

## CHAPTER 3 – AREA DIRECTION

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This chapter contains management direction for geographic areas, special areas and designations that have unique resources or management conditions (see Figure 3.1). Specially designated lands are formal designations, i.e. suitable WSR segment and ACEC. Also included in this chapter is direction for lands managed for wilderness characteristics and the Dolores River Canyon.

In addition to desired conditions and objectives, the areas in this chapter include “allowable use” tables. These tables portray the suitability determinations made under the grazing, timber, and travel programs in Chapter 2 as they apply to specific areas, and also identify additional uses that are listed as allowable, restricted, or prohibited. Restricted activities are those that are allowed, but may only be allowed during certain times of the year, within specific areas, or under specific conditions. The activities in the tables are described below.

- **Fire Managed for Resource Benefit:** This activity includes managing fires in order to achieve a management objective and/or a desired condition. The application of fire managed for resource benefit will always depend on site-specific conditions, current and predicted future weather, and fuel conditions.
- **Prescribed Burning:** This activity includes igniting fires in order to achieve a management objective and/or a desired condition. Managed active burning will be prescribed and monitored to burn at specified intensities over a defined area.
- **Mechanical Fuels Treatments:** This activity includes any method to alter live or dead vegetation with hand tools or by machine (including thinning with chainsaws or any commercial machine, shredder, chipper, or similar equipment) to break up fuel connectivity, including removal of fuels from treatment sites.
- **Land Use ROWs and Utility Corridors:** This includes energy corridors, linear transmission, communication sites, and other land use authorizations.
- **Livestock Grazing:** This includes permitted livestock grazing as authorized by an agency grazing permit on designated grazing allotments or areas outside grazing allotments where livestock grazing could be used as a vegetation management tool. Allotments contain lands that are both suitable and unsuitable for livestock grazing. Stocking rates would be based only on lands suitable for livestock grazing as determined at the project level.
- **Facilities:** This includes infrastructure and structures placed on public lands for resource protection, administrative use, and/or public enjoyment.
- **Motorized (summer):** This includes the use of any motorized wheeled vehicle (including four-wheel drives, dirt bikes, and ATVs/OHVs) during the year when the ground is not covered by snow.
- **Motorized (winter):** This includes the use of snowmobiles and other motorized winter vehicles during the snow-covered months.
- **Non-Motorized (summer and winter):** This includes hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and/or other means of non-motorized recreation. Non-motorized use does not include mountain biking because it is addressed as a separate activity below.
- **Mechanical Transport:** This includes any contrivance that moves people or material in or over land, water, or air that has moving parts, that provides a mechanical advantage to the user, and that is powered by a living or non-living power source. This includes, but is not limited to, bicycles, game carriers, carts, and wagons. It does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances. It also does not include skis, snowshoes, rafts, canoes, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts.

- **Road Construction (permanent or temporary):** This includes the building of roads for a specified use or uses, either permanent or temporary.
- **Minerals - Leasable:** This includes oil and gas, coal, and other leasable minerals, including solid leasable minerals such as sodium, potassium, and others. All TRFO lands made available for lease are subject to standard lease terms, which require operators of leases, as well as leasable mineral permits and licenses, to minimize adverse impacts to air, water, land, visual, cultural, and biological resources. Special lease stipulations are applied to a lease if additional restrictions on the rights of lessees are required to protect environmental resources. Special lease stipulations include NSO, CSU, and TL. Stipulations applied to new leases are described in Appendix H, Resource Management Stipulations for New Leases, of this RMP.
- **Minerals - Locatable:** This includes minerals that are subject to claim under the Mining Law of 1872 that are open to entry for exploration and development (unless withdrawn by law). Unless lands have been withdrawn by law, development of locatable minerals is generally allowable; however, additional measures may be applied to plans and notices to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation in areas with concerns for specific resources or management designations.
- **Mineral - Salable:** This includes sand, gravel, and decorative rock for commercial or personal use, which may be disposed of through sales contract to individuals or for-profit enterprises, or through free use permits to government and non-profit entities.

### 3.1 Wilderness Study Areas

Wilderness is a unique and vital resource. In addition to offering primitive recreation opportunities, it is valuable for its scientific and educational uses, as a benchmark for ecological studies, and for the preservation of historical and natural features.

There are seven WSAs on BLM-administered lands within the planning area (see Figure 2.1 Protected Areas). These WSAs are areas that were found to have wilderness characteristics during the original wilderness inventory that was conducted from 1978 to 1980 as directed by Section 603 of the FLPMA.

Section 603 also provides direction to the BLM on the management of WSAs and states, “During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness.” This language is referred to as the "non-impairment" mandate.

BLM WSAs were designated in the 1980s, and a final agency recommendation was forwarded to the President in 1991. Unless released by Congress from wilderness review, WSAs would continue to be managed in accordance with BLM Manual 6330 (July 13, 2012). If the WSAs are released, they would be managed in accordance with the direction provided in the desired conditions below (unless directed otherwise in the enabling legislation). See Table 3.1 for a listing of the existing WSAs. Areas are depicted in Figure 2.1 Protected Areas.

**Table 3.1: Wilderness Study Areas**

<b>Wilderness Study Areas</b>	
Weber Mountain	6,300
Dolores River Canyon	16,781
Handies Peak	1,041
Menefee Mountain	7,303
McKenna Peak	20,902
Whitehead Gulch	1,870
Weminuche Contiguous	1,419
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,576</b>

#### Desired Conditions

- 3.1.1 Unless directed otherwise in the enabling legislation, WSAs released by Congress from wilderness review would be managed for existing values and uses, such as primitive and unconfined recreation, opportunities for solitude, naturalness, roadlessness, livestock grazing, forest resources, and biodiversity. The visual quality of WSAs released from wilderness review would be managed under the VRM class of adjacent BLM public lands. Where more than one VRM class lies adjacent to a WSA, an interdisciplinary team would decide the VRM class of the released WSA.

# Special Areas and Designations

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Figure 3.1

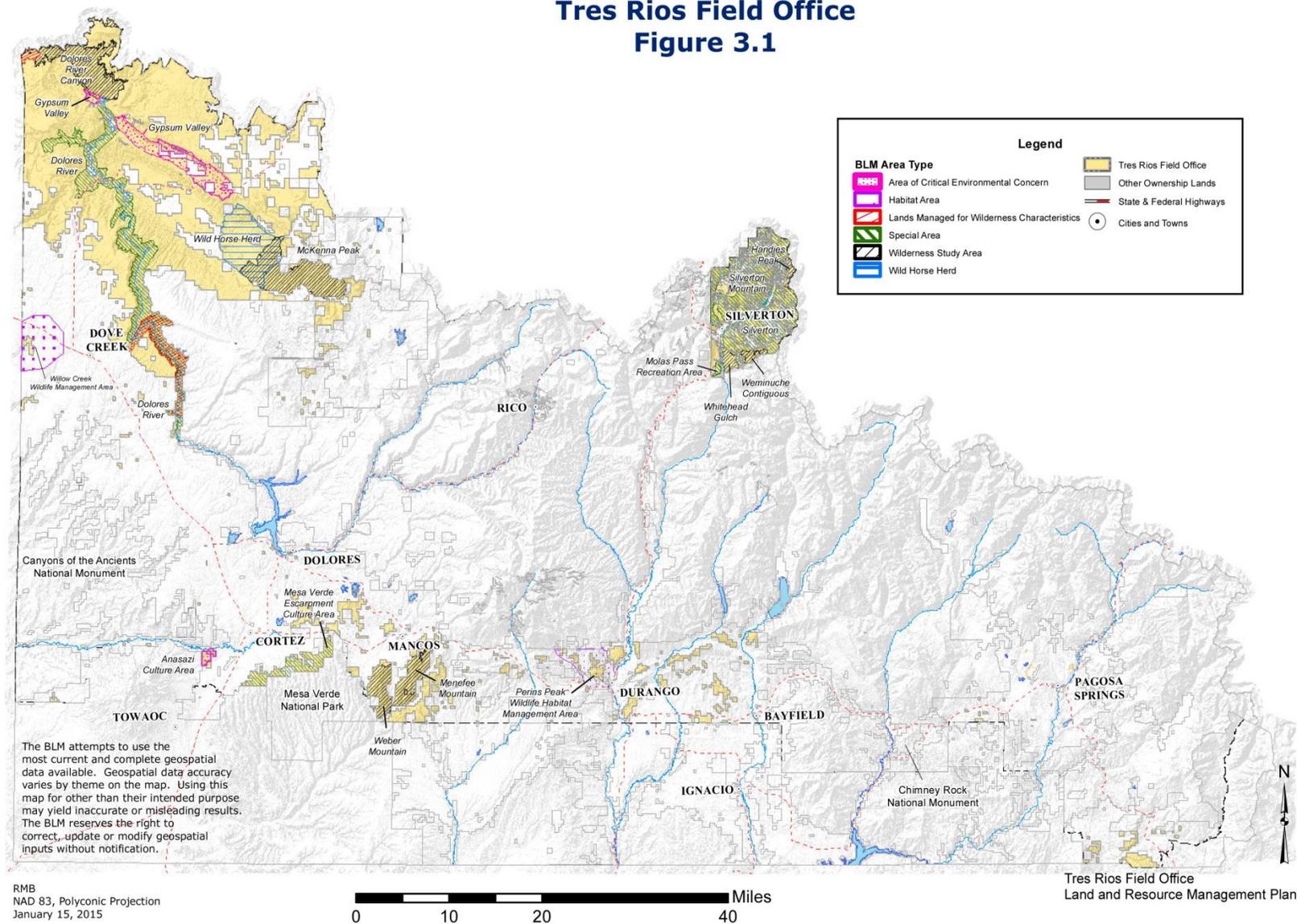


Figure 3.1. Special Areas and Designations

### 3.2 Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics

In addition to the initial wilderness review required by Section 603 of the FLMPA that led to the creation of WSAs, the Secretary of the Interior is also required to “maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resource and other values,” which encompasses wilderness characteristics as a resource (FLPMA, Section 201).

A detailed discussion of the wilderness characteristics inventory and evaluation process, and its results, is found in Appendix O. The EIS analysis, which takes into consideration the management of multiple resources, also guides the decision process for which lands with wilderness characteristics will be managed for protection.

Figure 3.3 identifies the lands that will be managed for wilderness characteristics, and Table 3.2.1 provides the acreage and a description of the location of the units that will be managed for wilderness characteristics.

The Coyote Wash unit is available for lease with an NSO stipulation. The Snaggletooth unit is not available for lease.

**Table 3.2.1: BLM Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics**

Unit Number	General Location	Acres
CO-030-301b	Snaggletooth area of Dolores River	10,723
CO-030-290h	Coyote Wash	1,144
<b>Total acres</b>		<b>11,867</b>

For the two geographic areas carried forward in the Approved RMP to be managed for wilderness characteristics, Table 3.2.2 provides a crosswalk reference detailing the management actions considered for these areas in the Draft and in the Proposed versions of the RMP.

**Table 3.2.2: Crosswalk from Draft LRMP to Proposed LRMP: Geographic Areas in Approved RMP to be Managed for Wilderness Characteristics**

Area	Draft LRMP Management, Alternative B (Preferred)	Proposed LRMP Management, Alternative B (Preferred)
Coyote Wash	MA <sup>4</sup> -3, Natural Landscape with Limited Management (Fig. 10, pg. 133)	Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics (Fig. 3.8, pg. 196)
		Desired Conditions 3.8.1: Wilderness Characteristics are present and preserved

<sup>4</sup>Management Area. MA-3 corresponded with the Coyote Wash area, and MA-2 corresponded with the Snaggletooth area of Dolores River. See definitions in the Draft and Proposed LRMPs.

Area	Draft LRMP Management, Alternative B (Preferred)	Proposed LRMP Management, Alternative B (Preferred)
	Management Restrictions (Table 11, pg. 135): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minerals (leasable): Available for lease with NSO</li> <li>• Minerals (locatable): Restricted</li> <li>• Potential RNA (from Table 33, pg. 206)</li> </ul>	Standards 3.8.2 (pg. 195): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new ROWs</li> <li>• Personal product removal restricted</li> <li>• Minerals (leasable): Available for lease with NSO (Final EIS, pg. 553)</li> </ul>
	Road Construction: Restricted	No new Road Construction
	VRM Class 3 (Figure 32,pg. 281)	VRM Class 2
	Recreation Facilities: Restricted	Construction of new facilities restricted
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motorized (Summer): Restricted</li> <li>• Motorized (Winter): Restricted</li> </ul>	Closed to Motorized and Mechanized
	Minerals (Saleable): Restricted	Closed to Mineral Material Sales
	Timber Production: Prohibited	Extractive Commercial Uses Prohibited
<b>Snaggletooth area of Dolores River</b>	<b>MA-2, Special Areas and Unique Landscapes (Fig. 10, pg. 133)</b>	<b>Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics (Fig. 3.8, pg. 196)</b>
	Management Emphasis for Dolores River Canyon Segments (Table 33, pg. 206) <p>Ponderosa Gorge (Bradfield Campground to Dove Creek Pump Station):</p> <p>Scenic Canyon, old-growth ponderosa pine, wilderness characteristics of outstanding solitude, primitive/semi-primitive recreation, whitewater boating</p>	Desired Conditions 3.8.1: Wilderness Characteristics are present and preserved
	Management Restrictions (Table 34, pg. 207): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescribed Burning: Restricted</li> <li>• Mechanical Fuels Treatment: Restricted</li> <li>• Livestock Grazing: Restricted</li> <li>• Potential RNA (from Table 33, pg. 206)</li> <li>• Minerals (leasable): Available for lease with NSO in canyon and TL for desert bighorn lambing areas</li> </ul>	Standards 3.8.2 (pg. 195) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new ROWs</li> <li>• Personal product removal restricted</li> <li>• Minerals (leasable): Available for lease with NSO (Final EIS, pg. 553)</li> </ul>
	Minerals (Saleable): Prohibited	Closed to Mineral Material Sales
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motorized (Summer): Restricted</li> <li>• Motorized (Winter): Restricted</li> </ul>	Closed to Motorized and Mechanized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timber Production: N/A</li> <li>• Commercial Use of Special Forest Products and Firewood: Restricted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extractive Commercial Uses Prohibited</li> <li>• Personal product removal restricted</li> </ul>	

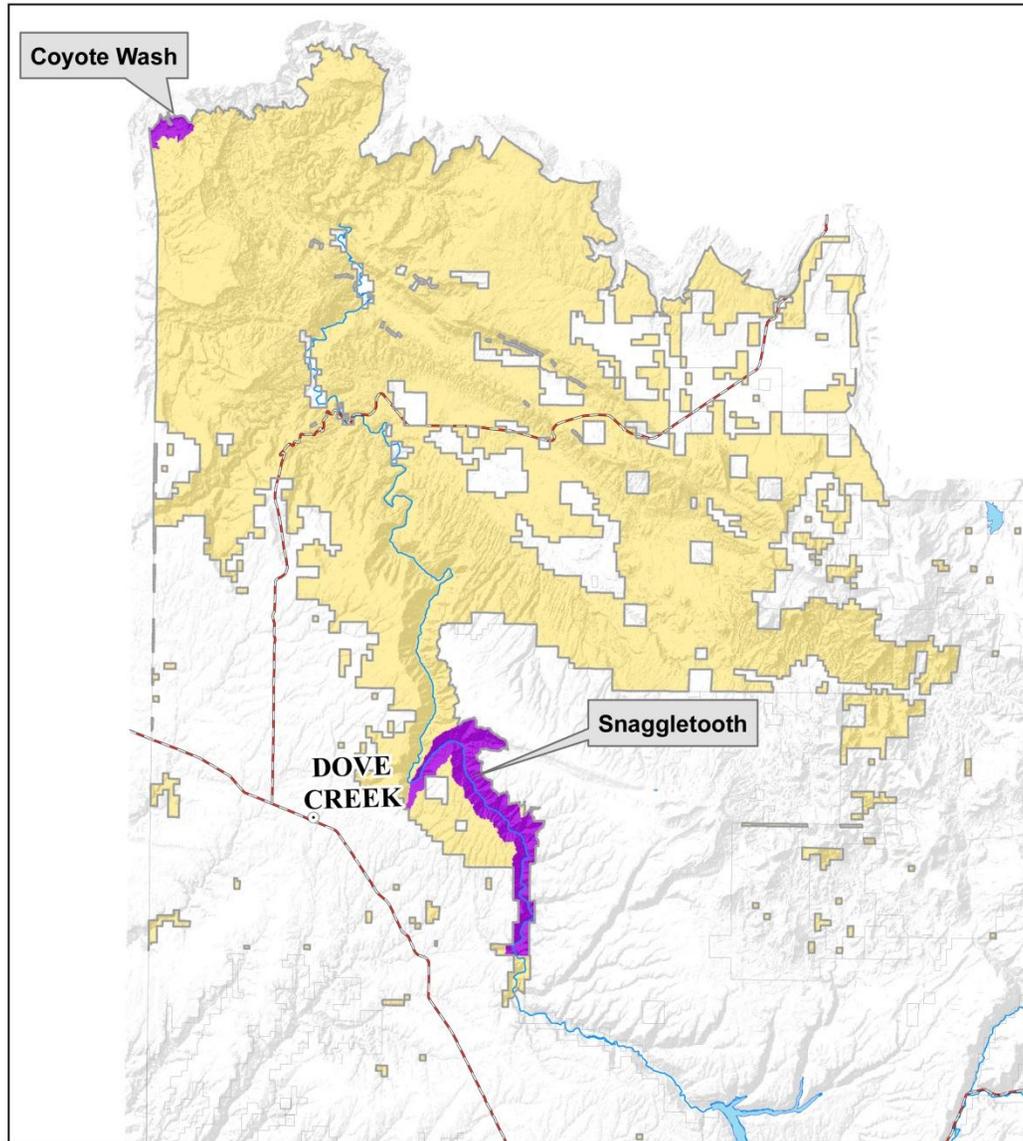
Area	Draft LRMP Management, Alternative B (Preferred)	Proposed LRMP Management, Alternative B (Preferred)
	VRM Class 2 (Fig. 32, pg. 281)	VRM Class 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Facilities: Restricted</li> <li>• Road Construction: Restricted</li> </ul>	Construction of new facilities restricted

**Desired Conditions**

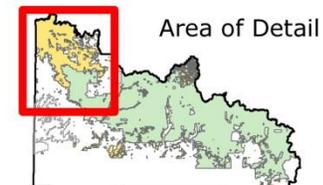
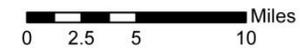
- 3.2.1 Wilderness characteristics are present and preserved within the lands described in Table 3.2.1 and identified on Figure 3.2.

**Standards**

- 3.2.2 Lands described in Table 3.2.1 and identified on Figure 3.2 must be managed in accordance with the following management actions and allowable uses:
  - 3.2.2a Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are not available for location of new rights-of-way under any conditions (they are identified as exclusion areas). Modification of existing authorizations that would add new disturbance outside the boundary of the existing right-of-way is prohibited; adjustments to existing rights-of ways or other authorizations may be allowed if impacts to wilderness characteristics are reduced or eliminated.
  - 3.2.2b Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are closed to new road construction.
  - 3.2.2c Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are closed to motorized and mechanized travel (summer and winter), with the exception of access related to valid existing rights.
  - 3.2.2d Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are closed to mineral materials sales.
  - 3.2.2e Extractive commercial uses are prohibited.
  - 3.2.2f Personal product removal permits are restricted to uses that that preserve or enhance wilderness characteristics.
  - 3.2.2g Lands managed for wilderness characteristics are managed under VRM Class II.
  - 3.2.2h Construction of new structures and facilities is restricted to activities that preserve or enhance wilderness characteristics or those necessary for the management of other uses allowed under this RMP.
  - 3.2.2i Lands managed for wilderness characteristics must be retained in federal ownership.



## Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics Tres Rios Field Office Figure 3.2



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The BLM attempts to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The BLM reserves the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

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Land and Resource Management Plan

RMB  
NAD 83, Polyconic Projection  
September 2, 2014

**Figure 3.2. Lands Managed for Wilderness Characteristics.**

## 3.3 Wild and Scenic Rivers

### Introduction

Congress enacted the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) in 1968 in order to preserve the free-flowing condition, water quality, and outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) of select rivers. The WSRA directs that each river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System be administered in a manner that protects and enhances its outstanding natural and cultural values. The WSRA allows existing uses of a river to continue and future uses to be considered (as long as the use does not conflict with the protection of river values).

WSRA Section 5(d)(1) directs federal agencies to consider the potential of all rivers and streams for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System during their planning processes. All streams and rivers within the planning area were assessed as to their WSR eligibility and suitability. The FEIS describes the process used for the planning area (also see Appendix D for additional details).

In order to be found suitable for WSR status, rivers must meet the following criteria:

- they must be free-flowing (not in a reservoir and having mostly natural banks);
- they must have at least one ORV (ORVs can be in relation to fish, wildlife, recreation, scenery, ecology, cultural, historic, and/or other resource);
- their free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs should be protected, even if there are other competing uses; and
- their WSR status would be the best method for protecting their ORVs.

During the planning process, the SJNF and TRFO determined the existing level of development along rivers in the planning area. This was based on water resources development, shoreline development, and accessibility. These constitute a river's classification as "wild," "scenic," or "recreation." Table 3.3 lists the rivers that have been found to be suitable for WSR status (see also Figure 3.4.1 in Appendix V).

These rivers may eventually be designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System by the Secretary of the Interior or as the result of an Act of Congress (Secretarial designation requires that the state governor make application to the Secretary of the Interior). The identification of rivers as suitable through this land management planning process does not trigger any water rights or other protections under the WSRA. In order to manage the rivers for their potential inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System, existing authorities will be used to protect the identified river's free-flowing character, water quality, ORVs, and recommended classification (details of the interim protective management are listed in BLM Manual 6400). Previous land management plans had similar direction and have provided protection for the ORVs of the Dolores River over the past several decades.

The suitability determinations outlined in Table 3.3 are preliminary administrative recommendations that the BLM may forward to its director, Cabinet Department Secretary, and the President for further review, possible modification, and transmission to the U.S. Congress for action. While these recommendations remain in this preliminary status, the BLM can consider and pursue alternative management direction that may be recommended by other entities and/or individuals that provide appropriate river management and protection for the stream segments determined as suitable. Alternative management approaches that would affect the classification of river segments found suitable, impair or modify the identified outstandingly remarkable values, or alter the suitability determinations, would be subject to the appropriate environmental review and plan modification processes.

Streams segments determined to be "not suitable" are no longer considered eligible under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and are released from interim protective management. See Figure 3.4.1 in Appendix V.

**Table 3.3. ORVs and Miles of River Segments Suitable for Wild and Scenic River Status by Class**

<b>River Segment</b>	<b>ORVs</b>	<b>Wild</b>	<b>Scenic</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dolores River - Bradfield Bridge to the BLM Uncompagne Field Office/Tres Rios Field Office boundary* <i>*miles above Bradfield administered by the USFS</i>	Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, Geology, Scenery, Ecology	48.3	23.1	31.4	102.8
Coyote Wash	Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, Ecology, Archaeology	7.6			7.6
<b>Dolores River Totals (administered by the BLM)</b>	-----	<b>55.93</b>	<b>23.10</b>	<b>31.36</b>	<b>110.4</b>
Animas River - Bakers Bridge to Sultan Creek* <i>*most of the segment is administered by the USFS</i>	Recreation, Scenery, Archaeology			1.3	1.3
Mineral Creek* <i>*most of the segment is administered by the USFS</i>	Scenery, Ecology			.2	.2
<b>Animas River Totals (administered by the BLM)</b>	-----			<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<i>Bull Canyon</i>	<i>Recreation</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Cement Creek</i>	<i>Ecology</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Cinnamon Creek</i>	<i>Recreation, Ecology</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Maggie Gulch</i>	<i>Ecology</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>McIntyre Canyon</i>	<i>Ecology</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Summit Canyon</i>	<i>Wildlife</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>West Fork Animas River in California Gulch</i>	<i>Ecology</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

# Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

## Tres Rios Field Office

### Figure 3.3

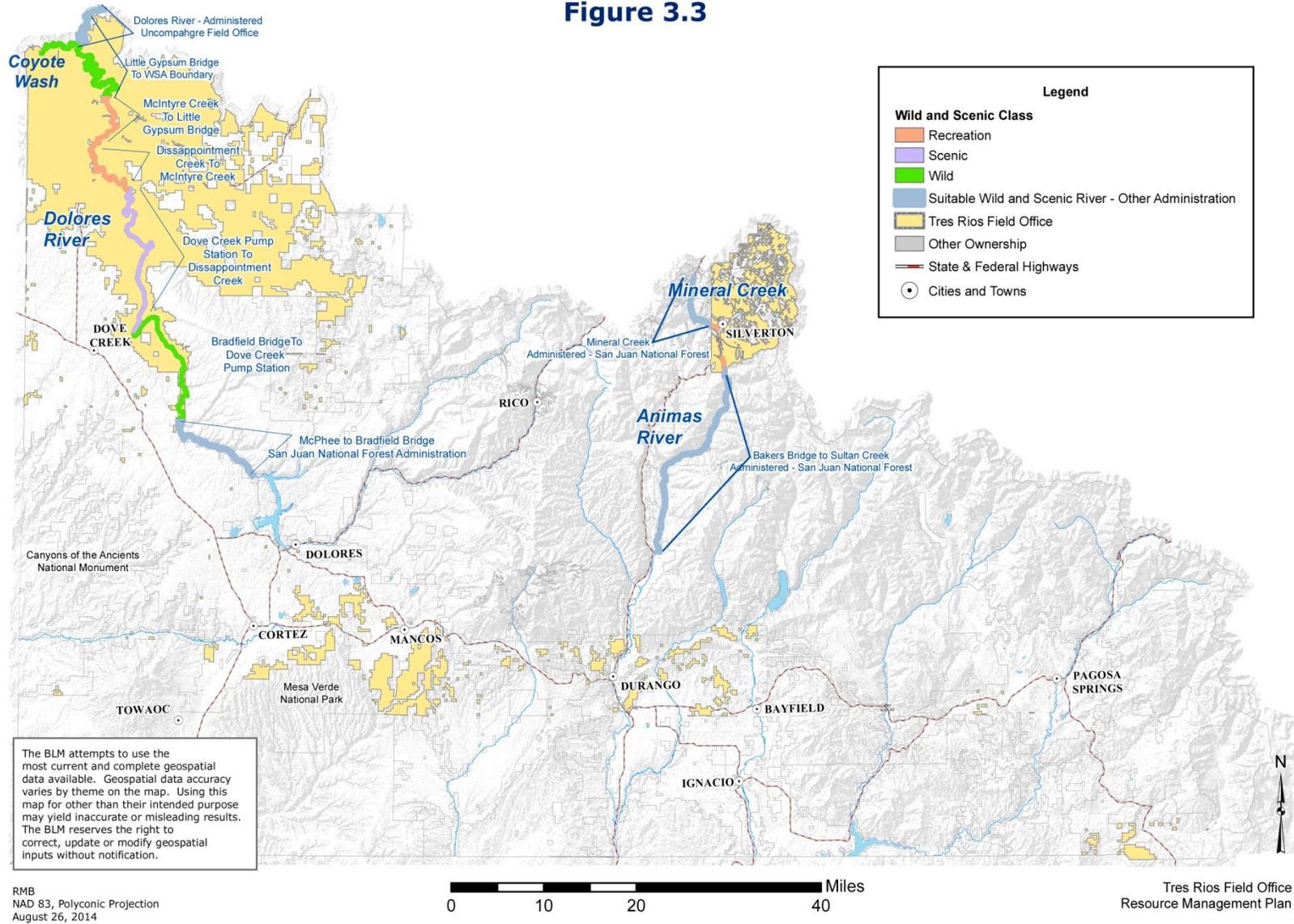


Figure 3.3. Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers.

## 3.4 Scenic, Historic, and Backcountry Byways

### Introduction

The TRFO will participate in partnerships with local communities, businesses, governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations and other interested groups and individuals to manage, develop, preserve and interpret nationally significant routes, which have become destinations unto themselves. Potential projects should promote stewardship and ultimately provide benefits to local economies.

### Desired Conditions

- 3.4.1 The byways are the main access routes, or gateways, to a wide array of recreation opportunities within the planning area; they have appropriate public information and services.
- 3.4.2 Important cultural, historic and agricultural heritage sites along byways (including early historic mining, ranching, and Native American sites) are interpreted.
- 3.4.3 Scenic byways and adjacent landscapes provide high-quality scenery. Viewsheds along scenic byways are protected, and scenic integrity is maintained in order to meet the public's desire for attractive natural landscapes. The byways contribute to recreation tourism and the regional economy. The byways are managed in order to protect the intrinsic qualities for which they were designated, consistent with current corridor management plans.
- 3.4.4 The TRFO plays a role in byway corridor management plans (the community-based strategies to balance the conservation of the byway corridors' intrinsic qualities with the use and enjoyment of those same resources) to ensure the plans are up-to-date, having been developed with participation from a variety of stakeholders interested in preserving and enhancing the scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological and recreational resource qualities of the byway.
- 3.4.5 Byway goals and objectives are effectively integrated with the applicable agency recreation facility master plan.
- 3.4.6 Byway goals and objectives are considered when actions are taken that could impact the byway.
- 3.4.7 Significant historic structures along byways are preserved and stabilized.

## 3.5 National Recreation and Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails

### Introduction

There is one designated national recreation and scenic trails within the TRFO: the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. A master plan for an additional prominent and long distance trail, the Colorado Trail, was signed in 1998. Both the Continental Divide and Colorado trails are recognized through establishment reports and management plans for their scenic, historic, interpretive, and recreation values.

The Old Spanish National Historic Trail also crosses through the planning area. Authorized by Congress in December 2002, the Old Spanish National Historic Trail commemorates the first overland link from Santa Fe to California. While the Old Spanish Trail is currently mapped as crossing the planning area, very few localities associated with the trail have actually been identified and ground-truthed.

Trail stewardship is emphasized through partnerships, marketing and interpretation, monitoring efforts, and maintaining and enhancing desired conditions.

## Desired Conditions

- 3.5.1 Consistent with their designation, the significant scenic, historic, recreation and natural resources for each trail are identified, interpreted, and protected. The values for which these trails were established are retained.
- 3.5.2 The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail provide opportunities for remote backcountry recreation, challenge, and solitude, except where they come near area communities (where more people and development may be encountered).
- 3.5.3 The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail are non-motorized trails and have high scenic integrity.
- 3.5.4 Interpretive venues are used to inform and educate visitors about the national recreation and scenic trails, as well as about resource stewardship.
- 3.5.5 Trail segments near area communities and/or major access points are planned and designed in order to be barrier-free.
- 3.5.6 Partnerships are encouraged and expanded in order to provide identification, documentation, monitoring, protection, preservation, education, research, and interpretation.
- 3.5.7 Interpretive displays, visitor contacts, and brochures are available to help visitors and employees understand and appreciate the heritage and cultural resources associated with the TRFO. A wide range of heritage activities, experiences, and products (both on-site and off-site) are available for visitor enjoyment and education. Off-site activities include museum displays, brochures, audio programs, classroom presentations, and field trips. Public access and interpretive efforts are compatible with the physical, cultural, and recreational settings and values of the resources.

## Objectives

- 3.5.8 Over the life of the RMP, partner with the Old Spanish Trail Association to ground truth the location of at least two segments of the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.
- 3.5.9 Over the life of the RMP, develop at least one interpretive product in partnership with the Old Spanish Trail Association that interprets the Old Spanish National Historic Trail within the planning area.
- 3.5.10 Over the life of the RMP, inventory high potential historic sites and trail routes of the Old Spanish Trail, develop a national trail management corridor, and establish goals and objectives for national trails in accordance with BLM Manuals 6250 and 6280 (BLM 2012c, 2012d).

## Guidelines

- 3.5.11 Other resource activities should be designed in order to meet scenic quality objectives for these special designation trails (generally, a foreground and middle-ground of very high to high scenic integrity or VRM Class II).
- 3.5.12 **Old Spanish National Historic Trail:** A literature search and/or Class III cultural resources survey should be conducted within 0.5 mile of either side of the centerline of the congressionally designated Old Spanish National Historic Trail in high potential segments,

prior to authorization of ground-disturbing activities or activities that could substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail.

## 3.6 Gypsum Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern

The Gypsum Valley ACEC contains 13,135 acres of BLM lands within the Big and Little Gypsum Valleys, and ranges in elevation from 6,100 to 6,500 feet. It is located in San Miguel County about 14 miles southwest of Naturita. See Figure 3.7.1 in Appendix V.

The Gypsum Valley ACEC is one of several northwest-southeast-trending valleys formed by the collapse of ancient salt domes. It contains gypsum outcrops and gypsum soils of the Paradox member of the Hermosa Formation that are unique and rare. The ACEC contains known occurrences and abundant habitat for two BLM sensitive species: Gypsum Valley cat-eye (*Cryptantha gypsophila*) and Naturita milkvetch (*Astragalus naturitensis*). The ACEC also contains five species with G1, G2, S1, or S2 CNHP/NatureServe Plant Community status rankings: *Lecanora gypsicola*, nodule cracked lichen (*Acarospora nodulosa* var. *nodulosa*), largeleaf gypsoplaca lichen (*Gypsoplaca microphylla*), winding mariposa lily (*Calochortus flexuosus*), gyp dropseed (*Sporobolus nealleyi*), and shortstem beardtongue (*Penstemon breviculus*). These plants are imperiled or critically imperiled globally or within Colorado and are at a high or very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity, very restricted ranges, or extremely low populations (see Appendix U).

Several important animal species are found within the proposed ACEC. The rims of Big Gypsum Valley have historically provided nesting habitat for migratory raptors, including peregrine falcons and golden eagles, which are both Colorado BLM State Director's sensitive species. In addition, desert bighorn sheep, another Colorado BLM State Director's sensitive species, use the canyon rims as travel corridors between the benches above the canyon and the Dolores River below. Desert bighorn sheep and other big game species use the Dolores River corridor and the flats of Big Gypsum Valley as important winter range and for other seasonal use.

### Desired Conditions

- 3.6.1 Biological soil crusts have high cover and are maintained or increased on the soils of this ACEC.
- 3.6.2 The relevance and importance values of this ACEC, as described in Appendix U, are maintained.
- 3.6.3 The gypsum soils maintain the soil productivity necessary to support and sustain the special status plant species that occur on them.
- 3.6.4 The special status plant species have self-sustaining populations and suitable habitat into which they can expand.
- 3.6.5 Special status plant species and their habitat are managed so that the viability of these species is not adversely affected.

### Objectives

- 3.6.6 Limit motorized travel within the ACEC to designated routes to be determined during travel management planning.

### Guidelines

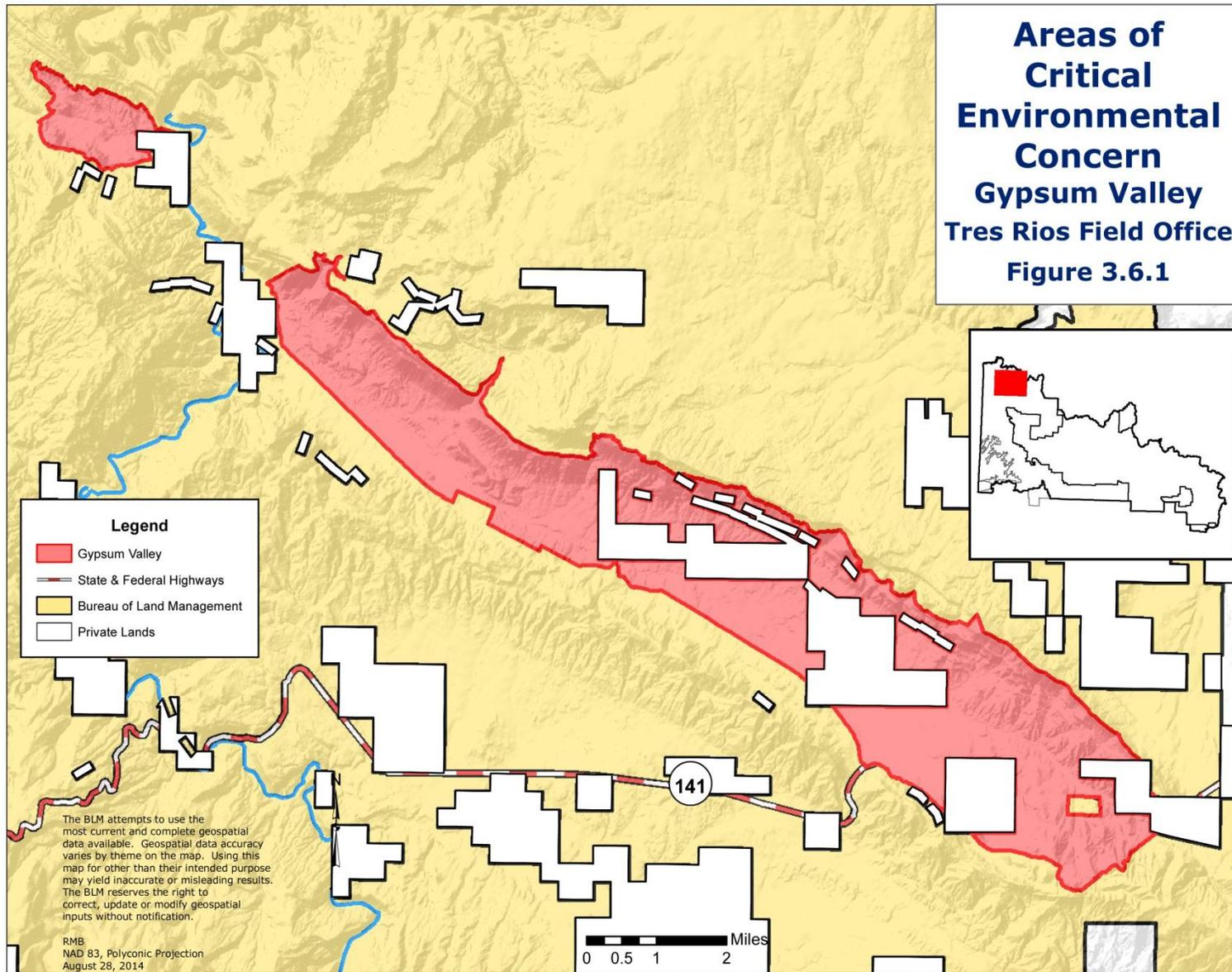
- 3.6.7 Ground-disturbing activities should not occur, or otherwise they should be mitigated, on gypsum soils within the Gypsum Valley ACEC in order to protect the special status plant species for which they provide habitat.

- 3.6.8 Management activities should minimize, and attempt to avoid where possible, soil displacement, compaction, and trampling in the Gypsum Valley ACEC in order to protect special status plant species and their habitat. Any activities should occur when the plants and soils are least vulnerable to disturbance, such as when soils are frozen or snow covered.
- 3.6.9 Management activities should minimize impacts to nesting raptors and desert big horn sheep. Potential impacts to raptors include excessive noise and human disturbance during critical nesting periods. Potential impacts to desert big horn sheep include conflicts during critical lambing times and concentrated winter use.

Table 3.6 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Gypsum Valley ACEC.

**Table 3.6: Gypsum Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern Allowable Uses**

<b>Management Activities and Uses</b>	<b>Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted</b>
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (may be used to meet desired conditions)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Not Applicable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted (commercial seed collection may be allowed in some circumstances)
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted (avoid gypsum soils)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (avoid gypsum soils)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (to designated routes to protect gypsum soils and sensitive special status species)
Motorized (winter)	Restricted (to designated routes to protect gypsum soils and special status species)
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (Possible seasonal closures for recreational rock climbing may be enforced due to seasonal raptor use. See raptor timing limitations table in Section 2.4 of this RMP.)
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Restricted (to designated routes to protect gypsum soils and sensitive special status plant species)
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (to avoid gypsum soils)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU, and TL stipulations may apply to protect special status species, wildlife, soils, and water resources)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to gypsum soils, special status plant species, wildlife, and water must be minimized)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (to avoid gypsum soils, special status species, wildlife, water, resources)



**Figure 3.6.1. Gypsum Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern.**

## 3.7 Anasazi Culture Area of Critical Environmental Concern

The Anasazi Culture ACEC retains one of the highest densities of Ancestral Puebloan architectural sites within the planning area. These highly significant sites are critical to understanding Ancestral Puebloan lifeways across the landscape. The geographical uniqueness and the area's setting are important not only for providing much needed context for the interpretation of Northern San Juan Anasazi settlement patterns but also for preserving the future integrity of their material remains. The ACEC also contains the rare plants shortstem beardtongue and Naturita milkvetch.

The Anasazi Culture ACEC was originally designated in the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan, and encompassed the Mud Springs area, as well as the entirety of the area now known as Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The majority of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument was released from ACEC designation in the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Resource Management Plan (BLM 2010d). As a result of this management and jurisdictional change, the boundary of the Anasazi Culture ACEC is now amended to include only the Mud Springs area, approximately 1,100 acres (See Figure 3.1.). The boundary of the ACEC has also been modified to remove the gravel pit. See Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V.

The management emphasis for the Anasazi Culture ACEC is to protect and preserve this area's outstanding archeological sites and setting, and to develop appropriate recreational opportunities that do not result in damage to archaeological or ecological sites. A proactive management approach will take full advantage of the educational, interpretive, recreational, preservation, and scientific opportunities available.

### Desired Conditions

- 3.7.1 The Anasazi Culture ACEC offers appropriate recreation and interpretive opportunities while archeological resources are preserved and protected.
- 3.7.2 The existing character of the cultural and physical landscape is preserved and protected.
- 3.7.3 Traditional cultural heritage values associated with cultural resources and landscapes within the ACEC are considered and protected.
- 3.7.4 Vegetation is managed to protect and enhance cultural resources.
- 3.7.5 The relevance and importance values of this ACEC, as described in Appendix U, are maintained.
- 3.7.6 Designated roads and trails are rerouted to mitigate impacts to cultural areas.
- 3.7.7 Recreational activities are actively managed in the designated areas, while protecting and mitigating impacts to cultural resources.

### Objectives

- 3.7.8 Over the life of the RMP, implement site steward and "adopt-a-site" programs.
- 3.7.9 Within 7 years, reroute or eliminate unauthorized and designated trails to avoid impacts to archeological sites.

### Guidelines

- 3.7.10 Fencing should be used to keep OHV use on designated trails.

Table 3.7 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Anasazi Culture Area ACEC.

**Table 3.7: Anasazi Culture Area of Critical Environmental Concern Allowable Uses**

<b>Management Activities and Uses</b>	<b>Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited</b>
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Prescribed burning	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Prohibited
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted (minimize or avoid impacts to archeological resources)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to designated roads, trails, and areas to protect significant archaeological resources
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Restricted to designated roads and trails to protect significant archaeological resources
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU, and TL stipulations may apply to protect recreation and cultural values, water, plants, or other resources)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to archaeological resource must be minimized)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

## 3.8 Mesa Verde Escarpment

### Introduction

The Mesa Verde Escarpment area includes 7,373 acres of BLM lands adjacent to Mesa Verde National Park (See Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V). Originally slated for inclusion in the designation of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, this area has the highest density of Ancestral Puebloan architectural sites on BLM lands within the planning area. These highly significant sites are critical to understanding Ancestral Puebloan lifeways across the landscape. The temporal span and distribution of sites indicate that this area was consistently inhabited throughout the Ancestral Puebloan occupation of the Montezuma Valley, from the Basketmaker III period through the Pueblo III (A.D. 600–1300). Additionally, these sites are considered to be in pristine condition because access to this area has been highly restricted. The sites are surrounded by the designated wilderness area within Mesa Verde National Park and privately owned, undeveloped lands. The geophysical uniqueness and the relative isolation of the area's setting is important not only for providing much needed context for the interpretation of Northern San Juan Anasazi settlement patterns, but also for preserving the future integrity of their material remains.

The management emphasis for the Mesa Verde Escarpment is to focus on opportunities which provide scientific research and an outdoor learning laboratory, while ensuring protection and preservation of the area's outstanding archeological sites. A proactive management approach will take full advantage of the educational, preservation, and scientific opportunities available. This area is surrounded by private lands that have not yet been developed; however, focused management of this area is needed to address the impacts related to potential future development. Collaboration with the developers and landowners will be emphasized in order to develop an understanding and appreciation of the archeological resources, as well as an understanding of the importance of protecting them. Acquisition and/or acquiring easements of adjacent lands to improve access and protection of cultural resources are encouraged.

**Desired Conditions**

- 3.8.1 Access to the Mesa Verde Escarpment is limited in order to protect and preserve archaeological resources.
- 3.8.2 User-made trails and other routes are rerouted or eliminated in order to avoid impacts to archeological sites.
- 3.8.3 Hazardous fuels are managed in order to protect and preserve archeological resources, and to reduce the risk of wildfire to adjacent private lands.
- 3.8.4 Cultural viewsheds are preserved; incompatible uses or developments are not authorized.
- 3.8.5 The existing character of the cultural and physical landscape is preserved.
- 3.8.6 Traditional cultural heritage values associated with cultural resources and landscapes within the ACEC are considered and protected.
- 3.8.7 Designated routes are limited to maintain the integrity of cultural resource values and for scientific research access.
- 3.8.8 Opportunities are sought to acquire adjacent lands and/or easements to improve access and protection of cultural resources.

**Objectives**

- 3.8.9 Over the life of the RMP, conduct phased cultural resource inventory of the area.
- 3.8.10 Over the next 3 years, develop procedures to encourage, foster, and conduct high-quality scientific and scholarly research.

Table 3.8 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Mesa Verde Escarpment.

**Table 3.8: Mesa Verde Escarpment Allowable Uses**

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Prescribed burning	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources

<b>Management Activities and Uses</b>	<b>Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited</b>
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources.
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to designated roads and trails
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to protect significant archaeological resources
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted in order to protect significant archaeological resources
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable (open to mineral entry, but impacts to archaeological resource must be minimized)
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

## 3.9 Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area

### Introduction

The Spring Creek HMA is located approximately 40 miles northeast of Dove Creek, Colorado (in Dolores and San Miguel Counties). The HMA comprises approximately 21,000 acres of BLM-administered public land. See Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V.

Wild horses and burros are managed under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, as amended (Public Law 92-195). The 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (BLM 1985) designated a wild horse emphasis area for the Spring Creek Basin. Portions of the Spring Creek HMA also emphasize watershed management (in order to reduce salinity into the Colorado River and for the watershed health of the McKenna Peak WSA). Scattered occurrences of the BLM Sensitive plant Gypsum Valley cat-eye (*Cryptantha gypsophila*) are present within the HMA. There is also an occurrence of pygmy sagebrush (*Artemisia pygmaea*) within the HMA. There is only one other occurrence of this G4, S1 ranked species in Colorado.

A Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) was approved in October 1986 (BLM 1986b) and revised in 1994 (BLM 1994a). The HMAP objective is to maintain appropriate management level between 35 and 65 adult horses. In 2005, additional analysis was completed in order to determine whether the existing management level was appropriate (based on an opportunity to provide additional AUMs for the herd area). The analysis showed that current management level was appropriate, considering that rangeland health standards (43 CFR 4180) were not being met, and that the few available AUMs would not improve herd genetics (#EA-800-2005-027; BLM 2005). In 2011, an environmental analysis was completed that approved instituting a fertility control program (DOI-BLM-CO-SO10-2011-0062) (BLM 2011i).

### Desired Conditions

- 3.9.1 The Spring Creek Basin wild horse herd population is within an acceptable range.
- 3.9.2 Adequate genetic viability and variability exists in order to maintain a healthy wild horse herd.
- 3.9.3 Vegetation is diverse and provides sufficient cover in order to reduce salinity and to prevent sediment from reaching Disappointment Creek and the Dolores River.
- 3.9.4 The herd is managed via a combination of traditional and non-traditional methods including bait trapping, fertility control programs, or other methods accepted by the National Wild Horse and Burro program.
- 3.9.5 Vegetation within the HMA is in a stable or upward trend, including diverse species composition and reduced erosion to provide a resilient ecosystem.
- 3.9.6 The Gypsum Valley cat-eye and pygmy sagebrush populations are maintained.

### Objectives

- 3.9.7 Within 5 years, revise the Spring Creek Basin HMAP (BLM 1994a) to incorporate specific goals, objectives, and techniques to guide management of the Spring Creek HMA, including management of Gypsum Valley cat-eye and pygmy sagebrush.

Table 3.9 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Spring Creek Wild Horse HMA.

**Table 3.9: Spring Creek Wild Horse Herd Management Area Allowable Uses**

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Allowable
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Not Applicable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted opportunities for firewood; however, gathering other forest products may be acceptable as long as gathering is not detrimental to wild horse management
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted to minimize disruption to the herd
Livestock grazing	Upon permit relinquishment, the BLM will designate livestock grazing as not available (43 CFR 4130.2(a)) in the Spring Creek Allotment (#17056).
Facilities	Restricted
Motorized (summer)	Restricted to existing and/or designated roads only
Motorized (winter)	Restricted to existing and/or designated roads only
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Restricted to existing and/or designated roads only.
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Allowable
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Allowable
Minerals - locatable	Allowable
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Allowable

### 3.10 Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area

The Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area consists of approximately 1,512 acres of BLM-administered public lands and approximately 3,400 acres of state lands administered by CPW. See Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V. The area is located northwest of, and immediately adjacent to, Durango. Historically, the area has served as winter range for large herds of elk, mule deer, and a remnant population of bighorn sheep. Breeding populations of golden eagle, prairie falcon, and peregrine falcon add to the significance of the area. The area also supports populations of Merriam's wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). More than half of the elk herd of CPW Game Management Unit 74 is dependent on this area in severe winters. Rapid development in the Durango area has increased impacts to wildlife resources in the area due to land conversions, migration corridor disruption, and increased recreational pressures to disturbance-sensitive wildlife species. The TRFO works closely with CPW to manage the habitat and will seek future opportunities to consolidate ownership where practicable to improve wildlife management emphasis of the area.

#### Desired Conditions

- 3.10.1 Habitat diversity components are secure, undisturbed, and sufficient to sustain the wildlife populations that depend on the Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area in an urbanizing environment.

#### Program Emphasis

Under the direction of this RMP, management emphasis for the BLM-administered lands would focus on habitat features and effectiveness for raptor reproduction, big game winter range, and other improvements for non-game birds and small mammals, in coordination and conjunction with adjacent CPW lands. The Perins Peak Wildlife Habitat Management Plan (BLM et al. 2003), which was prepared

by the BLM in cooperation with the USFWS and CPW, outlines the emphasis and management objectives for the area. Within this Habitat Management Plan, a comprehensive list of management objectives is provided for raptors, big game winter range, habitat improvements, and public access.

Table 3.10 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area.

**Table 3.10: Perins Peak Wildlife Management Area Allowable Uses**

<b>Management Activities and Uses</b>	<b>Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted</b>
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Prohibited
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted (project design should maintain habitat effectiveness and species objectives as outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Livestock grazing	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Facilities	Prohibited
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Motorized (winter)	Prohibited
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan; winter use is not allowed)
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Prohibited
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (construction timing, construction type, route, and use and timing of use conforms to habitat and species needs described in the Habitat Management Plan)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted - (CSU and TL, as defined for leasable minerals; maintains habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

### 3.11 Willow Creek Wildlife Management Area

The Willow Creek Wildlife Management Area consists of approximately 876 acres of BLM-administered public lands and approximately 2,363 acres of state lands administered by CPW. (See Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V.) The primary objective of these areas is to provide habitat for the Gunnison sage-grouse on

State and BLM-administered lands. Detailed desired conditions are described in the Gunnison sage-grouse Rangewide Conservation Plan (CDOW 2005) for the Dove Creek sub-population (including connectivity to the Monticello sub-population). Gunnison Sage-grouse are known to occur on private lands adjacent to the State wildlife area. Managing Gunnison Sage-grouse on public lands or on State-owned lands has not been possible until the recent acquisition by the CDOW of private lands in the Willow Creek and Coal Bed Canyon area.

The area is located west of Dove Creek, Colorado. Historically, the area has served as winter range for large herds of elk, mule deer, and a population of Gunnison sage-grouse. A substantial portion of Gunnison sage-grouse rely on the area for breeding, nesting, brood rearing and wintering. Large intact stands of sagebrush provide critical winter habitat within the species range.

The TRFO works closely with CPW to manage the habitat and will seek future opportunities to consolidate ownership where practicable to improve wildlife management emphasis of the area.

**Desired Conditions**

- 3.11.1 Habitat diversity components are secure, undisturbed, and sufficient to sustain Gunnison sage-grouse populations that depend on the Willow Creek Wildlife Management.

**Program Emphasis**

Under the direction of this RMP, management emphasis would focus on habitat features and effectiveness for Gunnison sage-grouse, in coordination and conjunction with adjacent CPW lands.

Table 3.11 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Willow Creek Wildlife Management Area.

**Table 3.11. Willow Creek Wildlife Management Area Allowable Uses**

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Not Applicable
Timber harvesting as a tool	Not Applicable
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Not Applicable
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted (project design should maintain habitat effectiveness and species objectives as outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Livestock grazing	Restricted (project design would maintain or improve effectiveness and be of primary benefit to habitat and species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Recreation Facilities	N/A
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Prohibited - Restricted
Motorized (winter)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Motorized tools for administrative work	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Restricted (timing of use and route restrictions maintain habitat effectiveness for species objectives outlined in the Habitat Management Plan)
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted to valid existing rights and temporary roads only for habitat improvement work as defined in the Habitat Management Plan (construction timing, construction type, route, use and timing of use conforms to habitat and species needs described in the Habitat Management Plan).
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	NSO
Minerals – locatable	Allowable
Minerals – saleable (materials)	Prohibited

## 3.12 Dolores River Canyon

### Introduction

The Dolores River, a tributary of the Colorado River, flows approximately 250 miles from its origins in the San Juan Mountains into Grand County, Utah, where it joins the Colorado River. A few miles below McPhee Reservoir, at the Bradfield Bridge Recreation Site, the Dolores River enters lands managed by the TRFO and begins an 85-mile journey through some of the most scenic canyon country in the southwestern United States. (See Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V). This stretch of river, known as the Dolores River Canyon and encompassing 33,504 acres, represents an astounding array of cultural and natural resources, which are reflected in the myriad of special management prescriptions layered across its landscape. Key resources in the area include recreation, suitable WSR segments, wilderness characteristics, cultural resources, geology, rare and unique plants and plant communities, riparian ecosystems, and wildlife. Overlying it all is a scenic backdrop of sheer cliffs, benches, and mesas that rival any of the more nationally recognized landscapes in the region.

### Recreation

The Dolores River Canyon provides opportunities for a broad spectrum of recreational experiences. The river canyon is probably best known for whitewater rafting and kayaking (up to Class IV) beginning at the Bradfield Bridge boat access near Dove Creek. Since the construction of the McPhee Dam and Reservoir, boating has been dependent on flow releases and generally requires between 200 (canoes and kayaks) and 1,000 cubic feet per second (large rafts). These releases require a good snow year and generally occur between late May and early June.

While whitewater boating might be the most popular activity enjoyed in the canyon, there are outstanding opportunities for hiking, camping, OHV touring, mountain biking, and wildlife viewing as well. Developed camping is provided in the upper reaches of the canyon (Bradfield Bridge and Box Elder campgrounds), while more primitive, dispersed camping is required for overnight stays further downriver.

The river canyon from Bradfield to the BLM Uncompagne Field Office/Tres Rios Field Office boundary was identified as an SRMA in the 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (BLM 1985) and a

River Corridor Management Plan was completed in 1990 (BLM 1990). This portion of the Dolores River Canyon will continue to be managed as an SRMA, divided into several RMZs to provide for specific recreational outcomes and benefits (see Appendix E).

## **Wild and Scenic River Eligibility**

This entire stretch of the Dolores River is suitable for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System. ORVs have been identified for the reach as a whole and include recreation and scenery (whitewater boating and sandstone cliffs), fish and wildlife (roundtail chub [*Gila robusta robusta*], flannelmouth sucker, and bluehead sucker), geology (sandstone cliffs), ecology (privet [*Forestiera neomexicana*] and Eastwood's monkeyflower [*Mimulus eastwoodiae*]), and cultural resources (historic and prehistoric sites).

This stretch of river has been divided into each of the three eligibility classifications (recreational, wild, and scenic). The segment from Bradfield Bridge to the Dove Creek Pump Station (Mt. Sheep Point) is suitable as a wild classification due to the lack of roads, motorized use, and developed trails. Dove Creek Pump Station to Disappointment Creek is suitable as a scenic classification despite Snaggletooth Road, which is generally unobtrusive to the surrounding landscape. The segment from Disappointment Creek to the Little Gypsum Bridge is suitable as a recreational designation due to the presence of the community of Slickrock and the access provided via multiple county roads. The segment between Little Gypsum Bridge and the Dolores River Canyon WSA boundary is suitable as a wild classification. Finally, the segment of River from the WSA boundary to the BLM Uncompagne Field Office/Tres Rios Field Office boundary, a segment that is about 2.5 miles, is suitable as a recreational designation.

## **Lands with Wilderness Characteristics**

The upper portion of the canyon (from Bradfield Bridge to nearly Disappointment Creek) was inventoried in 2011 and found to have wilderness characteristics. A portion of this unit, known as the Snaggletooth unit, from Bradfield Bridge to Mt. Sheep Point, will be managed for its wilderness characteristics.

## **Wilderness Study Areas**

The northernmost portion of the Dolores River Canyon within the TRFO is within part of the Dolores River WSA, and is managed by the TRFO so as not to impair the ability of Congress to make wilderness determination at some point in the future.

## **Cultural Resources**

The Dolores River Canyon has been a focal point of human interest, use, and occupancy dating back at least 11,000 years. Evidence of this use can be seen and experienced along the length of the river. Cultural resources include rock shelters, petroglyph panels, resource procurement and processing areas, and historic camps, homesteads, and trails. These sites contribute to our understanding of the area and its importance to the human experience over time.

## **Geology**

The Dolores River Canyon is up to 1,100 feet deep in places and cuts through multiple geologic formations spanning nearly 300 million years of earth's history from the Pennsylvanian through Cretaceous periods. Rock formations in the canyon record the passing of ancient seas and vast deserts. The prominent formation is the cliffs of Wingate sandstone. Major tributaries such as Coyote Wash, Bull Canyon, and Wild Steer Canyon display slickrock sculpted by wind and water and provide additional habitat for unique plant and animal populations.

## **Rare/Unique Plants and Plant Communities and Riparian Ecosystems**

Another natural resource that makes the Dolores River Canyon special is the variety of plant life found within its confines. Tucked along the canyon floor, along the cliff faces, or hidden within hanging gardens

are rare, unique, and even globally impaired species. Old growth ponderosa groves, box elder, and Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) galleries provide shade along the river's edge for boaters and animals alike. The New Mexico privet is a riparian shrub that is relatively common in the area, but extremely rare on a global scale. Also found in the canyon, usually in hanging gardens around seeps and overhangs, is the bright red Eastwood's monkeyflower, which is also considered extremely rare or imperiled within the state, and rare globally. In addition to rare plants and plant communities, the Dolores River Canyon includes excellent examples of more common plant communities useful as biodiversity reserves and reference areas. Many of these species and communities are threatened by human activities and invasive, non-native species. The BLM is an active member and supporter of the Dolores River Restoration Partnership, which was founded to reduce or eliminate the threats to native vegetation and riparian functionality from tamarisk and other invasive species.

## Wildlife

The Dolores River Canyon provides important habitat for a variety of species ranging from big game animals to tree frogs. The canyon is home to a population of desert bighorn, one of only three herds in the state. To aid in the viability of this herd, a seasonal motorized closure is placed on a BLM-administered portion of Snaggletooth Road during the spring lambing period (February 1–April 30, inclusive) from near Slickrock to Snaggletooth Rapid. The canyon also provides habitat for peregrine falcons, golden eagles, and other sensitive or listed avian species.

The river itself provides crucial habitat for many aquatic species including roundtail chub, flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluenose sucker (*Notropis welaka*), red-spotted toad (*Bufo punctatus*), tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), and canyon tree frog. Water levels in the river are controlled by the dam below McPhee Reservoir, which was constructed by the US Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Dolores Project and is operated by the Dolores Water Conservancy District.

## Desired Conditions

- 3.12.1 Key resources in the canyon (including recreation, WSR suitability, wilderness characteristics, archeology, geology, rare and unique plants and plant communities, riparian ecosystems, and wildlife) are protected and preserved.
- 3.12.2 Invasive species (including tamarisk, Russian knapweed [*Acroptilon repens*], and Canada thistle [*Cirsium arvense*]) are minor components of the riparian systems of the Dolores River and its tributaries.
- 3.12.3 The scenic integrity of the canyon is unaltered and or otherwise mitigated to keep structures and new construction out of view from the river bottom.
- 3.12.4 Recreational opportunities within the canyon corridor are maintained and enhanced.
- 3.12.5 Access to the river is maintained or improved outside areas classified as wild.

## Objectives

- 3.12.6 Use integrated pest management on the Dolores River Canyon to treat invasive species.
- 3.12.7 Over the life of the RMP, restore riparian and aquatic ecosystems in the Dolores River Canyon and its tributaries.
- 3.12.8 Over the next 20 years, enhance the resiliency of Dolores River Canyon corridor and provide refugia for species on 100 acres of TRFO lands in the Dolores River watershed through implementation of travel management decisions, recreation management plans in the watershed ecosystems, invasive species management projects, or other management activities.

## Guidelines

3.12.9 Management activities and recreational use should avoid or minimizes impacts to rare or unique plant communities.

Table 3.12 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Dolores River Canyon.

**Table 3.12: Dolores River Canyon Allowable Uses**

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Allowable
Prescribed burning	Restricted to management actions that enhance resource characteristics
Mechanical fuels treatment	Restricted to management actions that enhance resource characteristics
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Restricted to areas above Canyon Rim within ponderosa and oak Brush treatment area
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted to areas above Canyon Rim within ponderosa and oak brush treatment area.
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted to areas above the canyon rim
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted (to minimize impacts to canyon resources and protect the viewshed)
Livestock grazing	Allowable
Facilities	Restricted (development of recreation facilities may be allowed)
Motorized (summer)	Restricted (see Section 2.14; additionally, there is a motorized timing limitation within desert bighorn lambing areas between February 1 and June 30)
Motorized (winter)	Restricted (see Section 2.14; additionally, there is a motorized timing limitation within desert bighorn lambing areas between February 1 and June 30)
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Restricted (see Section 2.14; timing restrictions may apply to protect wildlife habitat)
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Allowable outside the lands managed for wilderness characteristics
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted to existing county roads within the canyon
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO and TL leasing stipulations may apply for the canyon corridor, viewshed protection, and to protect desert bighorn lambing areas)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Prohibited

## 3.13 Silverton

The Silverton area includes the Alpine Loop Backcountry Byway, portions of the San Juan Skyway, the Silverton SRMA, and the town of Silverton (39,703 acres; see Figure 3.7.2 in Appendix V.). The Silverton Ski Area and the Durango-Silverton Narrow-Gauge Railroad also operate within this area. A portion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Colorado Trail pass through this area.

The Silverton area has outstanding outdoor opportunities, extraordinary scenery (accessed by two byways and an extensive network of rough roads and trails), sensitive plant and animal habitats, and diverse year-round nature-based recreation and adventure tourism. The town of Silverton's history, and vintage architecture, is recognized by residents and visitors as a precious cultural resource.

Situated primarily above 9,000 feet, this is largely a sensitive and beautiful subalpine to alpine environment. This area has important biological value (including its essential function as a linkage area for wildlife across the San Juan Mountains and north to other parts of Colorado). The valleys and mountain passes provide key linkage corridors for migratory wildlife and wide-ranging carnivores (e.g., Canada lynx [*Lynx canadensis*]). The high country provides a large block of alpine and tundra habitat that is contiguous with adjacent public lands. This provides key habitat areas for a suite of unique species specially adapted to this fragile and harsh environment (including the endangered Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly [*Boloria acrocneuma*], the white-tailed ptarmigan, and the brown-capped rosy-finch [*Leucosticte australis*], Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, and Colorado cutthroat trout). The Silverton area contains peat-forming wetlands called fens. Fens require thousands of years to develop and cannot easily be restored once damaged. Rare and sensitive plants are found only in these fens. The Silverton area is also the only area where iron fens are found within the planning area. Iron fens are a unique type of fen found in areas with geology that produces acidic, metal-rich conditions. The San Juan Mountains are one of only a few places in the world that contain iron fens.

Mineral exploration, mining, and ore processing was the focus of activity in the Silverton landscape since the late 1800s. The remnants of this activity provide the road network and historic focus for heritage tourism and also left a legacy of hazardous open mines and water quality issues necessitating the need for an AML program.

The Alpine Triangle Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) provides guidance for the management and interpretation of cultural resources in the Silverton SRMA (BLM 1994b) (see Appendix E). Under the direction of the RMP, management will be intensive and include visitor facilities for interpretation and resource protection (including parking, trailhead facilities, signage, and trail maintenance). Regulations and visitor guidance will also play a role in protecting resources, as well as in enhancing visitor experience (including camping restrictions, travel management for motorized and non-motorized uses, resource protection, and visitor safety related to mines).

## Desired Conditions

- 3.13.1 Interpretation of the historic landscapes and features of the Silverton SRMA is made available through a range of effective and appropriate venues. Information is designed to enhance the touring experience and encourage the greatest extent of appreciation and protection of these precious assets.
- 3.13.2 Commercial summer and winter recreation opportunities are available through permitted outfitter/guides and the Silverton Ski Area.
- 3.13.3 Recreational uses (including motorized/non-motorized travel or camping) are at sustainable levels within ROS settings.
- 3.13.4 Recreation management compatible with the area's cultural and natural resource management goals is allowed and promoted.
- 3.13.5 High-priority historic resources are stabilized and preserved for future generations.
- 3.13.6 The built environment supports essential visitor services, heritage tourism and interpretation, and recreation opportunities. Design elements (including scale, materials, and colors) complement the natural environment and are consistent with the architectural vernacular of local historic structures.
- 3.13.7 Support services are located within, or close to, gateway communities.
- 3.13.8 Local communities serve as gateways to the Silverton area, take an active role in stewardship of surrounding public lands, and receive lifestyle, community, and economic benefit. The site-stewardship program and TRFO presence are fully effective for resource protection, visitor contact, education, and safety.

- 3.13.9 Plants and wildlife unique to the area (including Canada lynx/lynx habitat, fens, bighorn sheep, native Colorado Cutthroat trout, Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly, white-tailed ptarmigan, and brown-capped rosy-finch, and other alpine obligate species) are effectively protected and managed in conjunction with other actions.
- 3.13.10 Water quality meets or exceeds applicable standards, where possible.
- 3.13.11 Although private land access is provided, as required, opportunities for protection of key resources are sought through the county development process, easement options, and acquisition.
- 3.13.12 High-priority parcels of land are protected and preserved through methods that include acquisition, land exchange, or conservation easements.
- 3.13.13 Where public lands 1) are isolated by surrounding private parcels with limited or no public access, 2) have minimal cultural/natural resource or recreation values to protect, and 3) are not needed for any federal project or resource management activity, the BLM may consider exchanges, sales or other disposal in order to improve the overall management of the public lands. Each proposal will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, including environmental analysis under NEPA.
- 3.13.14 The responsibility to provide appropriate marketing and adequate interpretation, conservation education, and recreation information is understood and shared by agencies, partners, commercial outfitter/guides, and businesses.
- 3.13.15 The transportation system throughout the Silverton area meets the desire of visitors for access, provides a range of interesting touring experiences, and is designed in order to limit access to sites in need of protection.
- 3.13.16 AML and mining clean-up activities address resource protection and public safety.
- 3.13.17 Lands would remain open to mineral entry except where limited and specific needs for withdrawal or segregation. When possible, new mining projects would consider reclamation and remediation of historic mining operations to the extent economically, technologically, and legally possible.

Table 3.13 shows the allowable, prohibited, and restricted management activities and uses for the Silverton area.

**Table 3.13: Silverton Area Allowable Uses**

Management Activities and Uses	Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited
Fire managed for resource benefit	Restricted (wildfire for ecological benefit would be allowed in high-elevation spruce-fir, but emphasis will be put on protecting historic structures and private property)
Prescribed burning	Restricted (may be used in order to improve wildlife habitat, including bighorn sheep.)
Mechanical fuels treatment	Allowable
Timber production (scheduled on a rotation basis)	Restricted
Timber harvesting as a tool	Restricted
Commercial use of special forest products and firewood	Restricted to Christmas trees, firewood post and poles, mushrooms, and medicinal plants collected in the area
Land use ROWs and utility corridors	Restricted (surface disturbance should be minimized; utilize existing corridors and ROW where practicable)
Livestock grazing	Restricted to grazing allotments.
Facilities	Allowable
Motorized (summer)	Allowable

<b>Management Activities and Uses</b>	<b>Allowable - Restricted - Prohibited</b>
Motorized (winter)	Allowable
Non-motorized (summer and winter)	Allowable
Mechanized (e.g., mountain bikes)	Allowable
Road construction (permanent or temporary)	Restricted (allowable for access to valid existing rights and for effective public access.)
Minerals - leasable (oil and gas, and other)	Restricted (NSO, CSU, and TL stipulations may apply)
Minerals - locatable	Allowable
Minerals - saleable (materials)	Restricted (allowable where natural, cultural, and/or scenic values are not degraded).