping from the PRMP. The PRMP incorrectly states that 3,900 acres is limited to designated routes, which is the entire RMZ 1 and the Gunnison River Bluffs ERMA. The limitation only applies to 1,400 acres in RMZ 1. The Gunnison River Bluffs ERMA was mistakenly omitted from this action. The language in the Approved RMP was revised to the following for TRV-MA-13, “Limit equestrian travel to designated routes in the following areas (2,200 acres) (Refer to Appendix M for route designations in limited areas):
 - Bangs SRMA (part of RMZ 1 - 1,400 acres)
 - Gunnison River Bluffs ERMA (800 acres)
- Management Action CTTM-A15 was updated to reflect the correct acres from the GIS and mapping for the PRMP. The PRMP incorrectly stated that 3,900 acres was limited to designated routes for foot and horse. Only a portion of RMZ 1 in the Bangs SRMA is limited to designated routes for foot and horse. The correction also affects the acreage for the open designation for foot and horse travel. The language for this action in the Approved RMP for TRV-MA-14 was updated to the following, “Designate foot travel in the GJFO as follows (Figure 2-23, Appendix A):
 - Open: 1,057,800 acres
 - Closed: 1,300 acres
 - Limited to designated routes: 2,200 acres
- Management Action CTTM-A18 was updated to reflect the acres and mapping in the PRMP Bangs SRMA (Part of Recreation Management Zone 1) and Gunnison River Bluffs ERMA that is limited to designated routes for foot and horse. This correction also affects the acreage for the open designation for foot and horse

travel. The language in the PRMP was revised to the following for TRV-MA-17, “ Limit foot travel to designated routes in the following areas (2,200 acres) (Refer to Appendix M for route designations in limited areas):

- Bangs SRMA (Part of RMZ 1 - 1,400 acres)
- Gunnison River Bluffs ERMA (800 acres)
- A modification to decision number F&W-TRW-AU-03 (FW-TW-AU3 in PRMP) in the Approved RMP was completed to provide the updated name for the South Shale Ridge Wildlife Emphasis Area that was changed to the Winter Flats Wildlife Emphasis Area in the PRMP. The name of this area was changed in the PRMP to reduce potential confusion with the adjacent South Shale Ridge Area of Critical Environmental Concern.
- A modification to decision number VIS-AU-03 (V-AU3 in PRMP) in the Approved RMP was completed to correct an error in the list of areas that are covered under the visual resource management (VRM) NSO stipulation. Highway 141 along the Dolores River and Unaweep Canyon were added to NSO-1 from Alternative A in the PRMP. This action was also shown as applying to Alternative B, which was not correct. The listing of Highway 141 along the Dolores River and Unaweep Canyon were included in VIS-AU-03 in the Approved RMP.
- A modification was made to decision number ACEC-MA-03 (ACEC-A4) to updated the acres for closure to livestock grazing to match the mapped acres in the PRMP. This decision stated that 1800 acres were closed to livestock grazing in this area in the PRMP. The correctly mapped closure is 186 acres.
- Designations for 219 miles of routes identified by Mesa County as having high recreation concern were deferred. A portion of the deferred routes consisting of 189 miles will be managed as undesignated, and the remaining 30 miles will be managed under the existing designations from the 1987 RMP.

1.4 DECISIONS IN THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.4.1 Types of Land Use Plan Decisions

Land use plan decisions for BLM fall into two categories: 1) desired outcomes (goals and objectives), and 2) allowable (including restricted or prohibited) uses and actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes.

1. Desired Outcomes

Land use plans must identify desired outcomes expressed in terms of specific goals and objectives. Goals and objectives direct the BLM’s actions in most effectively meeting legal mandates; numerous regulatory responsibilities; national policy, including the DOI Strategic Plan goals; State Director guidance (see 43 CFR 1610.0-4 (b)); and other resource or social needs.

Goals are broad statements of desired outcomes that usually are not quantifiable.

Objectives identify specific desired outcomes for resources. Objectives are usually quantifiable and measurable and may have established time frames for achievement (as appropriate).

2. Allowable Uses and Management Actions

After establishing desired outcomes, the BLM identifies allowable uses (land use allocations) and management actions for different alternatives that are anticipated to achieve the goals and objectives.

Allowable Uses. Land use plans must identify uses, or allocations, that are allowable, restricted, or prohibited on the public lands and mineral estate. These allocations identify surface lands and/or subsurface mineral interests where uses are allowed, including any restrictions that may be needed to meet goals and objectives. Land use plans also identify lands where specific uses are excluded to protect resource values. Certain lands may be open or closed to specific uses based on legislative, regulatory, or policy requirements or criteria to protect sensitive resource values.

Management Actions. Land use plans also identify the actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes, including actions to maintain, restore, or improve land health. These actions include proactive as well as measures or criteria that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities occurring on public land. Land use plans also establish administrative designations such as ACECs, recommend proposed withdrawals, land tenure zones, and recommend or make findings of suitability for congressional designations (such as components of the National Wild and Scenic River System).

Major decisions for resources and resource uses included in the Approved RMP include the following:

FLUID MINERALS

The GJFO administers 1,231,300 acres of subsurface federal mineral estate. The Approved RMP provides the following guidance for the fluid mineral estate:

- Adoption of the Shale Ridges and Canyons Master Leasing Plan (700,900 acres) and manage 646,300 acres as open to fluid mineral development and 54,600 acres as closed to fluid mineral development;
- Manage 935,600 acres of federal mineral estate as open to fluid mineral leasing and geophysical exploration;
- Manage 295,600 acres of BLM surface/federal mineral estate as closed to fluid mineral leasing and geophysical exploration;
- Manage 29,800 acres of split estate private and state surface/federal fluid mineral estate as closed to fluid mineral leasing and geophysical exploration;
- Manage 424,500 acres that are open to fluid mineral leasing with no surface occupancy stipulations;
- Manage 74,100 acres that are open to fluid mineral leasing with controlled surface use stipulations; and
- Manage 383,800 acres with timing limitations.

RECREATION

Designate the following five Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) for the protection of the recreation setting and outcomes (87,200 acres):

- Bangs (47,800 acres)
- Dolores River Canyon (16,100 acres)
- Grand Valley OHV (9,700 acres)
- North Fruita Desert (11,600 acres)
- Palisade Rim (2,000 acres);

Designate the following six Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs) to sustain the principal recreation activities and associated qualities and conditions (217,400 acres):

- Barrel Springs (24,700 acres)
- Gateway (78,100 acres)
- Grand Valley Shooting Ranges (750 acres)
- Gunnison River Bluffs (810 acres)
- Horse Mountain (5,100 acres)
- North Desert (107,900 acres);

Approve recreational target shooting for approximately 1,013,700 acres, and prohibit recreational target shooting on approximately 49,000 acres;

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The Approved RMP designates the following areas as ACECs (123,000 acres):

- Atwell Gulch (2,900 acres);
- Badger Wash (2,200 acres);
- Indian Creek (2,300 acres);
- Juanita Arch (1,600 acres);
- Mt. Garfield (2,400 acres);
- The Palisade (32,200);
- Pyramid Rock (1,300 acres);
- Roan and Carr Creeks (33,600 acres);
- Rough Canyon (2,800 acres);
- Sinbad Valley (6,400 acres);
- South Shale Ridge (27,800);
- Unaweep Seep (85 acres);

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Decisions in the Approved RMP regarding transportation and access include the

following designations for motorized travel in the GJFO:

- Open: 10,200 acres (Grand Valley OHV SRMA, 18 Road Open Area, and Horse Mountain ERMA (RMZ2));
- Closed: 126,200 acres;
- Limited to Designated Routes: 925,200 acres (includes 105,200 acres with seasonal limitations);

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

The Approved RMP provides management guidance for four Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) (96,500 acres) in accordance with the Management of WSAs policies found in the FLPMA and in BLM Manual 6330, which includes the following areas:

- Demaree Canyon (22,700 acres);
- Little Book Cliffs (29,300 acres);
- The Palisade (26,700 acres);
- Sewemup Mesa (17,800 acres);

WILDLIFE EMPHASIS AREAS

The Approved RMP identifies 10 areas as Wildlife Emphasis Areas that provide specific management guidance and protection of areas with high habitat value for multiple species, including but not limited to sage-grouse, elk, mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, prairie dogs, and kit fox.

- Beehive (4,700 acres) – wintering and migratory habitat for mule deer and elk;
- Blue Mesa (9,300 acres) – wintering habitat for mule deer and elk;
- Bull Hill (4,800 acres) – wintering habitat for mule deer and elk;
- East Salt Creek (25,000 acres) – wintering habitat for mule deer and elk;
- Glade Park (27,200 acres) – Gunnison Sage-Grouse, mule deer and elk habitat;
- Prairie Canyon (22,200 acres) – long billed curlew, long eared owl, pronghorn antelope, white-tailed prairie dog, kit fox, Scott's oriole, gray vireo, and burrowing owl habitat;
- Rapid Creek (27,000 acres) – wintering and migratory habitat for mule deer and elk;
- Winter Flats (3,200 acres) – deer and elk wintering grounds;
- Sunnyside (14,500 acres) – bighorn sheep, mule deer, and Greater Sage-Grouse;
- Timber Ridge (11,800 acres) – mule deer, elk, and Sage Grouse.

LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

The Approved RMP identifies three areas totaling 44,100 acres to be managed to protect wilderness characteristics.

- Bangs (19,600)

- Maverick (17,800)
- Unaweep (6,700)

The Approved RMP also commits to maintaining an ongoing inventory (WIL-MA-07) and working with partners and cooperators to comply with current BLM guidance (WIL-MA-08). Consistent with applicable policies for lands with wilderness characteristics, including BLM Manuals 6310 and 6320, the GJFO will continue to update and complete inventories for lands with wilderness characteristics after the ROD is signed in areas not inventoried during this planning process or where new information in the form a citizen's wilderness inventory has been received. The GJFO will post the results of these inventories to the GJFO website and notify the original submitters of the updates to the inventory resulting from the review of their information.

Areas that were not inventoried during this planning process that are subsequently found to have wilderness characteristics through later inventories will be evaluated through project-level NEPA analysis. The GJFO Field Manager will determine if additional land use planning decisions are warranted to address resource conflicts or if existing protections adequately address resource issues.

Prior to approval of any surface disturbing activities with the potential to impact wilderness characteristics, the wilderness characteristics inventory will be reviewed and updated in accordance with BLM Manual 6310. Individual projects proposed within areas identified as possessing wilderness characteristics will be evaluated during the NEPA process for impacts to wilderness characteristics. Mitigation measures to protect wilderness characteristics will be applied as appropriate and consistent with the management direction provided in the Approved RMP.

1.4.2 Implementation Decisions

Implementation decisions take action to implement land use plan decisions and are generally appealable to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) under 43 CFR 4.410. BLM is using this decision document to approve the RMP (land use plan decisions) as well as the identified implementation actions (e.g., travel route designations).

Major implementation decisions included in the Approved RMP and TMP include the following for travel management route designations:

Table 1.4 Route Designations in Miles

Designation	Miles	Miles Following Mitigation
Limited to under 50" Only	37	48
Limited to under 50" Only with Seasonal Limitation	7	7
Limited to Bicycle Only	1	1
County Maintained	309	309
Limited to Foot and Bicycle Only	6	8
Limited to Foot Only	7	7
Limited to Foot and Horse Only	47	54
Limited to Foot, Horse, Bicycle and Motorcycle Only	89	84
Limited to Foot, Horse, Bicycle and Motorcycle with Seasonal Limitation	3	3
Limited to Foot, Horse and Bicycle Only	99	101
Limited to Foot, Horse and Bicycle Only with Seasonal Limitation	14	14
Open to all uses	871	1,004
Open with a Seasonal Limitation	235	237
Open (in open areas)	291	291
Undesignated (Zone L)	545	545
Undesignated Deferred (Mesa County important recreation routes)	189	189
Limited to Administrative and Permitted Uses Only (332 miles with no public access before mitigation)	524	330
Closed (94 miles with no public access before mitigation)	723	763
Total*	3,997	3,995

* Totals vary slightly due to rounding error.

During the structured analysis process, sensitive resources were identified requiring mitigation measures that would minimize effects to resources.

Generally, the alleviation or lessening of possible adverse effects on a resource by applying appropriate protective measures were defined and may be achieved by reroute, maintenance, additional resource surveys, remedying a safety issue or securing public access. Some routes may change designation following the completion of prescribed mitigation. Routes with proposed designation changes are shown in column two of Table 1.4.

The TMP implementation level decisions may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land

Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4. Public notification of this decision will be considered to have occurred on the date that the NOA is published in the federal register. Within 30 days of this decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215. The last day to file an appeal is 30 days after the signature of the ROD. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

1.4.3 Valid Existing Rights

Because of the long history of public land management, there are numerous rights and privileges that have been established on public lands under law, regulation, or planning decisions. The decisions included in this ROD and Approved RMP supersede the 1987 Grand Junction RMP and its subsequent amendments. Beyond the revised decisions in the Approved RMP, all BLM lands and Federal mineral estate within the GJFO remain subject to valid existing rights as well as subject to the stipulations and conditions of approval (COAs) associated with the given right at the time it was granted, including the right of reasonable access to surface and sub-surface parcels leased for the development of the mineral interest.

Oil and gas lease stipulations and lease notices in the Approved RMP would be applied to all new leases and to expired leases that are reissued. On existing leases, the BLM would seek voluntary compliance or would develop COAs for applications for permits to drill (APDs) or other authorizations, consistent with valid existing rights, to achieve resource objectives of lease stipulations contained in this RMP.

1.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm, commensurate to the landscape-level of planning, are included in the Approved RMP and appendices. In developing the alternatives, BLM used a variety of management methods and tools, including the identification of allowable uses, temporal, spatial, and/or methodological restrictions on uses, where specific uses would be prohibited, and specific actions that are needed to achieve the goals and objectives. Restrictions on land uses include seasonal closures, stipulations on surface disturbances, and the application of best management practices (BMPs).

Appendix H provides a list of BMPs that are applicable to land use activities authorized by the GJFO. Best management practices are state-of-the-art mitigation measures that may be applied on a site-specific basis to avoid, minimize, reduce, rectify, or compensate for adverse environmental or social impacts of land use activities. The BMPs included in this RMP are not intended to be a complete list but are displayed to show land use project proponents examples of commonly used practices the GJFO may require to reduce

impacts of surface-disturbing activities, use or occupancy. More explicit BMPs based on local conditions and resource-specific concerns could be developed once a specific proposal is being evaluated through the environmental analysis process. Additional BMPs can be proposed by project applicants for activities on BLM lands.

1.6 RMP AMENDMENTS, EVALUATION, MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING

1.6.1 RMP Amendments

RMP decisions are subsequently changed through either a plan amendment or another RMP revision. The process for conducting plan amendments is basically the same as the land use planning process used in developing or revising RMPs. The primary difference is that circumstances may allow for completing a plan amendment through the environmental assessment (EA) process, rather than through an EIS. Plan amendments (43 CFR 1610.5-5) change one or more of the terms, conditions, or decisions of an approved land use plan. Plan amendments are most often prompted by the need to consider a proposal or action that does not conform to the plan; implement new or revised policy that changes land use plan decisions; respond to new, intensified, or changed uses on BLM land; and consider significant new information from resource assessments, monitoring, or scientific studies that change land use plan decisions.

1.6.2 RMP Monitoring

Land-use plan decision monitoring is a continuous process occurring over the life of the RMP. The aim is to maintain a dynamic RMP. Monitoring data are collected, examined, and used to draw conclusions on (1) whether planned actions have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the RMP (implementation monitoring), (2) whether RMP allowable use and management action decisions and the resultant implementation actions are effective in achieving program specific objectives or desired outcomes (effectiveness monitoring), and (3) calculating the cost of delivering a service or product (efficiency monitoring by program elements). Conclusions are then used to make recommendations on whether to continue current management or determine what changes need to be made to implementation practices to better achieve RMP decisions. Indicators, methods, locations, units of measures, frequency, and action triggers can be established by national policy guidance, in RMPs, or by technical specialists in order to address specific issues.

Based on staffing and funding levels, monitoring is annually prioritized consistent with the goals and objectives of the RMP. BLM may work in cooperation with local, State, and other Federal agencies or use data collected by other agencies and sources when appropriate and available.

1.6.3 RMP Evaluation

In accordance with the BLM's *Land Use Planning Handbook* (H-1601-1), the approved RMP will be evaluated periodically to determine whether the land use plan decisions and NEPA analysis are still valid and whether the plan is being implemented effectively. More specifically, the RMP will be evaluated to determine if (1) the decisions remain relevant to current issues, (2) decisions are effective in achieving or making progress toward achieving the desired outcomes specified in the plan, (3) any decisions in need of revision, (4) any decisions that need to be dropped from further considerations, and (5) any areas requiring new decisions.

In making these determinations, the evaluation will consider whether mitigation measures, such as those presented in the Approved RMP are satisfactory, whether there are significant changes in the related plans of other entities, and whether there is significant new information.

In addition to periodic evaluations, special evaluations may also be required to review unexpected management actions or significant changes in the related plans of Native American tribes, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments, or to evaluate legislation or litigation that has the potential to trigger an amendment or revision to the RMP. Evaluations may identify resource needs and means for correcting deficiencies and addressing issues through plan maintenance, amendments, or revisions. They should also identify where new and emerging issues and other values have surfaced.

1.6.4 RMP Maintenance

During the life of the RMP, the BLM expects that new information gathered from field inventories and assessments, other agency studies, and other sources will update geographic information system (GIS) data and BMPs. To the extent that this new information or actions address issues covered in the plan, the BLM will integrate the data through plan maintenance. BLM regulations in 43 CFR 1610.5-4 provide that RMP decisions and supporting actions can be maintained to reflect minor changes in data. Maintenance is limited to further refining, documenting, or clarifying a previously approved decision incorporated in the plan. Maintenance must not expand the scope of resource uses or restrictions or change the terms, conditions, and decisions of the approved RMP. For example, adjusting the parameters of special status species habitat based on new inventory information or adjusting fire management polygons due to changes in fuel source or urban interface patterns would be reasonable maintenance actions.

Maintenance may be especially necessary to update acreage figures presented throughout the RMP. Acreages are based on GIS data, which is subject to constant refinement. Any potential discrepancies within the acreage figures or future refinements in the data may be corrected or updated in the RMP through plan maintenance.

1.7 THE PLANNING PROCESS

1.7.1 Policies and Legislative Constraints

FLPMA is the primary authority for the BLM to manage public lands. This law establishes provisions for land use planning, land acquisition and disposition, administration, rangeland management, rights-of-way, and designated management areas, and for the repeal of certain laws and statutes. NEPA provides the basic national charter for environmental responsibility, and requires the consideration and public availability of information on the environmental impacts of major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. In concert, FLPMA and NEPA provide the overarching guidance for all activities on BLM lands.

RMPs are the primary mechanism for guiding BLM activities so that the mission and goals outlined in the BLM Strategic Plan are achieved. See the BLM's *Land Use Planning Handbook* (H-1601-1) for program-specific guidance. RMPs ensure that BLM lands are managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in the FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

As required by the FLPMA, as well as by BLM policies and guidelines, the public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; and that, where appropriate, will:

- preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition;
- provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals;
- provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use; and
- recognize the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands [Sec. 102 43 U.S.C. 1701 (a)(3)].

In addition to FLPMA and NEPA (and their associated regulations), the BLM must comply with the mandate and intent of all applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies that apply to BLM-administered lands and Federal mineral estate. The planning process is intended to develop RMP decisions that resolve conflicts between program priorities, policies and guidelines and that meet the multiple use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA.

1.7.2 Master Leasing Plans

Another aspect of the planning process in areas with the potential for leasing of Federal fluid minerals is the Master Leasing Plan (MLP) concept, introduced in *Washington Office Leasing Reform Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2010-117*. In August 2010, the Wilderness Society and the Center for Native Ecosystems submitted recommendations that the BLM GJFO prepare a Shale Ridges and Canyons MLP. This proposal encompasses 908,600 acres, including 640,700 acres of BLM-administered surface land and 700,900 acres of federal mineral estate. The externally recommended MLP is within

the GJFO boundary and overlaps with most of the northern half of the RMP planning area. The GJFO found that this proposal did not meet the main criteria for development of an MLP, however, they determined based on public comment that the area warranted analysis through an MLP incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The decisions associated with the MLP are adopted as part of this ROD and Approved RMP.

1.7.3 Relationship to the Northwest Colorado BLM Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Amendment and EIS

The BLM is also considering management of greater-sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) in the GJFO planning area in a concurrent plan amendment process. The BLM is preparing the Northwest Colorado BLM Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Amendment and EIS, which includes a full analysis of all applicable greater sage-grouse conservation measures as directed by BLM Instruction Memorandum No, 2012-044. The BLM expects to issue a comprehensive set of management decisions for greater-sage grouse when it issues the final Northwest Colorado BLM Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Amendment. In the interim period between issuance of the GJFO ROD and the Northwest Colorado BLM Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Amendment, the GJFO intends to act consistent with the BLM policy set forth in the BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-043 and any other applicable guidance.

1.8 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

The BLM decision making process is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Council on Environmental Regulations (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA, and the USDOJ and BLM policies and procedures implementing NEPA. NEPA and the associated regulatory and policy framework require Federal agencies involve the interested public in their decision making. The GJFO has made open, public dialogue integral to this RMP revision planning process. In doing so the GJFO recognized the interests of a wide range of public, private, and governmental representatives in the management of BLM lands and Federal mineral estate. The various opportunities for public input are identified below.

1.8.1 Public Scoping

The formal scoping period began with publication of the (Notice of Intent) NOI in the *Federal Register* on October 15, 2008, and ended January 9, 2009. The Scoping Report documented the results of scoping by summarizing the individual comments received and describing the issues that were raised, and is incorporated here by reference. Three RMP public scoping meetings were held in the planning area in 2008: Grand Junction, Colorado on December 2, Moab, Utah on December 3, and Collbran, Colorado on December 4. The BLM provided the local media with timely press releases announcing the time, location, and purpose of the meetings. The format for the scoping meetings featured informal, one-on-one discussions between BLM representatives and members of the public.

1.8.2 Trails and Routes Data-Collection Workshops

The GJFO also hosted six trails and routes data-collection workshops in February 2009. The workshops were held separately from the scoping meetings. The workshops were held to (1) allow the public to review the BLM's inventory for accuracy and completeness, (2) provide information on routes that are missing from the BLM's inventory, and (3) offer suggestions for reroutes or new trail sections that would complement the existing route system. The comment period for route and trail data collection was open until March 20, 2009. A second comment period was held from July 20 to August 21st that focused on gathering information about public's desired future condition for the travel route system.

1.8.3 Public Review of, and Comment on, the Draft RMP/Draft EIS

BLM published the NOA for the GJFO Draft RMP/EIS in the *Federal Register* on January 25, 2013. Initially, the BLM set an extended 90-day public comment period that lasted until April 25, 2013. Before the end of the comment period, BLM had received multiple requests to extend the comment period. BLM extended the comment period to June 24, 2013. The total comment period encompassed 151 days.

The BLM also hosted five open house meetings to provide the public with opportunities to ask questions about the project and planning process, to meet the RMP team members, and to offer comments.

1.8.4 Public Review and Protest of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the GJFO RMP revision planning process and has an interest that may be adversely affected by the planning decisions may protest the proposed planning decisions within 30 days from the date the NOA is published in the *Federal Register* by the EPA. The 30-day protest period ended May 11, 2015. BLM received 19 protest letters that were subsequently denied, or dismissed by the BLM Director, whose decision constitutes final agency action for the USDI. Issues raised by protestors included significant new information, recreation, socioeconomic impacts, lands with wilderness characteristics inventory, response to comments, air resources, Master Leasing Plan policy and valid and existing rights.

1.8.5 Results of the Protest Period and Governor's Consistency Review

1.8.5.1 Results of the Protest Period

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the GJFO RMP revision planning process and has an interest that may be adversely affected by the planning decisions may protest the proposed planning decisions within 30 days from the date the Notice of Availability is published in the *Federal Register* by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The 30-day protest period ended May 11, 2015.

The BLM received 19 protest letters with standing during the 30-day protest period provided on the proposed land use plan decisions contained in the GJFO Proposed RMP/Final EIS in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2. Issues raised by protestors included significant new information, recreation, socioeconomic impacts, lands with wilderness characteristics inventory, response to comments, air resources, Master Leasing Plan policy and valid and existing rights.

The BLM Director and his staff at the BLM Washington Office appropriately reviewed and resolved all proposed planning decisions protested by the public.

The BLM Director concluded that the BLM Colorado State Director followed the applicable laws, regulations, and policies and considered all relevant resource information and public input in developing the Proposed RMP. The BLM Director resolved the protests without making significant changes to the Proposed RMP.

1.8.5.2 Results of the Governor’s Consistency Review

The BLM regulations in 43 CFR 1610.3- 2 (e) require a 60-day Governor's consistency review period for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS to ensure consistency with State government plans or policies. The BLM initiated the Colorado Governor’s Consistency Review by letter from the BLM State Director dated April 10, 2015. The consistency review period concluded June 8, 2015. The Governor did not identify any inconsistencies with approved state or local plans, policies, or programs.

1.9 COORDINATION AND CONSULTATIONS

1.9.1 Cooperating Agencies

To integrate the special expertise and jurisdiction by law of these and other agencies, BLM invited local, State, Federal, and tribal representatives to participate as Cooperating Agencies for the RMP revision. These organizations were incorporated into the planning process as their jurisdiction and expertise warranted, resulting in their direct contribution to and improvement of the planning effort and the resultant RMP. The agencies that agreed to participate as formal cooperating agencies for the GJFO RMP revision and that signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are listed in Table 1.3.

Table 1.2. Cooperating Agencies

Federal Agencies

USDA Forest Service

State Agencies

Colorado River Water Conservation
District

Local Agencies

City of Fruita	City of Grand Junction
Town of Collbran	Town of De Beque
Town of Palisade	Garfield County
Mesa County	

BLM also coordinated with the following agencies: Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the Bureau of Reclamation.

1.9.2 Tribal Consultation and Indian Trust Assets

Tribal consultation regarding the GJFO RMP revisions began in February 2007. American Indian tribes and organizations consulted to date are as follows:

- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation (Ute Indian Tribe)

On August 30, 2010, the GJFO sent letters to 14 tribal governments (other than the three Ute tribes), to assess their interest in participating the RMP process. None of the 14 tribes expressed interested in participating.

American Indian trust resources are legal interests in assets held in trust by the Federal government for federally recognized Indian tribes or nations or for individual Indians. These assets can be real property, physical assets, or intangible property rights. Examples are lands, minerals, water rights, hunting and fishing rights, other natural resources, money, or claims. The BLM has no trust administration responsibilities in the GJFO.

1.9.3 Consultation Efforts with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer interested Native American Tribes

The BLM relies on the 2012 National Programmatic Agreement entered into between the BLM, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Colorado State Protocol for compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. § 306108, and its regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. The National Programmatic Agreement and the Colorado State Protocol set forth the alternative process and stipulations for satisfying Section 106, including a required process for State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) involvement during the development stage and all subsequent phases of land use planning in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.3 and Colorado State Protocol at Section V (Oct. 2014). The Colorado State Protocol also provides for a process of engaging Native American tribes and other consulting parties. In 2010 the BLM invited 17 tribal governments to participate in the RMP revision. Three of the tribes

that were invited accepted the invitation. The BLM coordinated with SHPO on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. A copy of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS was sent to the SHPO for review and comment. The BLM sought information from the three tribal agencies regarding cultural resources of importance, and integrated the information into the development of the Proposed RMP. The BLM also requested information from local governmental entities and the public. The Proposed RMP revision includes the information received from all interested parties and will inform future review and consideration of implementation-level decisions.

With respect to the BLM's travel and transportation management planning (TMP) decisions (Appendix M), the BLM is following the alternative procedures for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA as set forth in Attachment F of the 2014 Colorado State Protocol. This procedure establishes a phased process for compliance with Section 106 for TMPs, beginning with three phased steps for identifying historic properties. As described in Appendix M of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the BLM utilized existing cultural resource information to determine potential cultural resource concerns on a route-by-route basis during planning, which was included in the Route Designation Reports. The TMP only provides designations for existing routes; it does not open new routes or provide locations for new camping or staging areas, thus the use of a phased process without completing Class III surveys is appropriate pursuant with Attachment F of the 2014 State Protocol. The BLM consulted with the SHPO and interested Native American tribes during the planning process, and incorporated comments received into the proposed RMP. Following this ROD, the BLM will follow the implementation plan for completing the phased identified process for priority areas that require Class III cultural resource inventories pursuant to Attachment F of the 2014 Colorado State Protocol. Consultation with Native American tribes and other interested parties on the TMP (Appendix M) is ongoing and will follow the process in Attachment F of the 2014 Colorado State Protocol. The BLM GJFO will continue to work with the SHPO consistent with Attachment F of the 2014 Colorado State Protocol. If adverse effects are identified, mitigation measures, including avoidance, will be considered in consultation with the SHPO, Native American tribes, and other consulting parties to avoid, minimize or mitigate the effects pursuant to Attachment F of the 2014 Colorado State Protocol.

1.9.4 Resource Advisory Council

A Resource Advisory Council (RAC) is a committee established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management (BLM Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1). A RAC is generally composed of 15 members of the public representing different areas of expertise. The Colorado Northwest RAC includes members appointed to represent constituent public land users and provides input on public management issues to the BLM's Northwest RAC Designated Federal Officers. Recommendations are based on consensus-building and collaboration.

The Colorado Northwest RAC was involved in developing the preliminary planning issues for the GJFO RMP. In addition, a RAC subcommittee was established to participate in the planning process, and in particular to assist the BLM with creating a range of reasonable alternatives for the EIS. To date, 17 meetings of the RAC

subcommittee have been held at the GJFO. On November 3, 2011 the RAC subcommittee approved the range of alternatives as a reasonable range, at the next Northwest RAC meeting (December 1, 2011) the RAC disbanded the subcommittee because their task was fulfilled.

1.9.5 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation

To comply with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C 1531 et. seq.), the GJFO consulted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) throughout the RMP revision planning process. The USFWS provided input on planning issues, data collection and review, and alternatives development.

BLM worked with the USFWS to develop a Draft Biological Assessment (BA) following release of the Draft RMP/Draft EIS. The USFWS provided preliminary comments that were used to prepare the BA. As part of consultation efforts with the USFWS on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, a BA was provided to the USFWS for review and comment on October 3, 2014. The USFWS responded with a concurrence letter on BLM's effects determinations on April 27, 2015.

If new information becomes available, new species are listed, or there are any changes to the Approved RMP that alter its implementation or the extent of anticipated impacts from those described in the Final BA, then the BLM would re-initiate Section 7 consultation with the FWS.

1.10 CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTING THE GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.10.1 Management in Accordance with FLPMA Under the Principles of Multiple Use and Sustained Yield

The Approved RMP seeks the best combination of management decisions to meet the purpose and need for a land use plan in consideration of the planning issues and management concerns identified through the planning process. It is prepared to ensure that the public lands in the GJFO are managed in accordance with FLPMA under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Section 103 (c) of FLPMA defines "multiple use" as "management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people. . . ." The combination of planning decisions is driven by the diverse resources values on the public lands and how to best realize the broad spectrum of available opportunities. This combination of decisions also recognizes the limits of the ecosystems' sustainability and is within the constraints of applicable laws and regulations.

BLM's allocation of uses, often perceived as contrary to its multiple use mandate, is specifically provided for under FLPMA, which further defines multiple use as the "most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources . . ." and "the use of some land

for less than all of the resources” The trade-offs resulting from the allocation of resources were fully analyzed and disclosed in the Final EIS, providing for an informed decision that acknowledges their consequences on the human environment.

Another important component of multiple use under FLPMA is accounting for “the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources” These needs will be provided for through decisions included in the Approved RMP designed to meet the RMP’s goals and objectives for sustainable productivity of renewable resources and healthy ecosystems, habitat, and waters.

1.10.2 Consistency with Existing Plans and Policies of Local, State, and Federal Agencies and Local Native American Tribes.

Management decisions in the Approved RMP are made compatible and consistent with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, and Federal agencies and local Native American tribes to the extent consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal law and regulations applicable to BLM lands and Federal mineral estate. No formal comments were received from Federal or State agencies or tribal governments indicating the Proposed RMP was inconsistent with other existing plans or policies.

The Governor's Office did not identify any inconsistencies concerning State or local plans, policies, and programs following the 60-day Governor's Consistency Review of the GJFO Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

1.11 AVAILABILITY OF THE GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Electronic copies on DVD of the approved RMP are available by request at the BLM GJFO at 2815 H Road in Grand Junction, Colorado 81506. The approved RMP is also available online at <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/gjfo.html>.

1.12 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Approved RMP will be implemented as funding and workforce allow. The BLM will develop an implementation strategy to identify and prioritize the work needed to meet the goals and objectives of the RMP. Most of the land use plan decisions are effective upon approval of this document. However, some decisions will take a number of years to implement on the ground. Implementation monitoring will track which decisions have been implemented and when.

1.13 APPROVAL

The Approved RMP carries forward the land use planning decisions presented as Alternative B in the Proposed RMP and FEIS released to the public on April 10, 2015

with few minor revisions. Specific management decisions for public lands under the jurisdiction of the GJFO are presented by resource in Chapter 2 of the Approved RMP and in Appendices A through Q. The Approved RMP makes substantive revisions to management under the previous land use plan prepared in 1987, particularly with its decisions regarding the resources, programs, and opportunities.

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached Approved RMP and associated TMP for the GJFO. This ROD serves as the final decision for the decisions in the Approved RMP and associated TMP, and the Approved RMP/TMP become effective on the date this ROD is signed.

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER RECOMMENDATION

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated impacts, and public and agency input, I recommend the adoption and implementation of the Grand Junction Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan, which includes a comprehensive Travel Management Plan.

Recommended:

AUG 10 2015



Katie Stevens
Field Office Manager
Grand Junction Field Office

Date

DISTRICT MANAGER CONCURRENCE

I concur with the adoption and implementation of the Grand Junction Field Office Resource Management Plan and associated Travel Management Plan.

Concurrence:

AUG 10 2015



Joseph F. Meyer
District Manager
Northwest District Office

Date

STATE DIRECTOR APPROVAL

In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Grand Junction Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan, and the associated Travel Management Plan implementation decisions.

Approved:



Ruth Welch
Colorado State Director

8-10-15

Date

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