

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment
for Little Yampa Canyon Vista Trial and Trailhead
Development**

Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, Colorado 81625

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: Little Yampa Canyon Vista Trail and Trailhead Development

PROPONENT: Bureau of Land Management

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Vista Trail: T.5 N R.93 W, Sec. 2,3,11,14,15
Lower Trailhead Parking: T.5 N., R.93 W, Sec 14
Middle Trailhead Parking: T.5 N R.93 W, Sec. 14
Upper Trailhead Parking: T.5 N R.93 W, Sec. 2
White Rock Group/Youth Campground Parking/Trailhead
T.5 N R.93 W Sec. 2
Petrified Sand Dunes and Picnic Area T.5 N R.93 W, Sec. 14
6th p.m. Moffat County.

See Attachment A and B.

1.3 BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND: This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by the BLM to accomplish President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The Little Yampa Canyon Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) is one of the projects selected in the Yampa River Basin as part of this Initiative. It is the Federal Government's promise in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to utilize its resources and skills, in close coordination with partners to support and complete significant projects that get people outdoors and promote conservation and land stewardship.

In addition, the Little Snake Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (RMP/ROD) identified the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA as two Resource Management Zones (RMZs); Zone 1 – Yampa River and Zone 2 – Duffy and Iles Mountain, where visitors and Yampa Valley residents depend on public lands for recreation and related tourism use.

The proposed projects are located in Zone 2 where under the activity-planning framework for management, management would be geared towards providing visitors and residents of the Yampa Valley, hunting-related, wildlife viewing, interpretation/education, camping, and other recreation activities.

1.4 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed trail, trailheads, and picnic/interpretive site is to meet the recreation management objectives of the RMP/ROD and President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It also ensures that public lands are managed according to the principles of multiple use identified in the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA) while maintaining the valid existing rights and other obligations already established.

The project would provide public access, trail systems, and interpretation for multiple-use recreation opportunities within the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA.

The Proposed Action has been developed to meet the following objectives:

- To avoid damage to sensitive natural and cultural resources on and around the trail system.
- To provide for user safety.
- To provide convenient access to and usage of the trail system.
- To provide for increased enjoyment of recreational opportunities.
- To provide education and land stewardship through interpretative panels.

1.5 PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action was reviewed for conformance (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM MS 1617.03) with the following plan:

Name of Plan: Little Snake Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Date Approved: October 2011

Results: The Proposed Action is consistent with the Little Snake Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, Recreation Management goals to:

- Provide a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities, activities, and experiences for various user groups, unorganized visitors and affected communities, their residences, economies, and the environment.
- Provide visitor services including interpretive and educational information.
- Support tourism efforts for local economic diversification associated with public and resources.

Section/Page: Section 2.15 Recreation/page RMP-42-43

1.6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1.6.1 Scoping

NEPA regulations (40 CFR §1500-1508) require that the BLM use a scoping process to identify potential significant issues in preparation for impact analysis. The principal goals of scoping are to allow public participation to identify issues, concerns, and potential impacts that require detailed analysis.

External Scoping Summary: The action in this EA is included in the NEPA log posted on the LSFO web site: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/lfsfo.html.

Persons/Agencies Consulted:

- Yampa Valley OHV Trail Riders
- CNCC 4-Wheel Club
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Internal Scoping Summary: The Proposed Action was presented to the interdisciplinary NEPA team an LSFO priorities meeting in June 2012.

1.6.2 Issues Identified

No external scoping issues were presented to the BLM concerning the proposed projects. The following internal issues were identified:

1.6.2.1 Soils

Anticipated surface disturbance and soil compaction would be limited to a relatively small linear area (trail corridor) and other developed sites (picnic area, trailheads) as a result of user activities and routine maintenance. This EA will analyze soil erosion or compaction that may occur due to the proposed projects.

1.6.2.2 Vegetation, including Invasive/Non-native Species

The Proposed Action would remove native vegetation with trail and facilities construction and any alteration in landscape would increase the risk for establishment and spread of noxious and invasive species. Vegetation and potential spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants will be analyzed in this EA.

1.6.2.3 Migratory Birds and Special Status Animal Species

The SRMA provides both foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory bird species, and the sagebrush stands provide habitat for BLM sensitive species. Impacts to habitat used by BLM sensitive species caused by the proposed projects will be analyzed in this EA.

1.6.2.4 Wildlife, Terrestrial

Trail and facilities construction would impact wildlife habitat and cause some displacement during construction. The EA will analyze if the proposed projects have long-term impacts to terrestrial wildlife.

1.6.2.5 Cultural and Native American Religious Concerns

With regards to the proposed projects, there is a potential to impact cultural and/or paleontological resources and any potential impacts will be addressed in this EA.

1.6.2.6 Social and Economic Conditions

The proposed projects would affect Routt and Moffat counties and their associated communities. Social and economic impacts as a result of the proposed projects will be addressed in this EA.

1.6.2.7 Livestock

The Proposed Action lies within the Duffy Mountain Grazing Allotment. Livestock use within the Project Area includes both cattle and sheep. This EA will address livestock issues associated with the proposed projects.

1.6.3 Issues not Analyzed

Issues not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternative, or are present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis are required is covered under Table 1: Resources and Determination of Need for Further Analysis.

CHAPTER 2 - PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

2.2.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to complete projects identified as part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative within the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA and meet the objectives in the RMP/ROD. The proposed projects would encompass approximately 3.3 acres within the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA. These projects are:

1. Trail Construction

A long-term, sustainable trail system would be achieved with its design focusing upon minimal impact to resources. Monitoring, along with Adaptive Management would ensure sustainability. Reroutes or improvements to trail design may be made to reach acceptable design criteria. In locations where potential hazards may exist, proper signage would be installed. This would include: road and trail intersections, shared use road areas, and other applicable areas.

The BLM would construct new trails or improve sections of existing trails in sustainable locations within the appropriate management zones. The trails would be single track and cleared of trees and brush to provide sufficient visibility and passing room for trail activities. The trail system is two-way directional travel on all sections. Trail signs would be posted to mark the route and provide trail regulations, safety, and etiquette messages appropriate for the management zone. Informational or interpretive signs would be located at specific points of interest along the trail system.

The following trails have been identified for designation and implementation (Attachment A). These trails would be designated and available for foot, horseback and mechanized (i.e. mountain bikes) use only unless otherwise marked. Motorized (i.e., ATVs, motorcycles, etc.) use would not be allowed. The proposed trails are located in Zone 2 of the SRMA, which is identified as Duffy and Iles Mountain.

- Vista Trail (trail system from BLM Road 1596 trailhead to White Rock Group/Youth Campground Parking/Trailhead). Approximately 5 miles long.
- Petrified Sand Dunes Trail and Picnic Area (from BLM Road 1596 trailhead). Approximately .25 mile long.

BLM staff and authorized contractors/cooperators would provide trail flagging, GPS/GIS records, and cultural clearances. Trail construction would be performed by the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, Steamboat Springs Community Youth Corps, volunteers, BLM staff and/or authorized contractors. BLM would provide oversight and direction on all phases of the trail construction. The trails would meet or exceed all applicable BLM trail construction standards. The standards include minimum 3-foot width cleared to dirt or surface vegetation, follows land contours at or below 10% grade, side slanted surface or water dips for drainage where needed. Trail drainage design would take advantage of rocky areas and natural drainage areas to minimize erosion and maintenance requirements. Constructed splash guards or other energy dissipaters would be utilized as required where natural features do not occur. The vegetation canopy would be cleared to minimum 4 foot width and 9 foot height. Drainage crossings would be natural or improved with rocks and gravel where needed. No bridges would be required.

Trail construction would be by hand tools (e.g., shovels, rakes, pulaskis) and/or a dozer with a blade of no larger than 4 feet, specifically designed for trail work. Any brush and tree clearing would be by personnel certified to operate electric equipment or through hand tools.

Vista Trail (handicapped section)

The handicapped section of the Vista Trail (approximately .31 mile) shall comply with Section T303 *Trails*, of the Proposed Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, June 20, 2007. The surface of accessible trail would be firm and stable with an accessible exterior surface of crushed stone or fines. Trail width would be a minimum of 36 inches with any tread obstacles not exceeding 2 inches maximum in height. Passing space would be provided at intervals of 1,000 feet maximum. The maximum cross slope of the trail segment would not exceed 1:20, which would provide sufficient drainage to prevent ponding and water damage to the trail.

The maximum running slope of the trail segment would be no more than 30 percent of the total trail length to exceed 1:12 slope. Resting intervals would be provided at distances no greater than 200 feet apart.

Petrified Sand Dunes Trail and Picnic Area

The Petrified Sand Dunes Trail would be constructed to trail standards (see Trail Construction above). Crushed stone or fines will be used for the exterior surface to two picnic tables and to an interpretive panel. No other developments (i.e., grills, fire rings, etc.) would be constructed at the site.

Trail construction would be by hand tools (e.g., shovels, rakes, pulaskis). Any brush and tree clearing would be by personnel certified to operate electric equipment or through hand tools.

2. Trailhead Development

The BLM would construct parking areas and may install picnic tables, vault toilets, directional and interpretive signing or other appropriate facilities at or near the approximate locations as shown in Attachment B. The immediate area of the facilities would be cleared of vegetation and construction would meet BLM standards. Several trailhead parking areas and day use facilities have been identified and would be developed in collaboration with the America's Great Outdoors Program and other partners. For pipelines and buried communication lines, the "One Call" system to locate and stake the centerline of all underground facilities prior to construction activity would be employed. In addition, BLM would provide 48 hours notification to the owner/operator of any buried utilities or other facilities prior to conducting any construction work within 10 feet of the facility. The following trailhead developments are proposed (See Attachment B and C):

- Lower Vista Trail Parking Area (SE ¼ NW ¼ SE ¼, Section 14) would be constructed along BLM Road 1596. It would be approximately 150' x 150' (to accommodate 10 horse and/or utility trailers and 10 vehicles) with 6-inches of compacted road base surface. One metal, wood, or green information kiosk would be installed (approximately 2-3 posts 4' deep).

- Upper Vista Trail Parking Area (SW ¼ NW ¼ NE ¼, Section 14) would be constructed along BLM Road 1594 at the trailhead. The upper parking section would be approximately 25' x 20' (space for two vehicles) and would be designed to meet the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas standards. The lower section would be 30' x 34' (space for three vehicles) and would not be ABA compliant. Both areas would have 6-inches of compacted road base surface.
- Group/Youth Campground Parking and Trailhead (SE ¼ NE ¼ SE ¼, Section 3) would be constructed along BLM Road 1594C. It would be approximately 100' x 100' (space for 10 vehicles) with 6-inches of compacted road base surface. One metal, wood, or green information kiosk would be installed (approximately 2-3 posts 4' deep).

3. Access Portals for foot and horse:

The BLM would modify any existing fences along proposed trail routes to create appropriate access for foot and horse use.

4. Standard operating procedures and project design features employed in project implementation:

Several operating procedures will be employed during project implementation to protect a variety of resources at the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA. These procedures are:

Impacts to cultural resources will be mitigated through a range of practices as necessary from project avoidance to research design guided cultural data recovery excavations.

Any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) discovered during trail and trailhead parking construction shall be immediately reported to the authorized officer. Construction operations shall be suspended in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the authorized officer. An evaluation of the discovery will be made by the authorized officer to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values.

Project activities which remove migratory bird nesting and sage grouse habitat will not be permitted during the months of May 15 through July 15 to prevent disturbance to nesting migratory birds and sage grouse.

To prevent impacts to greater sage-grouse, no trails should be constructed via heavy equipment from March 1st – June 30th.

Spring and seep sources will be avoided during construction of new trail segments. New trail segments will be located to avoid all wetland areas if possible. Site specific mitigation will be developed for areas that cannot be avoided.

5. Compliance Plan(s):

Compliance Schedule: Compliance would be conducted during the construction phase and maintenance phase to ensure that all terms and conditions are followed. This would be done on a five-year compliance schedule after completion of the project.

Monitoring Plan: The SRMA use and condition of the trail, trailheads and facilities would be monitored during the life of the project for compliance with all stipulations and pertinent regulations as well as achievement of identified recreation objectives within each zone. The trails, trailheads and facilities would be monitored for noxious/invasive weeds during the growing season. Corrective action such as mechanical or chemical treatments would be identified and implemented. If implemented, appropriate application permits would be obtained.

Trailheads would not be fenced out from livestock; however trailheads and facilities would be monitored during the life of the project for any damage or overuse that could occur from livestock. Corrective action such as barb wire fencing or other types of barriers would be identified and implemented as needed.

Assignment of Responsibility: Responsibility for implementation of the compliance schedule and monitoring plan will be assigned to the recreation staff in the Little Snake Field Office. The primary inspector will be the recreation specialist.

2.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Vista Trail and associated projects would not be constructed. A portion of the recreation and travel management objectives identified in the RMP, and the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative would not be achieved.

CHAPTER 3 – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND EFFECTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Affected Resources:

The CEQ Regulations state that NEPA documents “must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail” (40 CFR 1500.1(b)). While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues raised warrant analysis in an environmental assessment (EA). Issues will be analyzed if: 1) an analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) if the issue is associated with a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact, or where analysis is necessary to determine the significance of the impacts. Table 1 lists the resources considered and the determination as to whether they require additional analysis.

Table 1. Resources and Determination of Need for Further Analysis

Determination ¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
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Determination ¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
Physical Resources		
NI	Air Quality	Activities associated with the proposed project that may affect air quality, namely dust from excavation and exhaust emissions from equipment, fall below regulated EPA emission standards for the six criteria pollutants of concern (sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter [both PM2.5 and PM10], and lead) and is not a significant source of these pollutant emissions that do occur in Moffat County. Impacts to air quality caused by the Proposed Action are considered minimal.
NP	Floodplains	There are no 100-year floodplains present on public lands within the proposed project area.
NI	Hydrology, Ground	Ground Hydrology would not be affected by the Proposed Action.
NP	Hydrology, Surface	See Water Quality – Surface
NP	Minerals, Fluid	This resource is not present within the proposed project area.
NI	Minerals, Solid	This resource would not be affected by the Proposed Action.
PI	Soils	See Section 3.2.1
NI	Water Quality, Ground	Ground Water Quality would not be affected by the Proposed Action.
NP	Water Quality, Surface	There are no perennial surface waters within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project area, which occurs on a plateau above the Yampa River. The project as proposed would result in minimal surface disturbance to soils away from drainages and would not result in measureable surface runoff towards perennial waters.
Biological Resources		
PI	Invasive, Non-native Species	Invasive, non-native species are present in the proposed project area and evaluated in the analysis below. See Section 3.3.1
PI	Migratory Birds	See Section 3.3.2
PI	Special Status Animal Species	See Section 3.3.3
NP	Special Status Plant Species	This resource is not present within the proposed project area.
PI	Upland Vegetation	See Section 3.3.4
NP	Wetlands and Riparian Zones	There are no perennial streams, wetlands, seeps, or springs on federal lands within or immediately adjacent to the proposed project site.
NP	Wildlife, Aquatic	This resource is not present within the proposed project area.
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial	See Section 3.3.5
NP	Wild Horses	This area is not within a Herd Management Area (HMA).
Heritage Resources and the Human Environment		

Determination¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
PI	Cultural Resources	The proposed undertaking has undergone a Class III Cultural Resource Inventory. There are no known sites eligible for the National Register within the area of potential effect. The proposed undertaking will have no effect on historic properties. See Section 3.4.1
NI	Environmental Justice	The proposed project activities would have no disproportionately high or adverse environmental, health, or safety effects on minority and low-income populations.
NI	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	No storage or disposal of hazardous or solid wastes would be authorized. Heavy equipment needs to be equipped with spill mitigation supplies.
NP	Native American Religious Concerns	There are no known items, sites, or landscapes determined to be culturally significant to the tribes near the undertaking
NI	Paleontological Resources	Paleontological Resources would not be affected by the Proposed Action.
PI	Social and Economic Conditions	See Section 3.4.3.
NI	Visual Resources	Proposed project areas are located in Recreation Management Zone 2, which is designated as VRM Class III where moderate change to the characteristic landscape would be allowed as long as the existing characteristics of the landscape are partially retained.
Resource Uses		
NI	Access and Transportation	Area is designated as a Travel Restricted Area with travel limited to designated roads and trails.
NI	Fire Management	The Proposed Action will not affect fire management activities.
NI	Forest Management	The amount of tree removal would not affect forest management.
PI	Livestock Operations	See Section 3.5.1.
NI	Prime and Unique Farmlands	There is farmland of statewide importance within the proposed project area, however there would be no adverse impacts as none of these soils on public lands are or would become irrigated or otherwise manipulated so as to create conditions favorable to create prime farmland within the proposed project area.
NI	Realty Authorizations, Land Tenure	There are no realty authorizations within the proposed project area.
NI	Recreation	Area is managed as a Special Recreation Management Area for multiple uses.
Special Designations		
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	There are no ACECs within the proposed project area.
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	Subject to WO-IM 2011-154 and in accordance with BLM policy, the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA was evaluated for suitability as lands with wilderness characteristics (Identifier CO-010-290) and did not meet the roadless criteria for an area greater than 5,000 acres.
NP	Wilderness Study Areas	There are no WSAs within the proposed project area.

Determination ¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
NI	Wild and Scenic Rivers	Trails and trailheads are located in Zone 2 of the SRMA, which would not affect the river segments suitable for WSR.

¹ NP = Not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives. NI = Present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required. PI = Present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA.

3.2 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

3.2.1 Soils

Affected Environment: The proposed trail alignment occurs across loam-dominated soils. The most recent Land Health Assessment for the area was in 2007. Soils were rated as stable and all standards were met. Plant production and density as well as species diversity are high, however nonnative annual grasses dominate some areas within the general project area. Biological soil crusts are present and intact where expected. There are no fragile soils in the immediate project area.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Surface disturbance and soil compaction would occur along the trail corridor and other developed sites as a result of user activities and routine maintenance. Anticipated use of the trail once completed is light; any impacts would be focused to a relatively small linear area and would not extend too far away from the trail. Care should be taken in the design of the trail up and across slopes so that natural drainage patterns do not undermine trail and soil stability and lead to accelerated erosion.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: No surface disturbance would occur if the trail is not built.

Mitigation: None

3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.3.1 Invasive/Non-Native Species

Affected Environment: Invasive and noxious weeds are present in the vicinity of the project area. Invasive annuals such as cheatgrass, and allysum commonly occur within the project area. Additional invasive species of concern in the vicinity include white top, Canada thistle, knapweeds leafy spurge, and biennial thistles. These species are on the Colorado List B of noxious weeds. Cheatgrass is on the Colorado List C of noxious weeds. Additional noxious weeds may also be present in the area. The BLM cooperates with the Moffat County Pest Management program to employ the principals of Integrated Pest Management to control noxious weeds on public lands.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The mechanical methods for trail construction as proposed would cause disturbance to the herbaceous plant community. The trailhead development process provides a greater opportunity for infestation establishment through use of

equipment and a larger cleared area. All the disturbed construction areas and their perimeters would be vulnerable to weed infestation. Weed infestation is fairly likely and would be mitigated through the monitoring plan included in this alternative.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: No new opportunities for invasive species establishment would occur under this alternative.

Mitigation: None needed with adherence to monitoring plan.

3.3.2 Migratory Birds

Affected Environment: BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-050 provides guidance towards meeting BLM's responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Executive Order (EO) 13186. The guidance emphasizes management of habitat for species of conservation concern by avoiding or minimizing negative impacts and restoring and enhancing habitat quality. The LSFO provides both foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory bird species. Several species on the USFWS's Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) List occupy these habitats within the LSFO.

Native plant communities in the area are comprised primarily of sagebrush stands, pinyon-juniper woodlands and early seral grasslands. A variety of migratory birds may utilize these vegetation communities within the project area during the nesting period (May through July) or during spring and fall migrations. The general area of Duffy Mountain provides potential nesting and/or foraging habitat for the following USFWS 2008 Birds of Conservation Concern: golden eagle, Brewer's sparrow, sage sparrow, sage thrasher, loggerhead shrike, gray vireo, pinyon jay and juniper titmouse. There are several golden eagle nests located in the vicinity of the proposed trails.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action has a low potential to result in the 'take' of any migratory bird. Construction is scheduled outside of the migratory bird nesting season and should not impact the majority of species that nest in the area. Once construction of the trail is complete, there would be no further potential to interfere materially with nest substrate. Depending on the level of use the trail receives, there may be impacts to migratory birds after trail construction. Impacts include nest abandonment, displacement and a change in species composition. Currently, most of the recreational activities occur on Duffy Mountain during hunting season, in the fall months. The trail would likely receive use during this time frame and may receive limited use in the spring months. Since the trail is not within close proximity to human populations, use is not expected to be at a level that would substantially impact migratory birds during the nesting season. Overall, impacts are expected to be isolated and would not influence populations of migratory birds on a landscape level.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to migratory bird species from this alternative.

Mitigation: None

3.3.3 Special Status Animal Species

Affected Environment: There are no ESA listed or proposed species that inhabit or derive important benefit from the project area.

Sagebrush stands in the general area provide habitat for greater sage-grouse, a BLM sensitive species and a candidate for ESA listing. There is one sage-grouse lek on top of Duffy Mountain, however this lek has been inactive for several years. There are four additional leks (two active and two inactive) in the vicinity of the project. These leks are located between three and four miles from the proposed trails and parking areas. Duffy Mountain is likely utilized by grouse during most of the year, excluding the winter months. Approximately 350 acres of sage-grouse habitat was burned in the Chief Fire in 2008. In addition, a portion of the project is located in Preliminary Priority Habitat.

The project area provides habitat for one additional BLM sensitive species, Brewer's sparrow. Brewer's sparrows are a summer resident in Colorado and nest in sagebrush stands. Nests are constructed in sagebrush and other shrubs in denser patches of shrubs. This species would likely be nesting in the project area from mid-May through mid-July.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The proposed trails and parking areas would have minimal impacts to greater sage-grouse. Two miles of the proposed trail would utilize existing two-track roads and 1.6 miles of new trail would be constructed. Approximately .60 miles of new trail would be constructed in PPH. However, most of this trail would be constructed within the perimeter of the Chief Fire. Vegetation in this area is primarily grass and is currently unsuitable for nesting. After construction, the hiking trail has the potential to impact greater sage-grouse, depending on the amount of use it receives. An increase in human presence could disturb or displace grouse from habitat. Currently, most of the recreational activities occur on Duffy Mountain during the hunting season, in the fall months. The trail would likely receive use during this time frame, however, since the trail is not within close proximity to human populations, use is expected to be at a low level during the important spring months. Overall disturbances from the hiking trail would be isolated and impacts to sage-grouse would be negligible.

Potential impacts to Brewer's sparrow are described in the Migratory Bird Section.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to migratory bird species from this alternative.

Mitigation: None

3.3.4 Upland Vegetation

Affected Environment: The area of Proposed Action is characterized by vegetation types associated with sagebrush grasslands and pinyon-juniper woodlands.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would remove up to 3.3 acres of native vegetation with trail and facilities construction. Although minor in scale any ecosystem alteration that removes native vegetation would be considered adverse. Another primary concern with this alteration is the potential for noxious weed establishment (see Sec. 3.3.1 Invasive/Non-Native Species).

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to upland vegetation.

Mitigation: None with adherence to the Monitoring Plan.

3.3.5 Wildlife, Terrestrial

Affected Environment: Native plant communities in the Proposed Action area are comprised primarily of sagebrush stands, pinyon-juniper woodlands and early seral grasslands. This plant community provides habitat for a variety of big game, small mammals, birds and reptiles. The proposed project area provides year round habitat for mule deer, elk, and pronghorn. The site is located in important mule deer critical winter habitat and within an elk winter concentration area.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Trail construction would impact a small amount of wildlife habitat. Wildlife species may be displaced from the project area during trail construction due to noise and an increase in human presence. Most species would return after construction is complete and are likely already habituated to some human presence as two-tracks in the area are already in use. Overall disturbances from the hiking trail would be isolated and impacts to wildlife species would be negligible.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to migratory bird species from this alternative.

Mitigation: None

3.4 HERITAGE RESOURCES AND THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

3.4.1 Cultural Resources

Affected Environment: The prehistoric and historic cultural context for northwestern Colorado has been described in several recent regional contexts. The prehistoric context is described in Reed and Metcalf's Northern Colorado River Basin overview (1999), a synthesis of archaeological data compiled for several large pipeline projects (2009). The historic context is described in overviews compiled by Frederic J. Athearn (1982) and Michael B. Husband (1984). A historical archaeology context has also been prepared for the state of Colorado by Church and others (2007). An overview of significant cultural resources on BLM-LSFO administered lands has been compiled by McDonald and Metcalf (2006).

The designation and development of a trail system and supporting facilities is considered an undertaking under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). BLM has the legal responsibility to take into account the effects of its actions on cultural resources located on

federal land. BLM Manual 8100 Series, the Colorado State Protocol and BLM Colorado Handbook of Guidelines and Procedures for Identification, Evaluation, and Mitigation of Cultural Resources provide guidance on how to accomplish Section 106 requirements with the appropriate cultural resource standards. Section 106 of NHPA requires federal agencies to: 1) inventory cultural resources to be affected by federal undertakings, 2) evaluate the importance of cultural resources by determining their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), and 3) consult with the federal and state preservation agencies regarding inventory results, National Register eligibility determinations, and proposed methods to avoid or mitigate impact to eligible sites. Within the state of Colorado, BLM's NHPA obligations are carried out under a Programmatic Agreement between BLM, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). If the undertaking is determined to have "no effect" or "no adverse effect" by the BLM Little Snake Field Office archaeologist then it may proceed under the terms of the Programmatic Agreement. If the undertaking is determined to have "adverse effects" then consultation is initiated with the SHPO regarding proposed mitigation.

The proposed undertaking has undergone a Class III cultural resource study:

Morton, Ethan and Gary D. Collins

2012 *Cultural Resource Inventory of the Proposed Little Yampa Canyon Vista Trail and Trailhead Parking Development, Bureau of Land Management Little Snake Field Office, Moffat County, Colorado.* BLM LSFO 10.32.2012. OAH# MF.LM.R95. Bureau of Land Management Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Cultural resources evaluated as eligible for the National Register can be directly or indirectly adversely impacted by recreational activities. Direct impacts could include but are not limited to intensive use of a campsite or staging area, leaving of trash, trail creation, collection of surface artifacts, and destruction of features. Indirect impacts could include but are not limited to increased erosion, improved access to a previously isolated location, and personal reuse of the area not related to the Proposed Action.

Mitigation: The cultural studies did not identify any cultural resources eligible for the National Register within the area of potential effect for the proposed undertaking. The proposed undertaking will have no effect on historic properties. Under the terms of the Programmatic Agreement it may proceed with the following standard mitigative measures in place.

1. Any cultural and/or paleontological (fossil) resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) discovered by the holder, or any person working on his behalf, on public or federal land shall be immediately reported to the authorized officer. Holder shall suspend all operations in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the authorized officer. An evaluation of the discovery will be made by the authorized officer to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The holder will be responsible for the cost of evaluation and the authorized officer will make any decision as to proper mitigation measures after consulting with the holder.
2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are encountered or

uncovered during any project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the find and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO) at (970) 826-5000. Within five working days, the AO will inform the operator as to:

- Whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
 - The mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the identified area can be used for project activities again; and
 - Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) (Federal Register Notice, Monday, December 4, 1995, Vol. 60, No. 232) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone at (970) 826-5000, and with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
3. If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation costs. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.
 4. Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are also attached in Standard Stipulations (Attachment 1-XVII K).

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: While a no action alternative alleviates potential adverse effects from recreation, cultural resources are constantly being subjected to site formation processes or events (Binford 1981, Schiffer 1987). These processes can be both cultural and natural and take place in an instant or over thousands of years. Cultural processes include any activities directly or indirectly caused by humans. Natural processes include chemical, physical, and biological processes of the natural environment that impinge and or modify cultural materials. Sites which have been determined eligible for the National Register and are threatened may have to be mitigated.

Mitigation: None

References Cited

Athearn, Frederic J.
1982 *An Isolated Empire: A History of Northwest Colorado*. Bureau of Land
Management-Colorado. Cultural Resource Series No. 2, Second Edition. Denver.
Broadhead, Wade

2001 *Brief Synopsis of Experiments Concerning Effects of Grazing on Archaeological Sites*. Ms. on file, Bureau of Land Management, Gunnison Field Office, Gunnison, Colorado.

Church, Minette C., Steven G. Baker, Bonnie J. Clark, Richard f. Carrillo, Jonathan C. Horn, Carl D. Spath, David R. Guilfoyle, and E. Steve Cassells

2007 *Colorado History: A Context for Historical Archaeology*. Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists, Denver.

Husband, Michael B.

1984 *Plateau Country Historic Context*. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation Office, Denver.

McDonald Kae and Michael Metcalf

2006 *Regional Class I Overview of Cultural Resources for the BLM Little Snake Field Office*. Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc. Eagle, Colorado.

Reed, Alan D. and Michael Metcalf

1999 *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin*. Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists, Denver, Colorado.

3.4.2 Native American Religious Concerns

Affected Environment: Four Native American tribes have cultural and historical ties to lands have administered by the BLM LSFO. These tribes include the Eastern Shoshone, Ute Mountain Ute, Uinta and Ouray Ute, and the Southern Ute.

American Indian religious concerns are legislatively considered under several acts and Executive Orders, namely the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the Native American Graves Environmental Assessment Protection and Repatriation Act, and Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites). In summary, these require, in concert with other provisions such as those found in the NHPA and Archaeological Resources Protection Act, that the federal government carefully and proactively take into consideration traditional and religious Native American culture and life and ensure, to the degree possible, that access to sacred sites, the treatment of human remains, the possession of sacred items, the conduct of traditional religious practices, and the preservation of important cultural properties are considered and not unduly infringed upon. In some cases, these concerns are directly related to “historic properties” and “archaeological resources”. In some cases elements of the landscape without archaeological or other human material remains may be involved. Identification of these concerns is normally completed during the land use planning efforts, reference to existing studies, or via direct consultation.

Consultation for proposed general recreational developments are consulted on annually with the tribes. Letters were sent to the tribes in the spring of 2012. No comments were received. Specific recreational activities requiring a permit are generally not consulted with the tribes unless they rise to a level that warrants specific consultation. The locations of any specific recreational development have likely not undergone an evaluation regarding the presence of items, sites, or landscapes which may be significant to the tribes. The proposed activity will not require an evaluation due to the nature of the specific undertaking.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Items, sites, or landscapes determined to be culturally significant to the tribes can be directly or indirectly adversely impacted by

recreational activities. Direct impacts could include but are not limited to physical damage, removal of objects or items, and activities thought to be disrespectful (ex. installation of bathroom facilities near a sacred site). Indirect impacts include but are not limited to prevention of access (hindering the performance of traditional ceremonies and rituals), increased visitation of a previously little used area, and loss of integrity related to religious feelings and associations.

There are no known items, sites, or landscapes determined to be culturally significant to the tribes near the undertaking. The Proposed Action does not prevent access to any known sacred sites, prevent the possession of sacred objects, or interfere or otherwise hinder the performance of traditional ceremonies and rituals.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: There are no known adverse impacts to any items, sites, or landscaped determined to be culturally significant to the tribes. If new information is provided by Native Americans, additional or edited terms and conditions for mitigation may have to be negotiated or enforced to protect resource values.

3.4.3 Social and Economic Conditions

Affected Environment: The social and economic study area for the Proposed Action includes Routt and Moffat counties and the communities of Steamboat Springs, Oak Creek, Hayden, Craig, Maybell and Dinosaur. These communities currently provide the workforce as well as providing lodging, retail, business and consumer services in the area. Steamboat Springs is the county seat of Routt County; Craig is the county seat of Moffat County.

Moffat County comprises 4,742.25 square miles with 2.8 people per square mile and a total population of 13,980 people in 2009. Other communities in the county include Maybell (2000 population of 370), and Dinosaur (2000 population of 335), (US Census Bureau 2000). Moffat County is the county of residence for the majority of the personnel and supports most of the indirect employment that provides supplies and services to workers and their families. The three industries related to population growth and increased tourism that could grow considerably are food services/retailing and hotels, services, and construction. In Moffat County, these industries could see income nearly double from \$57 million in 2002 to \$104 million in 2025, and go from providing 37 percent of total income in 2002 to 45 percent in 2025. The industries' share of employment would increase as well, accounting for 65 percent of all workers in 2025 versus 55 percent in 2002. In Routt County, income could rise from \$877 million, or 78 percent of total income in 2002, to \$1.26 billion which is 81 percent of total income, in 2025. These firms could grow from employing 82 percent of the local workers in 2002 to 85 percent in 2025. The relatively slower growth occurs because service businesses are labor intensive, already employ a large proportion of the total labor force in Routt County, and attract even more employees from nearby counties. Recreation remains a small proportion of the economy (BLM 2010).

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The local economy may have some direct but minimal, short-term benefit through the retention or creation of job opportunities and in supporting trades and services. No additional demand for housing or municipal services would

be anticipated. The indirect effects could include effects due to overall employment opportunities related to the Proposed Action as well as the economic benefits to state and county governments related to services sales/use taxes.

It is not likely that the proposed project activities would generate high levels of concern, opposition, or dissatisfaction among local residents. A small, temporary increase in activity may occur in rural subdivisions and areas primarily used for grazing, farming or hunting.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: Ongoing recreation activities occur in the project area at present, the no action alternative would cause minimal impact, either beneficial or adverse, to the present socioeconomic environment.

Mitigation: None

3.5 RESOURCE USES

3.5.1 Livestock Operations

Affected Environment: The Propose Action lies within a multiple use management area that includes the Duffy Mountain Grazing Allotment #04432, which is authorized for the following livestock use:

2,900 Sheep from 04/07 to 04/23 at 100% Public Lands for 324 Animal Unit Months (AUMs)
1,410 Sheep from 05/08 to 05/13 at 100% Public Lands for 56 AUMs
319 Cattle from 07/01 to 09/30 at 100% Public Lands for 965 AUMs

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: There would be no adverse effect to livestock operations per se., but there could be interactions between recreational public land users and livestock during the period that livestock are authorized. Livestock cause damage and unforeseen impacts to recreational facilities. Livestock might use constructed pedestrian trails, parking, camping, and picnic areas which may result in undesirable conditions for recreational users in the form of dusty/silty soil conditions and animal waste. Livestock may also use infrastructure for shade and rubbing.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: Fencing should be a last resort to mitigate livestock impacts, and if used, a wood structure fence design would be preferred over barbwire. Recreational facilities inspection and maintenance should occur multiple times per year so that deficiencies and problems are identified and corrected and not exacerbated over time.

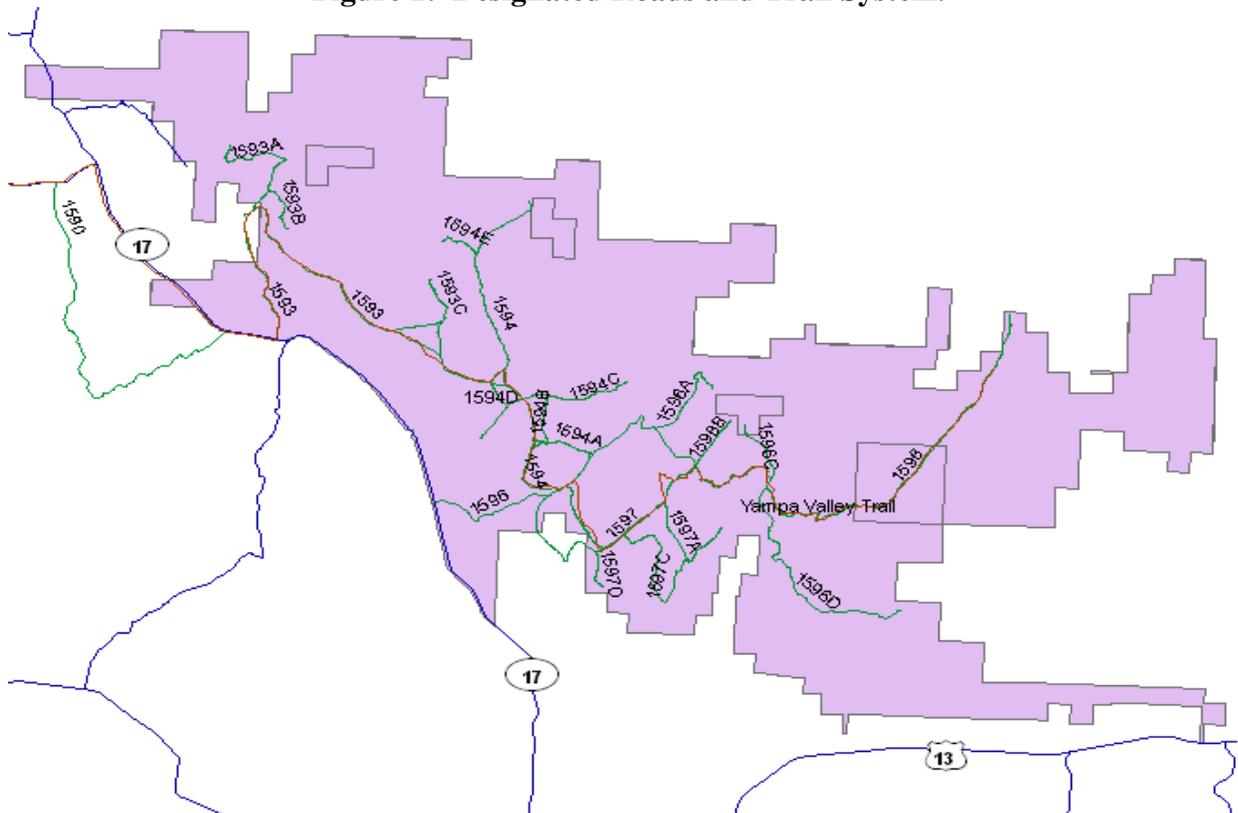
CHAPTER 4 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Unsurfaced roads and trails make up the majority of roads in rural areas of the western United States (Watts et al. 2007; Leu et al. 2008). Secondary road types associated with grazing, and recreational activities (i.e., hunting, off-highway vehicles) likely represent the majority of new roads in the Little Yampa Canyon SRMA. The majority of the project site is designated as a travel restricted area under the BLM's Resource Management Plan (RMP). This classification limits motorized travel to designated roads and trails, which was determined through comprehensive transportation planning.

There is currently only one designated trail within the SRMA. The Yampa Valley Trail system includes a range of trails which link the major towns along the Yampa River and also explores the territory of the Yampa Valley from Yampa to Dinosaur National Monument. The trail is approximately 300 miles long with 22.5 miles located in the SRMA. Segments within the SRMA are both motorized and non-motorized use.

Figure 1: Designated Roads and Trail System.



The proposed project area, identified as Zone 2, is currently used for recreation activities, including camping, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, geocaching, and recreational shooting. There is also 1 active grazing lease within the proposed project area. This grazing lease consists of both cattle and sheep.

The Project Area is a migratory corridor and wintering range for elk, deer, and pronghorn. This makes the area popular for big game hunting. During hunting season, which ranges from October to December, the area can expect up to 400 hunters, not including the 14 permitted outfitters. In addition to big game, there are 11 permits for mountain lion within the Project Area and one bike touring permittee.

4.2 EFFECTS OF OTHER PRESENT ACTIONS

Construction

During the construction period, the project sites would be closed to the public, which would result in a temporary disruption to current recreational uses and access road(s) would be clearly marked to limit public access for safety reasons. However, access would be preserved for some BLM-permitted uses. Upon completion of the construction period, access to the project areas would be restored for recreational uses. As such, construction of the Proposed Actions would temporarily disrupt existing recreational uses and/or interfere with the public's access to the project area.

In addition to local recreational users and visitors, the project would result in a temporary increase in population due to the influx of trail workers (i.e., Steamboat Springs Youth Corp). As proposed, the project would require a peak construction workforce of up to approximately 10 workers. Trail construction workers are expected to travel to the site from the city of Steamboat Springs over a 4 week period beginning July 16-20, July 30-August 3, and August 13-17. The number of trail workers expected to relocate to the area is not expected to be substantial; however, workers that relocate to the area would use the State Parks and Wildlife Duffy River Access Site as their home base for most of the duration of the project. Given the limited addition of people to the area, and the short-term duration of construction, the potential temporary increase in use by project personnel is not anticipated to be at such a level that would lead to the increased physical deterioration of the recreation resources.

The resources that are located within the project sites and in the surrounding area predominately include hunting and OHV use, depending on the season. Since there is a concentration of OHV use in the vicinity of the trailheads, it is possible that in reaction to existing OHV routes being restricted during project construction, some OHV recreationists may choose to utilize illegal OHV routes or create new, unauthorized OHV routes, thereby contributing to unmanaged or unauthorized recreational uses. Impacts associated with illegal OHV use including disturbances to surrounding lands that may be under management plans due to resources such as biological or cultural. However, impacts would be limited since there are several roads and trails within the project vicinity that are designated OHV use.

4.3 EFFECTS OF REASONABLY FORESEEABLE ACTIONS

Soils

Existing soil/surface disturbance on Duffy Mountain primarily consists of two-tracks and gravel roads that provide access for hunting and grazing activities, much of which include motorized vehicle use. The addition of the proposed trail and facilities intended primarily for non-motorized use would have a small additive impact to overall surface disturbance in the region. Routine trail maintenance and weed management should also act to minimize erosion potential. In some cases, the development of a trail system may act to focus existing non-motorized uses, thereby minimizing dispersed activities across the landscape.

Invasive/Non-Native Species

The proposed project would increase the risk for establishment and spread of noxious and invasive species increasing the occurrence of weeds within the landscape. The total disturbed area covers a potential 3.3 acres for infestations to establish and spread from. If noxious weeds establish in these plant communities the health of upland plant communities and associated ecological function would decline. The design features of the proposed project provide mitigation which would decrease long term establishment and spread of invasive species.

Upland Vegetation

Upland vegetation in the area of Proposed Action has been impacted by historic and current grazing and agricultural practices. Hunting is the recreational activity that has occurred over time but never with developed facilities. Introduction of developed recreation has the potential to be neutral to negative depending on amount of use, number of users, and management practices in maintaining developed recreation facilities. Any future land uses that remove or alter native vegetation or alter ecosystem function would have detrimental cumulative impacts to the overall area, thus challenging the continuation of current land use.

Wildlife/Terrestrial

The Proposed Action would not add substantially to disturbances already occurring on Duffy Mountain. Currently, recreation and grazing are the primary land uses in the area. Hunting and OHV use are likely the activities most impacting wildlife at this time. The hiking trail would have minor impacts to wildlife species after initial construction and is not expected to add substantially to disturbances already occurring on Duffy Mountain.

Cultural Resources

The cumulative impacts to cultural resources are broad and include impacts within the project area, adjacent to the project area, and within the viewshed of the project area. The Vista Trail system would introduce a new variable into a relatively undeveloped area. The trails and parking lots have created some surface disturbance related to recreation. The use of the trails has the potential to indirectly effect any unknown cultural resources off the trails through increased erosion or the illegal collection of cultural material.

Native American Religious Concerns

Continued recreational use of the area has an additive effect of changing the landscape from that ancestrally known by the tribes. There are no specific sites of concern identified in the project area, it is rather the broader continued change that modern culture brings to the landscape.

Social and Economic Conditions

The proposed project when combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, contribute slightly to the local, state, and federal treasuries, and could contribute to continuation of companies that provide substantial income and jobs to the community.

Recreation

Trail and facility infrastructure, and additional river access could make the area more attractive for visitors, thereby increasing use of and impacts to the area. Historic, cultural and paleontological features could also attract more visitation, thereby increasing use and impacts to the entire region. Increasing use of the area for hunting could also create impacts to the trail system. Additionally, conflicts could arise between OHV users and other recreation user groups, particularly hunters.

The development of oil and gas operations, locatable minerals, mineral material sales, nonenergy leasables, and coal leasing; and the associated traffic, equipment and resource disturbances required to build and maintain them could impact the experiences of trail users, obstructing their views of vast, open valleys, degrading their opportunities to enjoy the remoteness of the area and possibly necessitating the temporary closure of some sections of trail.

Should use indicate its necessity, developed picnic areas at natural stopping points along the trail could provide an enjoyable experience for trail users, and opportunities to relax in the shade and take advantage of amenities like picnic tables without having to first return to a trailhead. Races and events that may be held on the trail could improve opportunities for OHV recreation, but may cause damage to the trail itself and impact natural and paleontological resources along the trail. These impacts would be assessed in the NEPA analysis required for each special recreation permit.

Grazing Allotments

This area has been historically grazed with the primary recreation activity being hunting. Much of the current condition of the area may be attributed to historical grazing practices. Current and recent grazing levels have been adjusted to be conducive for ecological sustainability while continuing domestic livestock grazing and providing for wildlife habitat and productivity. Introduction of developed recreation has the potential to be neutral to negative depending on amount of use, number of users, and management practices in maintaining developed recreation facilities.

Many recreational opportunities are available throughout the area, including on the grazing allotments. Recreational opportunities include, but are not limited to, hunting, river rafting, hiking, OHV use, geocaching, wildlife viewing, and horseback riding. The Little Yampa Canyon is especially popular for big game hunting and flatwater river rafting. As population demographics in the surrounding area and the push to get people outdoors continue to evolve, more people are utilizing public lands. An increase in visitors to public lands could provide the

potential for conflicts between people and livestock protection dogs that are a primary and traditional means of protecting sheep from predators. The allotments have different dates that allow for normal grazing and herding; however, trailing, which occurs primarily in the fall and spring, could occur anytime on any of the allotments in these areas, particularly along the more major county roads, and the potential to interact with livestock protection dogs could occur during recreational use. A national effort is currently underway to provide information to the public on the potential dangers associated with sheep dogs and are aimed at better educating the public on how to act when in the vicinity of these dogs.

CHAPTER 5 – PUBLIC LAND HEALTH STANDARDS DETERMINATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In January 1997, the Colorado State Office of the BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health and amended all RMPs in the State. Standards describe the conditions needed to sustain public land health and apply to all uses of public lands. The Little Yampa Canyon SRMA Project Area was assessed for compliance with the Colorado Standards of Public Land Health by an interdisciplinary team.

5.2 COLORADO PUBLIC LAND HEALTH STANDARDS

5.2.1 Standard 1: Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes.

Finding of most recent assessment: The most recent assessment in 2007 finds that surface soil characteristics are stable and show little to no signs of surface movement. Biological soils crusts are present and intact where expected. Plant density and production on the site is high to promote water infiltration and permeability as well as minimize surface runoff.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would not meet the public land health standard for upland soils where the trail and associated facilities occur, however the standard would likely continue to be met within the greater project area since use would be focused and limited mostly to the trail.

No Action Alternative: No surface disturbance would occur under this alternative. This standard would continue to be met.

5.2.2 Standard 2: Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water function properly and have the ability to recover from major disturbance such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods.

There are no riparian systems within or immediately adjacent to the project area. This standard does not apply.

5.2.3 Standard 3: Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential.

Finding of most recent assessment: The Duffy Mountain area was assessed as part of the Axial Basin LHA. Two stops were made in the general vicinity of the Proposed Action. One site was meeting all land health standards and the second site was failing standards, with the causal factors being noxious weed abundance and lack of native vegetation.

Proposed Action: The area of the Proposed Action is partially meeting land health standards. The construction and use of trails and facilities facilitates an increase in weed infestations. Combined with the potential removal of 3.3 acres of vegetation the Proposed Action would contribute to this standard not being met.

No Action Alternative: The area is partially meeting land health standards and this trend would continue under the No Action Alternative.

5.2.4 Standard 4: Special status, threatened and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by the BLM, and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy, native plant and animal communities.

Finding of most recent assessment: Finding of most recent assessment: The Duffy Mountain area was assessed as part of the Axial Basin LHA. Two stops were made in the general vicinity of the Proposed Action. One site was meeting all land health standards and the second site was failing standards, primarily due to the amount of cheatgrass in the area.

Proposed Action: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive species present within or in the vicinity of the proposed project. For plants, this standard does not apply.

The area of the Proposed Action is partially meeting land health standards. The construction of the trails could lead to a slight increase in weed infestations, but overall, the Proposed Action would not preclude this standard from being met.

No Action Alternative: The area is partially meeting land health standards and this trend would continue under the No Action Alternative.

5.2.5 Standard 5: The water quality of all water bodies, including ground water where applicable, located on or influenced by BLM lands will achieve or exceed the Water Quality Standards established by the State of Colorado.

There are no perennial surface waters within or immediately adjacent to the project area. This standard does not apply.

CHAPTER 6– COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER: /s/ Gina Robison

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:

DATE SIGNED:

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2012-0027-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA and all other available information, I have determined that the proposal and the alternatives analyzed do not constitute a major Federal action that would adversely impact the quality of the human environment. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts have been disclosed in the EA. Analysis indicated no significant impacts on society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests or the locality. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Little Snake Resource Area and adjacent land.
2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted. There are no known or anticipated concerns with project waste or hazardous materials.
3. There would be no adverse impacts to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, known paleontological resources on public land within the area, wetlands, floodplain, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas or designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.
5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.
6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other actions that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives of adopted Federal, State or local natural resource related plans, policies or programs.
7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.
8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys and through mitigation by avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated. There are no known American Indian religious concerns or persons or groups who might be disproportionately and adversely affected as anticipated by the Environmental Justice Policy.
9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act were identified. If, at a future time, there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or new analysis would be conducted.
10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for the protection of the environment.

I have reviewed the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed activities documented in EA No. DOI-BLM-N010-2012-0028 EA. I have also reviewed the project record for this analysis and the impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives as disclosed in the Alternatives and Environmental Impacts sections of the EA. Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. Because there would not be any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Wendy Reynolds, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

Decision Record

DOI-BLM-CO-N010- 2012-0028-EA

DECISION AND RATIONALE:

I have determined that approving this project is in conformance with the approved land use plan. It is my decision to implement the project with the specified mitigation measures. The project will be monitored as stated in the Compliance Plan outlined below.

MITIGATION MEASURES: The mitigation measures for this project are described in the environmental impacts section of the environmental analysis for cultural resources, paleontology, hazardous materials, and realty authorizations.

Compliance Schedule

Compliance will be conducted during the construction phases and maintenance phase to ensure that all specifications and mitigative measures outlined in EA No. DOI-BLM-N010-2012-0028 EA are followed.

Monitoring Plan

Following implementation, the SRMA use and condition of the trail, trailheads and facilities will be monitored during the life of the project for compliance with all stipulations and pertinent regulations as well as achievement of identified recreation objectives for Zone 2. The trails, trailheads and facilities will be monitored for noxious/invasive weeds during the growing season. Corrective action will be identified and implemented.

Assignment of Responsibility

Responsibility for implementation of the compliance schedule and monitoring plan will be assigned to the Recreation Staff in the Little Snake Field Office. The primary inspector will be the Recreation Specialist.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer, and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4.

Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at the Little Snake Field Office, 455 Emerson St., Craig, CO 81625. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

Contact Person

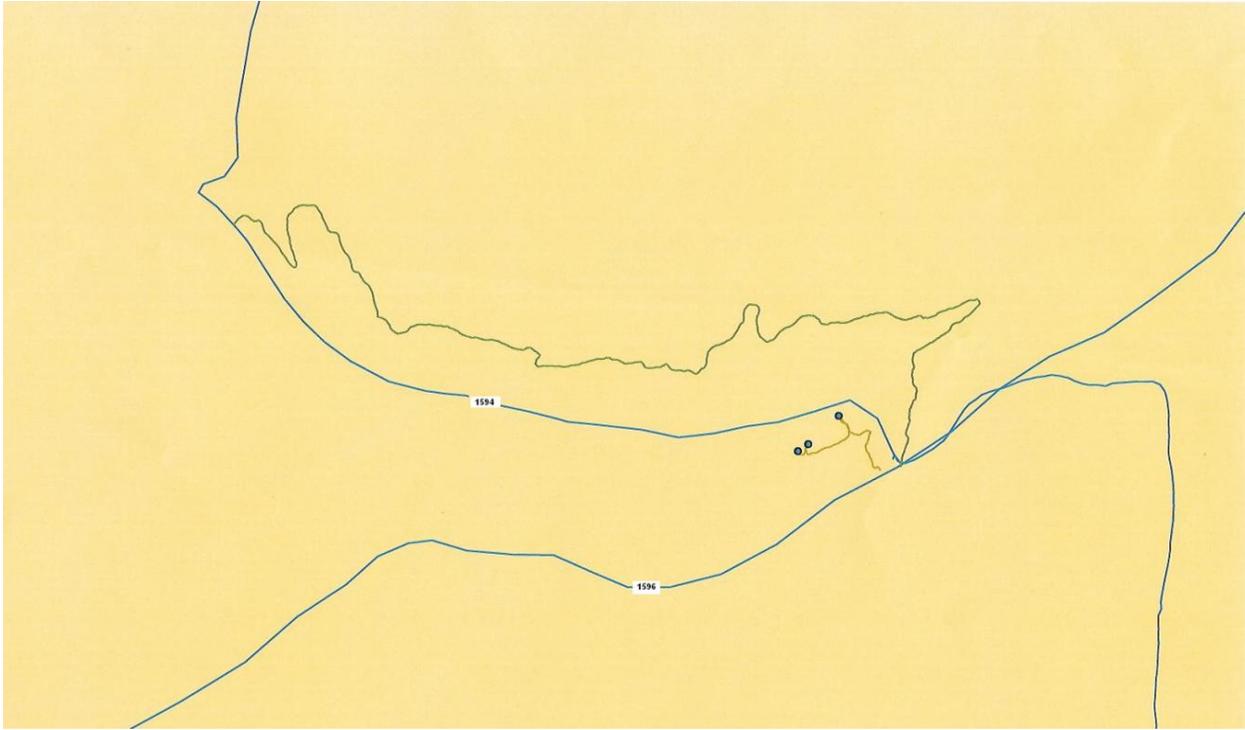
For additional information concerning this decision, contact Gina Robison, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Little Snake Field Office, 455 Emerson Street, Craig, CO 81625, Phone (970) 826-5083.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Wendy Reynolds, Field Manager

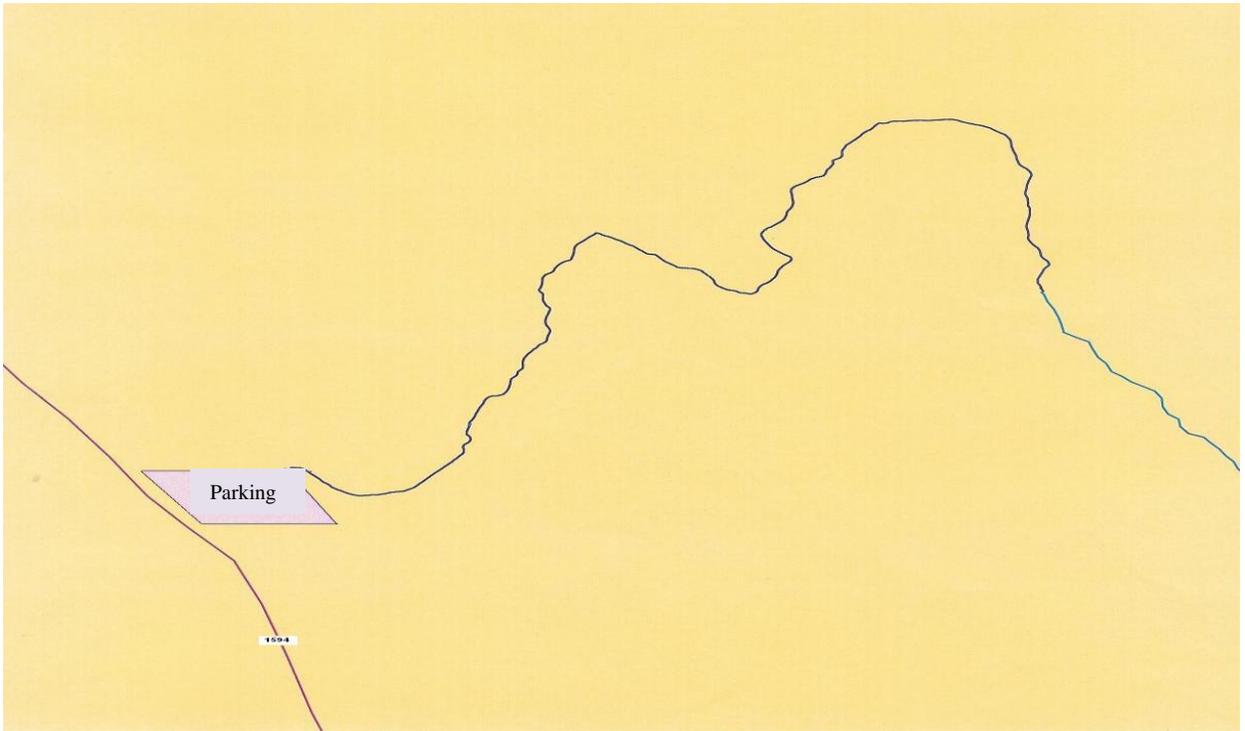
DATE SIGNED:

Attachment A:

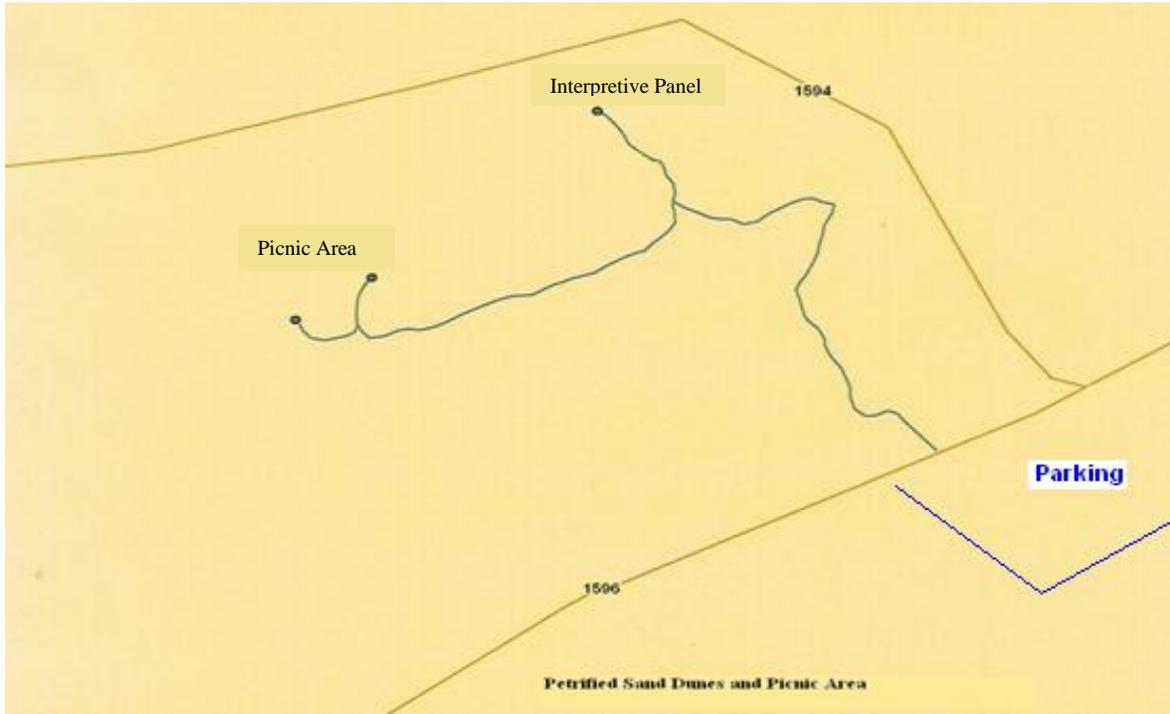
**Project Area
Vista Trail Maps
Petrified Sand Dunes Trail and Picnic Area**



Map 3: Lower Trail Section



Map 4: Upper Trail Section



Map 5: Petrified Sand Dunes Trail and Picnic Area

Attachment B

**Proposed Location of Trailhead Facilities
Trailhead Parking Conceptual Designs**

Figure 1: Proposed Location of Trailhead Facilities

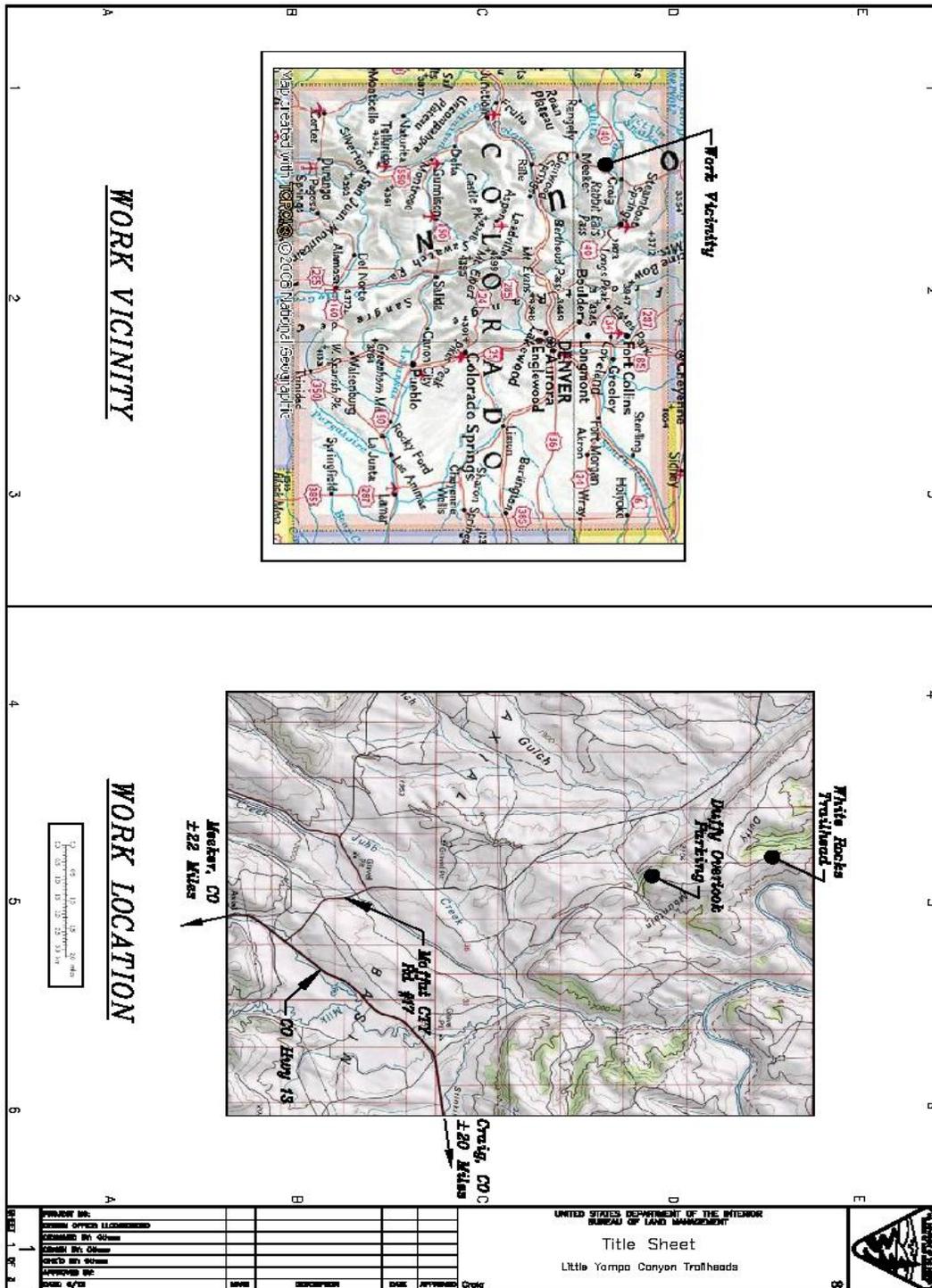
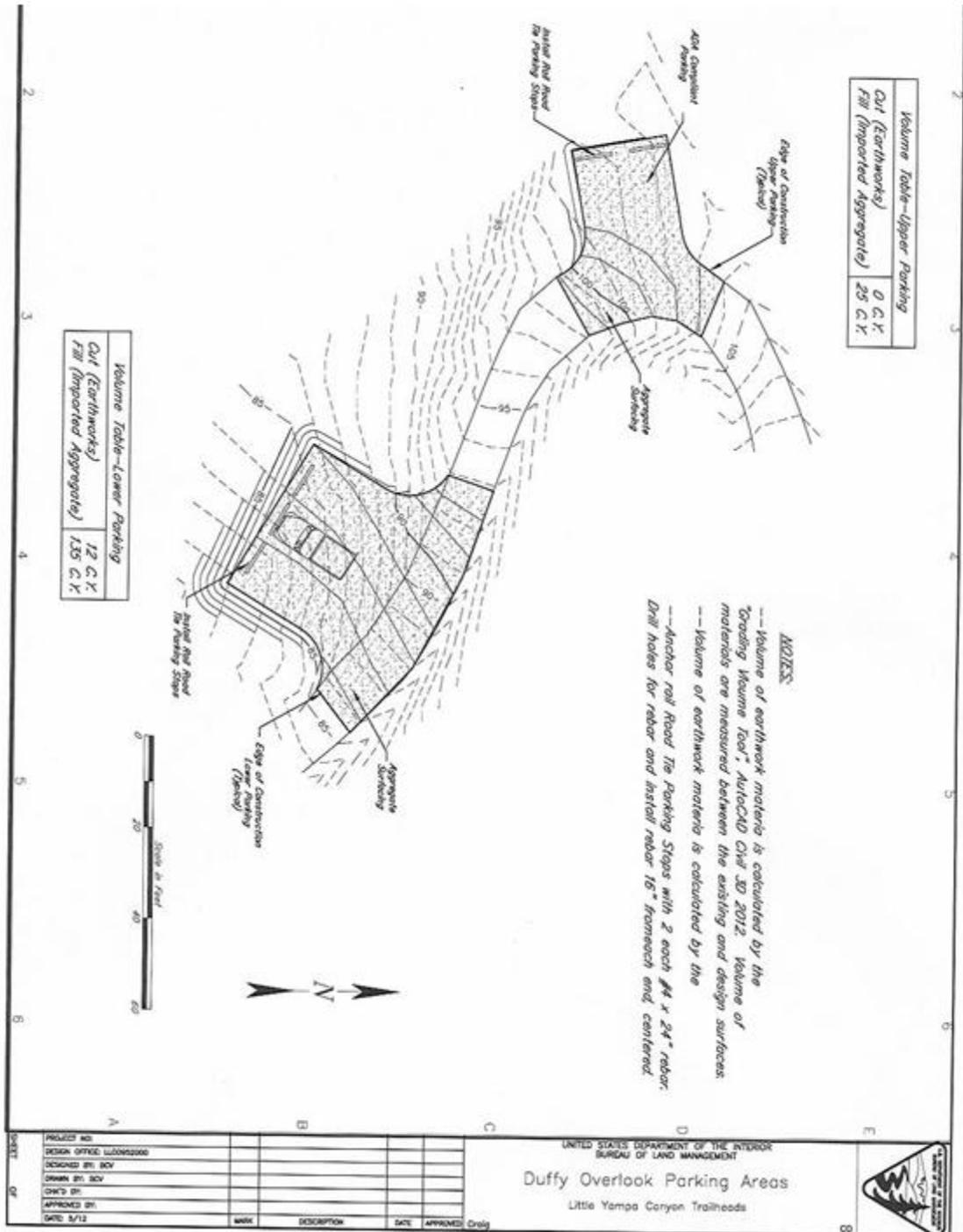


Figure 3: Middle Trailhead Parking Area - ABA Assessable (Upper Section)



Attachment C
Trailhead Specifications

- 01009 - General Information and Requirements
- 02730 - Aggregate Surfacing
- 02315 - Excavation and Fill
- 10990 - Miscellaneous Specifications

SECTION 01009

GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

PART 1: GENERAL

1.1 SUMMARY

- A. Description of Work: Furnishing labor, equipment, supplies, and materials, to construct imported fill and aggregate parking areas, install rock barriers, and timber parking stops.
- B. Location: Work under this Contract is located in Moffat County, Colorado. The work locations are shown on the drawings.
- C. Cleaning Equipment: Prior to being allowed within the work area, heavy equipment, vehicles, and tools to be used at the worksite shall be cleaned and free of dirt, sod, and any foreign materials that may contain noxious weeds seed.

1.2 REFERENCES

- A. Referenced Specifications/Standards with Abbreviations and/or Acronyms: Wherever the following acronyms are used in these specifications or on the drawings, they are to be construed the same as the respective expressions represented. Copies of the referenced specifications/standards referred to herein may be procured by the Contractor, from the following:

AASHTO American Association of State Highway and
Transportation Officials
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 249
Washington, DC 20001

AASHTO M 147-65 Materials for Aggregate and
Soil Aggregate Subbase, Base
and Surface Courses (R1993)

1.3 DEFINITIONS

- A. Approvals: Approval of the submittals is an indication that the Contractor's submittals have been reviewed and that there are no objections, except as noted. Approval

of deviations shall apply only to those deviations or omissions from the requirements of the drawings and specifications brought to the Contracting Officer's attention in writing. After approval of an item, submit a substitute for approval when the approved item cannot be purchased or delivered in time to avoid delay in completion of the project.

1.4 SUBMITTALS

- A. Scope: Submittals include aggregate surfacing weigh tickets and materials compliance.

1.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- A. Codes and Standards: The work shall comply with codes and standards applicable to each type of work and as listed in the individual sections of these specifications. This Contract incorporates materials, applications, and tests by reference, with the same force and effect as when they were given in full text.
- B. Conflict: Where a conflict occurs between reference documents and project specifications, the project specifications shall govern.

1.6 SEQUENCING AND SCHEDULING

- A. Work Schedule: The schedule shall be submitted at the pre-work conference. When requested, submit an updated schedule within 3 calendar days. The work schedule shall show the estimated start and completion dates for work performed at each work location.

PART 2: PRODUCTS

(There are no applicable requirements.)

PART 3: EXECUTION

3.1 PROJECT MEETINGS

- A. Pre-Work Conference:
 - 1. Will be held prior to the start of work. The Contractor will be notified in advance of meeting

time, date and place. The purpose will be to review required work, project drawings and specifications, construction schedules, payroll and payments, and administrative provisions of the Contract.

2. The Contractor, subcontractors and the persons responsible for coordination of the work shall be present at the meeting.
3. Be prepared to summarize and explain procedures planned for the project.

B. Progress Meetings:

1. To be held at the project site, or as determined by the Contracting Officer.
2. May be called by either the Contracting Officer or the Contractor. Request shall state who should attend and include an agenda.

C. Final Inspection:

1. To be held at the project site, or as determined by the Contracting Officer.
2. Notify the Contracting Officer in writing at least 5 working days before the completion date so the Government can schedule final inspection.
3. The superintendent shall be present during this inspection.

3.2 PREPARATION

- A. Construction Staking: Will be established by the Government. The Contractor shall notify the COR a minimum of 5 working days prior to starting work to allow the Government to install the construction staking for each site.

PART 4: MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT

4.1 METHOD OF MEASUREMENT

- A. Units: The work described in this section will not be measured for payment.

4.2 BASIS OF PAYMENT

- A. Payment: No direct payment for the work described under this section will be made. Consideration for this item shall be included in the bid price for other items of the Contract

END OF SECTION

SECTION 02730

AGGREGATE SURFACING

PART 1: GENERAL

1.1 SUMMARY

- A. Section Includes: This work shall consist of furnishing, placing, and compacting crushed aggregate on a prepared surface.

PART 2: MATERIALS

2.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Crushed Aggregate: Aggregate shall consist of hard, durable particles or fragments of stone or gravel crushed to the size and of the quality requirements for crushed aggregate materials normally used locally in the construction and maintenance of highways by Federal or State agencies and shall be according to AASHTO M 147. The aggregates comply with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Class 6.

PART 3: EXECUTION

3.1 CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Preparation: Shall be completed as per Section 02315.
- B. Placing: The material shall be placed on the prepared surface in layers of the thickness shown on the plan.
 - 1. Placing shall be from vehicles equipped to distribute the material in a uniform layer or windrow. The layer or windrow shall be such size that when spread and compacted, the layer shall have the required thickness.
 - 2. When hauling is done over previously placed material, hauling equipment shall be routed as uniformly as possible over the entire width of previously constructed layers.
- C. Compacting: Immediately following final spreading and smoothing, each layer shall be compacted full width. Compaction shall be accomplished by means of a smooth drum vibratory roller compactor, minimum 48 inch drum width, and minimum 10,000 centrifugal force. A minimum of three

passes shall be made over the entire width of the area, and until the material visible stops compacting. Apply water as necessary to obtain maximum compaction.

- D. Thickness Requirements: The thickness of the imported crushed aggregate shall have a minimum compacted depth as noted on the drawings.

PART 4: MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT

4.1 METHODS OF MEASUREMENT

- A. Method: The quantity to be paid for will be the number of tons of material placed, compacted and accepted in the completed course. Weighing of material shall be at Contractor's expense. A weight receipt for each load of material shall be furnished by the Contractor.

4.2 BASIS OF PAYMENT

- A. General: Prices and payment will be full compensation for the work described in this section. Payment will be made under:

PAYMENT WILL BE MADE UNDER:

<u>Pay Item</u>	<u>Pay Unit</u>
02730(1) Aggregate Surfacing	Ton

END OF SECTION

SECTION 02315

EXCAVATION AND FILL

PART 1: GENERAL

1.1 SUMMARY

- A. Section Includes: Excavation and placement of materials as shown on the drawings.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

- A. Unclassified Excavation: Consists of the material excavation and placement regardless of its nature.
- B. Rock Excavation: Removal of material is rock excavation when it consists of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rock which cannot be excavated with the use of a hydraulic excavator with a minimum net flywheel power of 140 hp.
- C. Common Excavation: Removal of materials which can be excavated using a hydraulic excavator with a minimum net flywheel power of 140 hp or less shall be considered common excavation.
- D. Imported Fill Material: Shall be crushed stone or gravel or natural gravel, and shall comply with Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Class 1, Class 2, or Class 3 (pit run material).

PART 2: PRODUCTS

2.1 MATERIALS

- A. General: See definitions.

PART 3: EXECUTION

3.1 PREPARATION

- A. Clearing and Grubbing: The area to be excavated, and the surface area to be covered by fill material or aggregate, shall be thoroughly cleared and stripped of vegetative matter, rocks, and other objectionable materials.

- B. Preparation for Grading: Prior to beginning fill operations in an area, necessary clearing and grubbing in that area shall have been completed and accepted by the Contracting Officer.
- C. Grades: When not otherwise indicated shall be level, or uniform slopes. Abrupt change in slopes shall be rounded. At entrances to the parking areas or roadways, grade uniformly to blend into the adjacent existing grades and/or slopes.

3.2 INSTALLATION

- A. Excavation: Excavate where shown on the drawings and as staked. Excavate on a straight grade between the points.
- B. Disposal of Materials: Excess and/or unsuitable material shall be disposed of onsite at a location designated by the Contracting Officer. Material shall be graded to match the adjacent existing grades/slopes. Compaction shall not be necessary.
- C. Imported Fill Material: Shall be spread over the full width of the cross section of the embankment to a maximum loose thickness of 8 inches, and shall be compacted as specified in paragraphs 3.3A Compaction below, before the next layer is spread.
- D. Frozen Material: Shall not be placed. Fill material shall not be placed upon a frozen surface.

3.3 FIELD QUALITY CONTROL

- A. Compaction: Immediately following final spreading and smoothing, each layer shall be compacted full width. Compaction shall be accomplished by means of a vibratory roller compactor, minimum 48 inch drum width, and minimum 10,000 centrifugal force. A minimum of three passes shall be made over the entire width of the area, and until the material visible stops compacting. Add water when necessary to obtain compaction.

PART 4: MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT

4.1 METHOD OF MEASUREMENT

- A. Units: The work described in this section will be measured and paid for by the ton of imported fill, placed and accepted. Volume of existing minor cut and fill material will not be measured for payment. Volumes of materials are as shown on the drawings.

4.2 BASIS OF PAYMENT

- A. Payment: Prices and payment will be full compensation for the work described in this section. Payment will be made under:

<u>Pay Item</u>	<u>Pay Unit</u>
02315(20) Imported Fill.
Ton	

END OF SECTION

SECTION 10990

MISCELLANEOUS SPECIALITIES

PART 1: GENERAL

1.01 SUMMARY

- A. Section Includes: Furnishing and installing rail road tie parking delineators and rock barriers as shown on the drawings.

PART 2: PRODUCTS

2.01 MATERIALS

- A. Rail-Road Tie Parking Stops: Grade 2 or better, approximately 7" x 9" x 8', free of cracks and splits.
- B. Rock Barriers: Shall be hard, durable limestone and angular in shape. The boulders shall 30"x30"x30" minimum dimension.

PART 3: EXECUTION

3.01 INSTALLATION

- A. Rail-Road Tie Parking Stops: Shall be set as shown on the drawings.
- B. Rock Barriers: Shall be placed at the general location as shown on the drawings and as noted. Install in a manner which will produce a firmly set and effective barrier to vehicles. Excavated material shall be smoothed and shaped, by hand, around each boulder to blend into adjacent surroundings.

PART 4: MEASUREMENT AND PAYMENT

4.01 METHOD OF MEASUREMENT

- A. Units: The work described will be measured and paid for by each railroad tie parking stop and boulder installed and accepted.

4.02 BASIS OF PAYMENT:

- A. Payment: Prices and payment will be full compensation for the work described in this section. Consideration for items of work not listed shall be included in the bid price of other items. Payment will be made under:

<u>Pay Item</u>	<u>Pay Unit</u>
10990(1) Rail Road Tie Parking Stop.	Each
10990(2) Rock Barrier	Each

END OF SECTION