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BLM UNCOMPAHGRE FIELD OFFICE RMP PLANNING FACT SHEET

Recreation and Visitor Services

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The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) is revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Uncompahgre planning area. The Uncompahgre RMP will provide detailed information about the current state of resources on public lands within the planning area, and set forth a plan of action for managing those resources for the next twenty or so years under the BLM’s dual mandate of *multiple use* and *sustained yield*.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ABOUND

Public lands within the planning area support a variety of land, water, and snow activities, including camping, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, rock climbing, off-road vehicle driving, and target shooting.



Local rivers and streams offer ample opportunities for boating and cold water fishing, and attract

high visitation from across the state and nationally. Migrating and resident wildlife provide plentiful opportunities for observation, photography, and hunting, when visitation in the area peaks.

VISITATION AND LAND USE

The greatest number of recreational visits occur on BLM lands adjacent to communities. The cities and towns of Montrose, Delta, Norwood, Paonia, Crawford, Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, Orchard City, Olathe, Ridgway, Telluride, Naturita, and Nucla are all near public lands commonly used as “backyard” recreation areas by local residents. This use continues to grow exponentially, along with growth in the communities themselves. The communities benefit directly from the visitation and tourism associated with public lands.

In fact, recreation has emerged as the predominant activity on local BLM lands and national forests. Most data on public land use and activities is a statistical approximation, relying heavily on field observations and the professional judgment of recreation staff. It is estimated that the UFO receives around 349,000 visits per year.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS

BLM land use plans designate *Special Recreation Management Areas* (SRMAs), where recreation is the principle management focus, and funding and personnel are directed toward fulfilling the commitment to provide specific “structured” recreation opportunities. The UFO currently has two SRMAs:

SRMA NAME	LOCATION	ACRES
San Miguel River	Deep Creek to Piñon	39,367
Dolores River (UFO portion)	UFO boundary to Bedrock	13,334

Any area not delineated as an SRMA is called an *extensive recreation management area* (ERMA). Recreation in these areas is unstructured and does not require intensive management or significant investments in trails or facilities. This type of custodial or “dispersed” recreation management offers little in the way of visitor services or developed recreational facilities.

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A COMPARISON OF ERMAS AND SRMAS

	ERMAs	SRMAs
Management	Unstructured No identifiable market demand for structured recreation	Structured Tied to identified market demand for structured recreation (i.e., activities, experiences, benefits, and the maintenance of recreation setting character)
Objectives	Reactive & Custodial Directed at taking care of dispersed recreation-tourism activities	Proactive Directed at producing specific recreation opportunities/outcomes

DEVELOPED RECREATION FACILITIES

In certain locations, the BLM has constructed recreation sites and facilities in order to enhance recreation opportunities, protect resources, manage activities, and reduce user conflicts. These infrastructure developments range from campgrounds to simple bulletin boards at trailheads.

Developed recreation sites occur mainly along the San Miguel River SRMA and in the Dolores River SRMA. There are several campsites along the San Miguel River corridor which have boat ramps, changing rooms, cabanas and picnic tables, grills, kiosks, parking areas, and toilets. The Dolores River SRMA has picnic tables, cabanas, parking area, boat ramp and a visitor informational kiosk site.

There are other dispersed staging areas and trailheads in the planning area that consist of kiosks, picnic tables and parking areas as well as one developed site along the Uncompahgre River with cabanas and picnic tables, informational signs, benches, toilet and non-motorized paved trail.

SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS

The BLM requires special recreation permits (SRPs) for commercial uses, competitive events, organized groups, and recreation use within certain special areas in the UFO, including rivers, backcountry, and camping areas. Most SRPs issued by the UFO are for river activities and upland hunting outfitting.

The UFO currently has approximately fifty commercial permits issued, which include guided fishing, white water rafting, vehicle shuttles, big and small game hunting, mountain lion hunting, horseback trail rides, jeep and motorcycle tours, camping, archery tournaments and mountain bike rides. Fifteen percent of SRP fees are expended on program administration, with the remainder going toward visitor services, monitoring, and maintenance.

The BLM wants your input...

The BLM designates SRMAs when recreational demands require that a particular recreation setting be maintained, or where structured opportunities for specific activities and recreational experiences are desired.

- **What areas should be designated and managed as SRMAs (rather than custodially managed for dispersed recreation as ERMA)s?**
- **Should the BLM develop recreation facilities and improve access to recreational opportunities? If so, where?**
- **Should the BLM charge fees for recreational use? If so, for which uses and/or in which geographic areas?**
- **Should the BLM prohibit target shooting in specific areas? If so, where?**

UFO Planning Webpage:
www.UFORMP.com

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