

Public Attendance Roster
Southwest Resource Advisory Council Meeting
 Lakewood, CO
 February 13, 2013

Name	Address	Phone/Fax/E-mail	Affiliation
Juli Slivka	1600 Wynkoop St. see 950 Denver CO 80202	juli-slivka@ tws.org	The Wilderness Society
Kathy Tobert			SWRAC
Dee Tidy	3		
John Whitney			Senator Bennett
* Pete Kolbenschlag	Kolbenschlag		
* Sarah Sauter			WSCC



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Tres Rios Field Office
29211 Highway 184
Dolores, Colorado 81323

Southwest RAC Meeting

February 13, 2013

February 2013 Lease Parcel Sale EA – The public comment period for the preliminary EA was extended 2 weeks. The final EA was issued Nov 16. Protest period ended Dec 16. 16 protests were received. All parcels were deferred in order to address protests and work with recently elected local officials.

Tres Rios RMP Revision – The public comment period ended on November 25, 2011 for the supplemental EIS for the gothic oil shale analysis. Overall RMP analysis continues and final RMP is anticipated to be issued in May 2013. The Record of Decision is expected to be signed by 9/30/2013.

CO2 3-D Seismic EA: An environmental analysis for 3D seismic exploration was issued with a 30-day comment period Feb 6, 2013. Received five comment letters. Informal conferencing is currently underway. A Decision Notice/FONSI should be issued this spring. Implementation is expected Summer/Fall of 2013.

Potash exploration prospecting permit EA comment period ended on November 26, 2012. Seventeen comment letters were received. Informal conferencing is currently underway. A DN/FONSI is expected this spring and exploration is expected to begin summer 2013.

Standard Metals acquisition has been finalized. This project has been in the works for over 10 years. Titles for federal ownership have been recorded and are currently being reviewed by Solicitor Staff.

A Visual Resource Inventory is currently underway and should be completed by March 2013. This inventory is part of the resource management plan process.

Northern San Juan Basin (NSJB) Stakeholders group and technical working group process has been re-initiated in September when BLM received an APD. A second APD has been received. Stakeholders meetings are currently underway as needed to allow interaction between the stakeholders, TWG and APD administrators. Next meeting is Nov 21, which will discuss the TWG evaluation of the latest APD.

Weber Fire Trial. The trial for the juvenile involved in the June 'Weber' fire is slated to begin Monday February 11, 2013. It is expected to be a 2-day trial. Because it involves a juvenile, the trial is closed and all records are sealed.

Weber coal waste pile fire - BLM determined this fire was located on private property. BLM will work with local fire district to monitor the coal fire that was ignited by the June/July Weber Fire near Mancos. Mining refuse from historic operations continue to smolder over a 2 acre area. Steep terrain, standing dead trees and inaccessibility combined with safety issues are hamper a tactical solution. It is hoped that the majority of the waste pile is consumed over the cold winter months. A second fire was reported in December on the north side of the Weber Fire. This fire is on BLM land. The TRFO has submitted a funding request to the State of Colorado Division of Reclamation and Mine Safety (DRMS) for potential funding if winter snow pack does not ultimately eliminate the fire.

King II Coal Mine - Lease Modification EA scoping period closed on December 27, 2012. Two comment letters were received. The company submitted an application to modify their existing coal lease in January 2011. The mine is underground and the portal and associated facilities are located on State lands. The modification would affect split estate lands where the surface belongs primarily to the Ute Mountain Ute tribe. No new facilities are proposed with this modification. All natural drainages on the surface are ephemeral. The mine is dry. The operator imports water for mine dust control.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC) inventory was posted on the TRFO webpage in December 2012.

Conveyance of 100 acres of public lands to the **Town of Silverton** is continuing. A mineral assessment has been completed; archaeological reports are completed and BLM is currently negotiating with SHPO for historical recordation requirements for the portion of the mill structures located within the proposal. The Town has leased these lands for the past 10 years. This is expected to be finalized in the summer 2013

Conveyance of the **32nd St. Property to the City of Durango** is almost completed this year. Environmental analysis has been completed. Two comment letters were received. The Federal Register notice will be the next step as will be the record of decision.

Durango Urban Interface area working group is looking at land ownership for the future in and around the Durango area in relation to State, County, City and federal lands. BLM is meeting with local governments and State agencies to initiate a long-term strategy. Colorado Parks and Wildlife has requested parcels in the Perins Peak and BODO wildlife areas.

Bureau of Indian Affairs leasing EA is currently planning for scoping for the proposed leasing of approximately 12,000 acres of tribal lands in the east Red Mesa Area, Southern Ute Reservation.

EPA mailed 104(e) letters to Kinross Gold Corp, Sunnyside Gold Corp. and Mueller Industries on January 16, 2012 with a 45-day response requirement regarding the Upper Animas Mining District, San Juan County, Colorado. This information request is an inquiry into the identification, nature and quantity of

materials that have been or are generated, treated, stored or disposed of at, or transported to, the site; the nature of extent of the release of a hazardous substance or pollutant or contaminant at the site; extent of the ownership and operations of at the site; and information relating to the ability of a person to pay for or to perform a cleanup at the site.

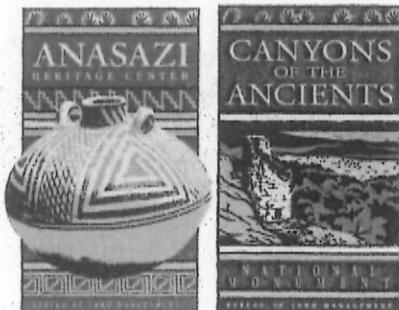
Disappointment Valley Range Allotment EA – BLM range conservationists have worked with the permittees and local CCA liaison. The BLM interdisciplinary team is currently updating and completing analysis based on the alternative development from the above-efforts. An environmental assessment will be issued for a 30-day comment period sometime this spring.

Slickrock Trailing Permit. BLM range conservationists are completing the environmental assessment for the trailing permit along the Dolores River in Dolores and San Miguel counties.

Recreation site improvements were partially completed at 3 sites on the Dolores River-Dolores Overlook, Mountain Sheep Point and Boxelder **campgrounds**. Due to winter snowfall, work has been temporarily suspended. The project will be completed this summer.

Three adopted wild horses in the **Spring Creek Horse herd** that were confiscated from their adopters this fall have been successfully adopted by local entities.

Livestock permittees received a letter in November discussing the current drought conditions in the area. The letter does not specify any immediate direction. However, it strongly stresses the need for permittees and BLM range staff to proactively plan for changing conditions.



Bureau of Land Management
Anasazi Heritage Center
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
Dolores, Colorado
February, 2013

"From advisory councils and committees to Friends groups and individuals who simply care enough to volunteer their free time, the National Conservation Landscape System has inspired thousands to embrace public lands stewardship as never before." Bob Abbey, BLM Director, 2010

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument was established in 2000, to protect more than as many as 30,000 archaeological sites along with natural resources, serves as an outdoor museum and laboratory for about 50,000 visitors per year. The sites reflect the cultural and physical landscape for a hundred generations: villages, field houses, check dams, reservoirs, great kivas, cliff dwellings, shrines, sacred springs, agricultural fields, petroglyphs, and sweat lodges, as well as historic farms and ranches, and Native American sacred sites.

- 18% inventory documents up to 100 sites per sq. mile, the highest known density of sites in the United States. Approximately 30,000 archaeological sites estimated.
- One of the most extensively studied archaeological landscape in the world -- from explorations in 1776 by Dominguez and Escalante to the late 1800s by William Henry Jackson and a recent National Science Foundation Village Ecodynamics Project.
- Thirteen public-use developed cultural sites including Lowry Pueblo, Painted Hand Pueblo, Sand Canyon Pueblo, and eight sites along the Sand Canyon Trail.
- Implementation phase of Resource Management Plan [ROD June, 2010]
- 25 Tribal entities claim cultural affiliation.
- Approximately 80% of the Monument is currently leased by active oil and gas production including Kinder Morgan's largest CO₂ gas reservoir in the United States.
- 20 miles of specific foot, horse or bicycle trails, 8 miles of ATV routes, 3 Wilderness Study Areas, and 1 Research Natural Area. Over 35 miles of unwanted routes have been closed and restored.
- Land Health Assessments (LHA) 100% completed in 2001, with a reduction of over 2,000 AUMs from permitted to calculated numbers. Currently, 23 grazing allotments; 6,400 AUMs; 19 livestock operators.
- About 8,000 acres of private lands have been acquired since the monument was established.
- Integrated approach to weed management including herbicides, mechanical control and biological control for tamarisk, Russian knapweed and other species with County partnerships.
- Contains suitable habitat for several special status species including the Mexican spotted owl, Southwestern willow flycatcher, Colorado pikeminnow and rare snakes and lizards.



Lowry Pueblo

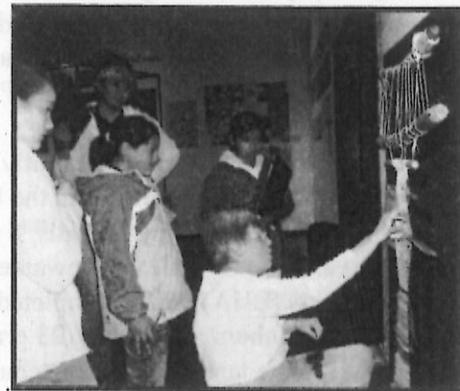


The Anasazi Heritage Center (AHC) is a world-class museum interpreting the history and culture of the Ancestral Puebloan people, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Trail of the Ancients National Scenic Byway and the Four Corners region.

- Opened in 1988 as an interagency artifact repository. Built by the BOR for the Dolores Archaeological Program (the largest ever in the US).
- Headquarters for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument since 2000.
- Ten thousand square feet of public galleries, a theater, and museum shop.
- 12th century Dominguez and Escalante Pueblos with fully accessible interpretive trail.
- Collections curated include 3.5 million artifacts and ¼-mile of archives.
- Millions of dollars provided via grants and partnerships including the Anasazi Historical Society, Colorado State Historical Fund, Save America's Treasures, Canyonlands Natural History Association, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, San Juan Mountains Association, McElmo Canyon Research Institute, Fort Lewis College, Colorado College, University of Colorado, Jaegiellonian University of Krakow Poland, Roads Scholars (Elderhostel), Public Lands Interpretive Association, and Mesa Verde Country and Trail of the Ancients Byway Association with National Geographic.
- Education programs include curriculum based student activities, artifact loan kits, traveling exhibits, library, Junior Explorer—Archaeologist, and the award winning film Visit with Respect. Monument based programs include Castle Rock Field Days and Outdoor Museum Field Days at Lowry Pueblo.
- Thousands of student visitors from Colorado and throughout the United States every year.
- Solar panel array installed in 2011.
- Plant Select Demonstration Garden in Partnership with the Denver Botanic Gardens and Colorado State University Extension & the Master Gardeners program.
- Award winning volunteer program including over 150 volunteers, interns, and hosted workers annually with an on-site Intern House available for year round participants, equivalent to 8 full time employees.



Visitors enjoy behind the scenes curation tours



Students in the Museum Discovery Room.

BLM's National Landscape Conservation System was created by DOI administrative order in 2000, and permanently established in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.

The mission is:

to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes and places that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations.

The 15-year strategy released in 2011 includes four themes:

- Ensuring the Conservation, Protection and Restoration of NLCS Values;
- Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Large Landscape;
- Raising Awareness of the Values and Benefits;
- Building upon BLM's Commitment to Conservation.

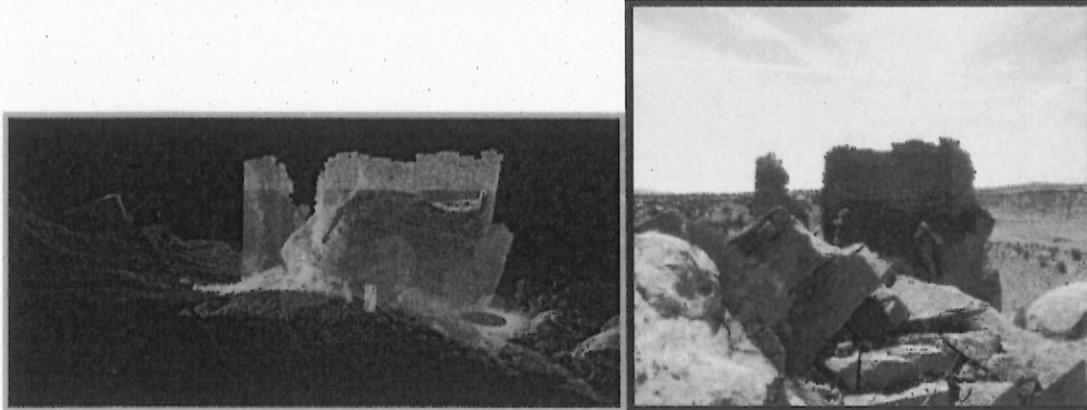


**Bureau of Land Management
Anasazi Heritage Center
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
Dolores, Colorado
SWRAC Briefing
February 2013**

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument staff and Kinder Morgan LLC are currently working on a Master Development Plan to facilitate the future extraction of CO₂ from the McElmo Dome Unit. This will allow the focus of development to avoid archaeological sites and sensitive wildlife habitat and better protect the objects and values outlined in the proclamation establishing the Monument.

Recent convictions of vandals for excavating a human skull and showing it as part of a guided tour resulted in restitution (\$1,800) and minor prison sentences. The remains have been returned to the AHC and NAGPRA consultation has been initiated.

A partnership between University of Colorado Denver, BLM's National Operations Center and CANM resulted in research testing the utility of using Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) versus photogrammetry to document archaeological structures with standing walls. The preliminary results were impressive and hold great hope for more rapid documentation of walls and enhanced interpretive opportunities. The resolution is exceptional and will also allow for monitoring structural integrity and rate of deterioration.



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is embarking on a discussion with Kinder Morgan LLC about creating a Master Development Plan for future CO₂ Development. This approach will allow for continued development while providing protection for the objects and values of the Monument.

A second Artist in Residence program has just been announced and will be a competitive process to select an artist(s) to spend two week on CANM and creating art that captures the essence of the place. BLM will receive digital versions of the art work to be used in interpretive programs, brochures, presentations and other venues.

A steering committee exploring "standing up" a friends group for CANM and the AHC has donated over 800 hours to the effort and just held an open house on February 9, 2013. A recent anonymous donor provided \$5,000 and they are currently seeking board members. This group will focus specifically on our unit and will fill niches not currently filled by our existing successful partnerships.



**Uncompahgre Field Office/Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area
Southwest Resource Advisory Council
February 13, 2013**

Uncompahgre Field Office Resource Management Plan Revision

The draft will come out for public review late spring/early summer.

Travel Management Planning

The Uncompahgre Field Office continues to work on a comprehensive travel management plan for an area near Ridgway, CO. The area is directly adjacent to Ridgway State Parks and is approximately 1200 acres. We've received approximately 140 comments on a preliminary environmental assessment. We hope to have a decision in the next couple of months.

Norwood Burn Canyon Recreation Trail's project; UFO completed public scoping May 4. Based on public comment, we are now evaluating it as a comprehensive travel management plan. The UFO staff is presently working on development of alternatives. We hope to have a preliminary EA for public review in the next few months.



There will be a travel management training course offered February 21 at the Holiday Inn Express from 8 – 4:30pm. You are invited to participate but must RSVP to Julie Jackson by Friday, February 15.

Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic Byway

The Scenic Byway committee received a grant to develop a corridor management plan. They have been holding public meetings along the Byway in the past few weeks. They will be developing a marketing strategy in conjunction with the plan. BLM UFO is an ex-officio advisor to the Byway committee.

Relief Ditch, Gunnison River



This is a project on the Gunnison River in the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. The purpose is to improve the efficiency for the diversion of irrigation water and address public safety concerns of the existing structure which constitutes a recreational boating hazard. Working with partners, BLM has authorized this project which includes riparian restoration and tamarisk removal, in addition to the construction of a new diversion. Funding for the project has been provided through a variety of sources which include *Fishing is Fun* grant from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado River Water Conservation District, Whiting Farms, BLM and others. Trout Unlimited has been instrumental in facilitating all the

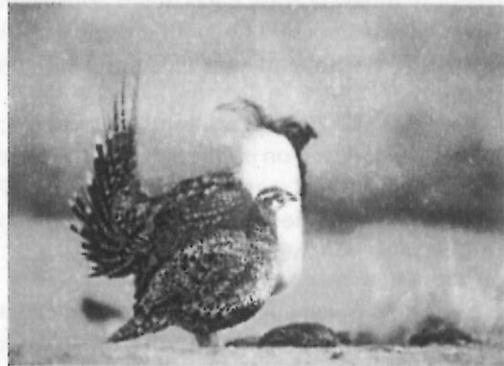
partners to make this a reality. The irrigation diversion portion of the project started in October 2012 and is on schedule for completion this March prior to the start of irrigation season. Wetland and riparian improvement work will occur through next fall utilizing wildlife habitat mitigation funds from the U.S Bureau of Reclamation; this work will not impede irrigation and use of the Relief Ditch by area farmers.

Dolores River Restoration Project

Work continues on this project which involves tamarisk eradication, and habitat restoration along the Dolores River in Colorado and Utah. There are four BLM offices involved, working collaboratively with many partners including the Western Colorado Youth Corps, South West Youth Corps, Tamarisk Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, private land owners and others. We completed tamarisk removal along a 4 mile stretch of the Dolores River, and removed elm along 4 miles of the San Miguel River, a major tributary. We planted native shrubs as part of a pilot study to determine the best adapted species and methods for restoration. Included in the program of work for this year, is additional monitoring, treatment of invasive species, and if conditions allow, implementing a pilot project that would involve prescribed burning small patches of tamarisk followed by a variety of restoration strategies to determine future design of broader scale projects.

Gunnison Sage Grouse

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have published a proposed rule which lists the Gunnison Sage Grouse as Endangered. If the Service finalizes this rule as proposed, it would extend the Endangered Species Act protections to this species. The Service's decision is based on their analysis of the threats contributing to the species' decline and they cite the principle threat as habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation of habitat and as well as other factors having an effect on current populations and habitat.



The Service has also determined that following the proposal to list the Gunnison Sage Grouse as Endangered, designation of critical habitat for the species is necessary. Critical Habitat is those areas that are critical to the survival of the species. In total, 1.7 million acres are being proposed for designation as critical habitat. The *Federal Register* Notice on January 11, 2013 also opened a 60 day comment period for both the Endangered status and proposed habitat designation. Within the area of the Uncompahgre Field Office, there are 190,447 acres of proposed critical habitat (BLM, Forest Service, State, Private surface): mostly covering the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and Crawford area (56%), but this also includes, Jones Draw, Simms Mesa, Kinikin, Cerro Summit areas near Montrose, as well as Miramonte/Beaver Mesa, Sheep Draw and a little sliver of Monogram Mesa on the west end near Norwood. A Final Listing Decision is due September 30 2013. After the final listing, either it will be officially listed as Endangered, Threatened, or not listed.

Drought

We continue to work with grazing permittees and are having conversations about drought and the potential impacts not only to range vegetation, but livestock operations. We worked with the USFS to ensure a smooth transition for those range users moving from high elevation National Forest Lands to BLM managed public lands this past fall. Despite the monsoonal rains which have helped significantly, vegetation is still suffering the effects of this drought. Overall there will probably be less numbers and shorter grazing periods. However, conditions are not uniform and so we are working out grazing use on an allotment by allotment basis. Many permittees have made alternate plans and do not plan to use their allotments, or will reduce livestock numbers. Our range specialists will be evaluating winter/spring precipitation this to determine how that may influence available forage for this the next grazing season. We have had good cooperation and support from the permittees in coordinating grazing use.

Placer Mining

Over the past year, the Uncompahgre Field staff has observed many instances of resource damage due to Placer Mining along the San Miguel River in western Colorado. Due to the elevated resource degradation associated with this activity, the Uncompahgre Office field manager is meeting with the Olathe Club of the Gold Prospectors

Association of America on Thursday, February 21, to increase awareness and encourage enhanced stewardship of public lands.

Uranium

Rimrock filed for a mine plan to make minor modifications to add a small area to their existing mine footprint. Public scoping recently ended and we are working on the environmental assessment.

Oil and Gas Program

February 2013 (The North Fork) oil and gas lease sale: the parcels have been deferred as of February 6 for the February 14th sale. 157 protests were received on the environmental assessment. We are working through the protests.

SG Interests

SG Interests initiated a 150 well project for the Bull Mountain Unit on October 29, 2008. The project was scoped 2 different times due to changes in the proposed action. A preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) was released in March 2012 with public comment closing April 24. The preliminary EA, public comment, input from the EPA and BLM staff analysis indicated the need for additional air quality analysis driven in part by the proximity to Class 1 view sheds to nearby Wilderness. We are currently working on a Notice of Intent (NOI) to initiate an EIS project in the federal register.

North Fork Coal Actions

West Elk Mine - UFO worked as a cooperating agency with the USDA Forest Service on an EIS for West Elk on modifications to their mine. BLM also wrote an EA for the leasing decision. The Record of Decision was signed in December. WildEarth Guardians has appealed the decision.

Bowle – has made application for a new lease adjacent to and north of their existing mine. The surface area contains FS, BLM, and private lands. BLM and FS will be doing a joint environmental assessment for the Spruce Stomp LBA. Office of Surface Mining will be a cooperating agency. The 30 day scoping period ends Friday, February 22.

Oxbow – A decision to approve a coal exploration project on Oak Mesa was made last fall. We received an appeal from WildEarth Guardians which they withdrew after 30 days. About half the holes have been drilled thus far and should be completed by late spring. They have also recently filed for a lease modification to the north of their mine on FS land.

Lands

We continue to work with Department of Energy on an EIS analyzing environmental issues in regard to potential uranium leases on withdrawn lands in San Miguel and Montrose Counties.

We are working with the Bureau of Reclamation on an EIS for their salinity control project in the Paradox Valley.

At the end of December, we completed a land exchange involving approximately 310 acres southeast of Montrose (BLM acquired 160 private acres in exchange for 150 federal acres). It was a 5 year process.



BLM Resource Advisory Councils

Partners Across The West

Gunnison Field Manager Update

February 2013
Denver, Colorado

New Staff

- Associate Field Manager – Stuart Schneider
 - Field Staff Ranger (Law Enforcement) – Derek Chodorowski

Grazing Permit Renewals and Drought Management

- Permit renewals continue to be high priority workload for Gunnison.
- In 2012, BLM asked for voluntary drought management measures based on elevation bands: reductions in timing, intensity, and herd size.
- Modified voluntary responses based on continued/worsening drought conditions.
- Conducted drought monitoring and assessment during and after grazing season.
- Developing drought management response for 2013;
 - Communicating informally with permittees and requesting they present alternative allotment management plans.
 - Meeting with Stockgrowers Association board to discuss courses of action.



Domestic Sheep Grazing

- BLM is engaging permittees and Colorado Parks and Wildlife in permit renewal process (NEPA) for domestic sheep grazing permits.
 - BLM Gunnison Field Office has 12 sheep allotments from Gunnison to Lake City.
 - 5 permits need renewal for 12 allotments.
- Scoped public in November – 10 comments including counties; nothing from woolgrowers.
- CPW has developed bighorn sheep management plan for the area with BLM input.
 - 2012 Omnibus Bill directed BLM to ensure grazing management decisions are consistent with State bighorn sheep management plans.
- Conducting risk assessments of contact before finalizing alternatives.



Candidate Conservation Agreement for Gunnison Sage Grouse

- Finalized – have initiated informal conferencing with USFWS on biological assessment.
- BLM is a lead partner in developing a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) for Gunnison sage grouse within the Gunnison Basin.
- Collaborative effort between BLM, USFWS, other federal agencies, the County and other partners.
- Primary purpose is to:
 - Develop and implement landscape-level conservation actions to reduce or eliminate known threats,
 - Provide certainty that, if implemented, the conservation measures would reduce the likelihood of additional land use restrictions should the species become listed, and
 - Allow lessees and permittees on federal land to continue their operations (modified) while protecting and improving habitat conditions.

Gunnison Basin Climate Change Working Group

- Local partnership led by The Nature Conservancy, local land managers and private interests to develop a Gunnison Basin climate initiative.
 - a. Develop practical management strategies to reduce adverse effects on key species and habitats.
 - b. Build resilience to climate change, increase understanding of threats, and promote coordinated and effective implementation of these strategies.
- Develop a rapid climate vulnerability assessment for Upper Gunnison Basin to determine what species and habitats are most at risk from climate change.
- Completed social resilience and vulnerability assessment through University of Arizona.
- Successfully implemented pilot projects (private land) to:
 - a. Enhance ecosystem resilience of wetland/riparian habitats within the sagebrush shrublands, and
 - b. Increase the adaptive capacity of the Sage-grouse and other wildlife species.

Pursuing funding to support projects on BLM managed lands in 2013



Travel and Recreation Management

- Continuing to implement 2010 Travel Management decision in high priority sage-grouse habitat and recreation areas.
 - c. Re-engaged Gunnison County Commissioners on the purpose and need for travel management
- Completed a major route closure and rehabilitation project in 2012 to support mule deer and sage-grouse habitat (matching funds from Mule Deer foundation)
- Funded to conduct another travel management project in 2013 to support sage-grouse habitat conservation
- Initiating recreation and trail planning for Signal Peak area on east side of Gunnison city limits.
- Additional planning in Slate River includes a BLM 5-year maintenance plan, recreation site plan, river bank stabilization, and potential abandoned mine cleanup.

Bark Beetle Infestations

- Gunnison Field Office has documented several areas of bark beetle infestations
 - Gunnison and Lake City areas
 - Hundreds of acres in scale and expanding
- Working with partners to assess and respond
 - Consistent with BLM Colorado's bark beetle strategy
 - Partnering with USFS to develop treatment areas
 - Informing and coordinating with Hinsdale County and Lake City.
- Bark beetles pose a significant risk to forest health and recreation opportunities in BLM Gunnison Field Office

