
Appendix M

Travel Management

APPENDIX M

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Travel management is the process of planning for and managing access and travel systems on public lands. This includes route planning, inventory and evaluation, innovative partnerships, user education, mapping, monitoring, signing, field presence and law enforcement (IM CO-2007-020). Comprehensive travel management planning should address all resource use aspects, such as recreational, traditional, casual, agricultural, commercial, and educational, and all modes and conditions of travel on public lands, not just motorized or off-highway vehicle activities (Appendix C of the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook 1601-1).

Travel management implementation decisions for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan (RMP) are being deferred to an implementation plan due to the complexity of the area, controversy, and incomplete data (e.g., complete inventory of routes) within a majority of the resource plan area. To conform with Appendix C of the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, comprehensive travel management planning efforts will consider all modes of travel, motorized and nonmotorized.

The Uncompahgre RMP and Record of Decision (ROD) offers a mix of recreational opportunities that attempt to meet a wide variety of recreation demands while reducing conflict among users. The RMP/ROD also provides for livestock grazing, the continued operation of public land rights-of-way, forest product collection, traditional uses, and access to private property. Each of these uses, including recreation, requires a supporting travel management system within the UFO.

The ultimate goal of the travel management process is to propose a management framework that supports BLM's mission, achieves resource management objectives and provides appropriate, sustainable public and administrative access.

Travel management decisions are considered sequentially at two levels of analysis:

- Land Use Planning – Uncompahgre RMP, Travel area decisions (i.e., areas that are open, closed or limited for all modes of travel)

- Activity or Implementation Level Plans – Route-by-route decisions (i.e., which routes are open or closed for different modes of travel in limited areas)

Note: Land Use Plan level decisions differ from activity or implementation level decisions. To change a travel area decision, the RMP must be amended. Route-by-route decisions do not require a RMP amendment. As implementation decisions, they are designed to be more adaptable. Based on monitoring, the designated route system can be changed to meet resource and resource use objectives. Additionally, area designations may be protested and route-by-route designations may be appealed.

BACKGROUND

Description of Route System

Travel management historically focused specifically on motor vehicle use. The BLM now thinks more comprehensively about travel management to include all forms of transportation, including travel by foot, horseback, and mechanized vehicles such as bicycles, as well as the numerous forms of motorized vehicles from two-wheeled (motorcycles) and four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to full-size vehicles (cars and trucks), and aircraft (landing strips).

The vast majority of existing routes within the UFO were not constructed by the BLM for recreational use. Instead, the majority of existing routes are two-track routes that were created to provide access for timber cutting, mineral and paleontological exploration, range and vegetation management projects, and various rights-of-way. Of these routes, many were not necessarily intended to be left behind or open for recreational use but have become popular routes for visitors engaged in nonmotorized and motorized recreation activities.

Over time, the UFO's route system has been expanded by users themselves, particularly in areas that were previously designated as open for cross-country travel. These routes are not typically maintained by the BLM; rather, it is the repeated passage of vehicles that maintains these routes.

Description of Process

Travel management planning for the UFO will be based upon extensive public participation and internal, structured interdisciplinary team route by route analysis.

Inventory and Public Comment

BLM staff in the UFO will inventory and digitize spatial information regarding the existing route systems within each Travel Management Area prior to travel planning. The majority of this information will be collected in the field, while some may have to be digitized remotely using satellite imagery and verified in the field at a later date.

During the scoping comment period, the BLM will seek feedback from the public on the following questions:

- Is the BLM's route inventory accurate and complete?
- Which routes do you value for what uses, and why?
- Where would you like to see additional routes, and why?
- What routes would you like to see closed and why?

Interdisciplinary Meetings

Once public comments have been reviewed, the BLM will use an interdisciplinary team to draft travel management route-by-route implementation-level decisions for a range of alternatives. During this step of the process, comments from the public, resource information, and management objectives will drive the decision-making process. The purpose of the BLM interdisciplinary team meetings will be to:

- Gather information from the interdisciplinary team on conflicts identified and mitigation proposed. Identify the purpose and need for each route. Where conflicts with resources exist, these conflicts will be discussed and resolved during the meeting, and final proposals for the various alternatives will be established.
- Formulate a range of alternatives that will support the goals and objectives established under each alternative.

The product of the process will be a range of alternative travel management systems. Development of a preferred alternative would likely include components of the other alternatives.

Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Program Guidance

Currently, the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) establishes the criteria for designating public lands with respect to OHVs and for establishing controls governing the use and operation of OHVs. Nonmotorized and nonmechanized uses will also be addressed in travel planning, and decisions made will be incorporated into supplemental rules for enforcement purposes. Various laws and regulations apply to the process, including:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Wilderness Act
- Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Antiquities Act of 1906
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- Taylor Grazing Act
- Mining Act of 1872 (and subsequent mining acts)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) for the BLM
- Executive Orders 11644 (1972) and 11989 (1977)
- BLM's Travel and Transportation Manual (1626)
- Travel and Transportation Management Handbook (H-8342-1)

- Addendum I to the Colorado Protocol: Section 106 Requirements for Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Planning
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

Addendum I to the Colorado Protocol: Section 106 Requirements for Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Planning allows the BLM to complete consultation per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act after route designation.

The Federal Regulations 43 CFR Part 8342.1 and Executive Order 12608 require BLM to designate all public lands as Open, Limited, or Closed for OHV use within the following parameters.

The BLM Authorized Officer shall designate all public lands as open, limited, or closed to off-highway vehicles. All designations shall be based on the protection of the resources of the public lands, the promotion of the safety of all the users of the public lands, recreational opportunities, and the minimization of conflicts among various uses of the public lands; and in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, air, or other resources of the public lands, and to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability.
- b) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats. Special attention will be given to protect endangered or threatened species and their habitats.
- c) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.
- d) Areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated wilderness areas or primitive areas. Areas and trails shall be located in natural areas only if the BLM Authorized Officer determines that off-highway vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, esthetic, scenic, or other values for which such areas are established.

AREA ALLOCATION TRAVEL DECISIONS

Area allocation travel management decisions, or land use planning travel management decisions, define the areas within the UFO that are designated Open, Limited, or Closed to OHV, mechanized travel, and possibly cross-country foot and horse. Limited can mean the following:

- Limited to designated routes
- Limited to existing routes
- Limited to a specific season of use (generally done for wildlife or soil protection)
- Limited to a specific class or type of use

Area decisions reflected the goals and objectives of resources and resource uses throughout Chapter 2 of the Uncompahgre RMP/EIS. Goals and objectives for all UFO uses and resources (e.g., recreation, lands with wilderness characteristics, livestock grazing and vegetative health, wildlife, and soils and water quality) played a role in influencing the land allocation travel decision process.

IMPLEMENTATION-LEVEL TRAVEL DECISIONS

Implementation level decisions include the process of assigning route designations to each route in accordance with alternative objectives, while balancing access and resource concerns. Route designation is an implementation level decision intended to support the UFO's goals and objectives.

The BLM's interdisciplinary team will convene for each travel management plan. The group will examine each route within the planning area to determine its designation under the range of alternatives. Access needs, resource concerns, recreation objectives and public comment all factored into this process. The criterion that will be used is described below.

Please note that only routes on BLM land within the UFO travel planning area that are not county roads will be considered during this process. In addition, routes within Wilderness Study Areas can be designated for horse and/or foot travel.

Identification of Use Needs and Concerns for Each Route

As the BLM analyzes each route (existing and proposed) within the travel management planning area, the following baseline criteria will be used to determine the use needs and resources concerns associated with each route. This process will be done with all alternatives in mind. For example if a route helps meet trail-based recreation objectives under any of the alternatives it will be noted at this stage of the process.

Some of the criteria for identifying environmental concerns and other factors for consideration may be treated with more urgency than others when route-by-route designations are being determined. For example, routes that are in big game calving or production areas would be considered to be a far more pressing concern than routes that fall within big game summer range.

Use of the Route

Recreation

1. The route helps meet objectives for recreation
2. The route provides access to recreational opportunities
3. The route provides access to a destination point (e.g., dispersed camping site or scenic overlook)

Livestock Grazing

1. The route provides access to existing range developments
2. The route facilitates livestock management

Lands and Realty

1. The route provides access to nonfederal lands
2. There is an existing right-of-way associated with the route, or the route provides access to an existing right-of-way
3. The route provides access for authorized mineral activities, valid mineral rights, or other valid existing rights

Other

1. The route is necessary for wildland fire suppression activities
2. The route could provide access for forest resource permits (e.g., wood collection and Christmas trees)
3. The route is needed for public health and safety
4. The route provides administrative access for BLM administrative functions (e.g., research or vegetation treatments)
5. The route provides administrative access for traditional use by Native Americans

Environmental Concerns

Soil Stability

1. The route is within a highly erosive soils area (i.e., fragile soils, as defined by NRCS)
2. The route crosses slopes of 40 percent or greater
3. Increases erosion potential with use

Wildlife Habitat

1. The route is within big game winter range (1a. severe winter range, etc.)
2. The route is within big game calving or production areas
3. The route is within big game summer range
4. The route leads to significant wildlife habitat fragmentation
5. The route is a potential issue for nesting birds

Special Status Species Habitat

1. The route is a known issue within special status wildlife habitat
2. The route is a known issue for special status plants
3. No known issue for special status species, but within suitable habitat
4. Route has potential to impact special status wildlife species

Riparian, Water Quality, and Fisheries

1. The route causes known impacts to water quality
2. The route could cause impacts to water quality

3. The route impacts riparian areas, or seeps and springs
4. The route could lead to cumulative impacts to water quality

Vegetation

1. The route creates concerns for rare, exemplary, or ancient vegetation
2. The route is a known contributor to land health problems

Visual Resources

1. The route conflicts with potential Visual Resource Management class objectives

Cultural Resources

1. The route creates an issue for known historic or prehistoric properties
2. The route creates an issue for areas of Native American concern
3. The route falls within an area that lacks cultural survey information

Geological/Paleontological Resources

1. The route crosses significant paleontological or geological areas
2. The route creates an issue for active or future paleontological research sites

Wilderness/Wilderness Study Area

1. The route is within an area determined to contain wilderness characteristics
2. The route is within a Wilderness Study Area/Congressionally Designated Area

Special Management Areas

1. The route conflicts with recreation management area objectives
2. The route conflicts with ecological emphasis area objectives
3. The route falls within a ACEC or heritage area
4. The route is within a Wild and Scenic River suitable corridor
5. The route is within a Wild and Scenic River eligible corridor
6. The route conflicts with National Trail or Byway objectives

Other Factors for Consideration

General

1. The route is a BLM-maintained route
2. The route condition is poor and/or unsustainable
3. The route is unsafe (e.g., steep or no turn-around)
4. The route is an existing aircraft landing strip

Route Redundancy/Dead-end

1. The route runs parallel to a preferable, existing route

2. The route is a dead-end route (0.5-mile or less and not leading to a facility, campground or scenic overlook)

Private Land Issues

1. The route could lead to private land trespass issues

Route-by-route Designation

Once the uses, concerns and other factors for each route have been determined, the interdisciplinary team will give each route a designation under each alternative.

Route designations under each alternative will be made to conform to the management objectives and actions described in Chapter 2 of the UFORMP/DEIS.

Route designations will fall into the following categories (letters within parentheses are symbols used for each category):

- Open to all modes of travel
- Closed
- Limited to administrative use only
- Limited to foot and horse travel
- Limited to bicycle, foot and horse travel
- Limited to motorcycle, bicycle, foot and horse travel
- Limited to ATVs, motorcycles, bicycle, foot and horse travel

Administrative routes are routes that would be closed to the public, but open for use by individuals (e.g., grazing permittees, BLM employees, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife) who receive authorization to travel on such routes. These administrative routes could include routes to stock ponds and other range improvements, guzzlers, and BLM facilities. Some routes could receive both an administrative use designation as well as another designation for public use. This could mean that a route could be open to full-size vehicles for administrative use, but limited for the public to bicycle, foot and horse travel.

There may be routes where the BLM identifies an environmental concern that could be addressed or mitigated. This allows the BLM to address environmental concerns, while continuing to provide access or recreational opportunities. Depending on the alternative and the nature of the concern, the routes could fall into one of the following categories:

- Open, seek re-route or mitigate resource concern
- Closed until re-route or resource concern is mitigated

Route-by-route Designation Guidelines

Through the process of route-by-route designation, the interdisciplinary team will follow the baseline guidelines for route designation that will apply across all alternatives except for the No Action Alternative. These are described in more detail below.

1. Routes will be designated to provide consistency with adjacent route designations on adjacent Federal and State lands.
2. Motorized and mechanized travel onto public lands from adjacent private lands will be limited to public access points only.
3. Route density for designated public routes will be used as an analysis tool. Due to the low level of use, administrative route mileage would not be considered within the route density analysis.
4. Prohibit cross-country motorized/mechanized travel for big game retrieval. Where appropriate, allow hand-held wheeled game retrieval carts off route in limited areas only during Colorado Parks and Wildlife authorized hunting seasons.
5. Where needed to protect resource values, provide for public safety, and/or maintain an identified opportunity, limit nonmechanized/nonmotorized travel to designated roads and trails.
6. Width restrictions for:
 - a. Single track = 36" or less
 - b. ATV = 50" or less and weighing no more than 1200 lbs.
 - c. Roads = Wider than 50"
7. Motorized and mechanized modes of travel employing advanced technology must adhere to specified route width and weight restrictions.
8. Identify and consider aircraft landing strips.
9. Parking will be restricted to immediately adjacent and parallel to available designated routes unless otherwise restricted.
10. Designate spur routes leading to destination sites that meet objectives (e.g., campsites and overlooks).
11. Impacts to currently known eligible cultural properties will be avoided, minimized or mitigated in consultation. Where National Register eligible sites are known to be in danger or are currently being impacted by travel activities, routes will be closed to travel if necessary until the appropriate mitigation has been implemented.
12. Route density will be considered during the environmental analysis
13. BLM administrative functions related to resource management objectives requiring cross-country travel using motorized vehicles or equipment will be addressed at the project level on a case-by-case basis.
14. Monitoring plans will be developed sufficient to detect and evaluate motorized OHV, mechanized and nonmotorized/nonmechanized related impacts so that management changes can occur, if needed.

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