

Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Royal Gorge Field Office

3028 E. Main

Cañon City, CO 81212

OFFICE: Royal Gorge Field Office

PROJECT NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0039 DN

CASEFILE: (if applicable)

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Cottonwood Trail Designation and Maintenance

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Chaffee County, New Mexico Principal Meridian, T. 50 N., R. 9 E., Sec. 27 and 34.

APPLICANT (if any): BLM and Salida Mountain Trails

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The Decision Record, signed 5/21/2008 for the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (CO-200-2006-0086 EA, 2008) decided to close the upper segments of several BLM mountain bike routes, including Cottonwood Gulch, that originate on lands administered by the San Isabel National Forest, Salida Ranger District based on concern expressed from the US Forest Service at the time. The decision goes on to say “provided the USFS NEPA analysis and decision-making is complete within 3-5 years from this decision and no new substantive information is brought forward, these trail segments may be designated for recreation use defined in the TMP-EA as long as these uses are consistent with use defined for the Forest Service portion of these trails.” On 12/18/2012 the Salida Ranger District issued a Decision Memo titled “Cottonwood Trail Construction/Reconstruction” that decides to “relocate improperly located sections of user created trail and improve other sections to bring them up to Forest Service standards” and “to protect deer and elk winter range from human disturbance, the trailhead, parking lot, and the Upper Cottonwood trail would be closed to use from approximately December 15 thru approximately March 15 every year. The Lower Cottonwood trail would remain open for use year round”. The proposed action is to formally designate the Cottonwood trail making it open to foot, horse, and bicycle consistent with the US Forest Service Cottonwood Trail Decision Memo and the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan. Since the Lower Cottonwood trail is the portion that connects with the BLM portion of the trail it would not be subject to the winter closure.

It is also proposed to perform trail maintenance on the Cottonwood trail following best management practices found in Appendix 7 of the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan. Maintenance includes but is not limited to installation of structures such as rock steps, water bars, switchbacks, filling incised tread and constructing short re-routes that are within 50 feet of

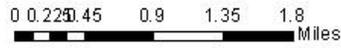
the existing trail corridor. The work would be performed by volunteers, BLM staff, or youthcorps crews using hand tools beginning in the summer of 2013 and continuing until finished. Since the majority of the trail is located on US Forest Service administered lands the trail management objectives, such as intended difficulty, would mirror those found on the US Forest Service portion of the trail. Additional routine maintenance would be performed in the future on an as needed basis.

No cutting of trees or other habitat altering activities would occur from May 15th through July 15th to avoid the migratory bird nesting season unless the area has been surveyed for nest avoidance prior to implementation. Removal of vegetation would primarily entail scraping and grubbing out grasses and shrubs and trimming and pruning of larger shrubs and trees. Complete removal of trees would be rare. Slash from vegetation trimming and removal would be scattered on site, if possible placed adjacent to the trail in areas where erosion is occurring.

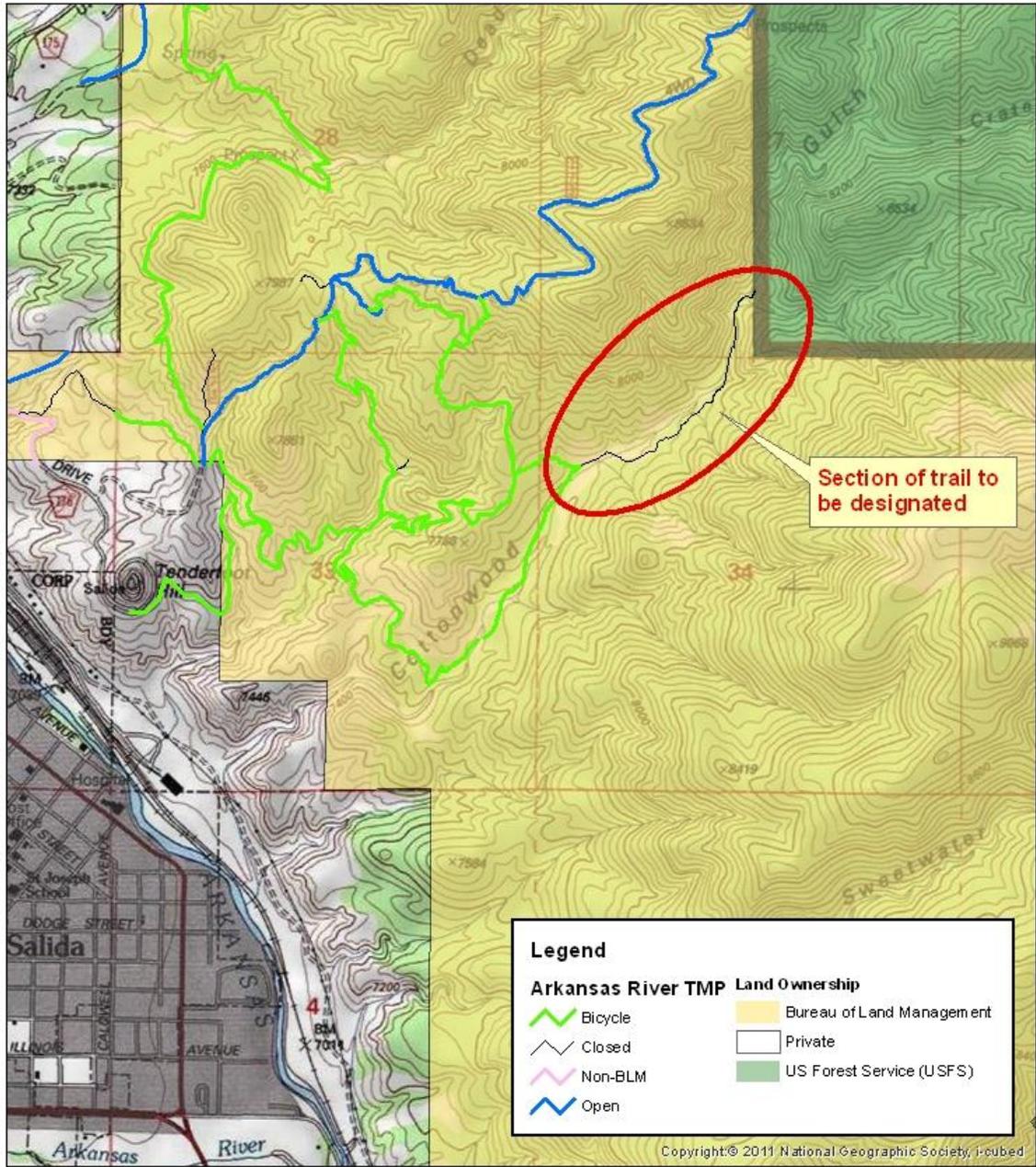


Cottonwood Trail Designation and Maintenance

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 New Mexico PM, T50N, R9E
 Sections 27 & 34



NOTE TO MAP USERS
 No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map. The official land records of the data providers should be checked or current status on any specific tract of land.



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B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan	Date Approved: 5/13/1996
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The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

1-82: Recreation will be managed to provide for a variety of recreational opportunities and settings; facility development will be accomplished to reduce user conflicts and to improve visitor health and safety.

1-50: The transportation system will be improved and maintained to facilitate public access and administrative monitoring through providing access to all retention lands.

C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

Name of Document: Arkansas River Travel Management Plan Environmental Assessment

Date Approved: 5/21/08

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial? The Proposed Action is identified in the Decision Record for the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (CO-200-2006-0086EA). The travel management plan specifically identifies designating the Cottonwood Trail pending plan conformance with the US Forest Service Salida Ranger District. On 12/18/2012 the Salida Ranger District issued a decision memo approving the Cottonwood Trail on the US Forest Service managed lands including re-routing and constructing. Per this decision memo the designation of the Cottonwood Trail and the subsequent maintenance and signing is in conformance with the Decision Record for the existing NEPA document.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values? Four alternatives were analyzed as part of the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan (CO-200-2006-0086EA) with respect to the new proposed action. The alternatives included a No Action Alternative that analyzed continuing uses on existing roads and trails. Alternative A considered designating a higher number of miles of routes for all use types. Alternative B considered designating the fewest number of miles of routes for all use

types. Alternative C, the Proposed Action, considered designating a number of miles of routes for all use types that was in between Alternatives A and B. Alternative C was chosen in the decision record with minor changes from the original proposed action. There have been no changes in given environmental concerns, interests, and resource values since the time of the original decision.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action? The resource staff was provided the opportunity to review the proposed action and no new information or change in circumstances was identified that would make the existing NEPA document invalid or change the analysis of the new proposed action.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document? The existing NEPA document and decision record analyzes the impacts of designating the trails identified in the new proposed action including formally designating the Cottonwood trail to foot, horse and bicycle use pending conformance with US Forest Service planning efforts. Since the US Forest Service issued a Decision Memo to add the Cottonwood Trail to their system allowing foot, horse, and bicycle use the new proposed action is the same as identified in the original documents Decision Record.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action? The Proposed Action is an action identified within existing NEPA document of which there was extensive public involvement and interagency review. This review and public involvement included an initial press release and mailing to 300 citizens and was followed with two public meetings, 40 personal interviews with stakeholders, a presentation to the Front Range Resource Advisory Council to identify issues and concerns. Another round of public meetings and presentations was held to provide an opportunity to comment on the project. Since the current proposed action is identified in the existing NEPA document no new scoping or seeking of comments was initiated.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 2/13/2012
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 2/12/13
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	-----
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Weeds	JL, 02/12/2013
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 2/19/2013
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 3/5/13

Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	-----
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 2/12/13
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 2/13/13
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	KL, 2/27/2013
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	-----
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 2/13/13
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics	mw, 2/12/13
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 2/12/13
Erin Watkins	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	-----
Vera Matthews	Realty Specialist	Realty	VM,2/14/2013
Bob Hurley	Fire Management Officer	Fire Management	
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	

Other Agency Represented: None

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: No historic properties were found in the area of potential effect [see report CR-RG-13-24 (P)]. Therefore, the proposed undertaking will have no effect on any historic properties (those eligible for the NRHP).

Native American Religious Concerns: No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

Threatened and Endangered Species: There are no records of federally listed or BLM sensitive species within or near the project area. The Proposed Action will not result in impacts to TES species.

Migratory Birds: To be in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and USFWS required by Executive Order 13186, BLM must avoid actions, where possible, that result in a “take” of migratory birds. Generally this is a seasonal restriction that requires new vegetation disturbance be avoided from May 15 thru July 15. This is the breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds. Any action that may result in a “take” of individual migratory birds or nests that are protected by MBTA will not be allowed. The proposed action reflects this restricted period; therefore, the proposed action will not result in take of migratory birds.

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: If the project involves oil or fuel usage, transfer or storage, an adequate spill kit and shovels are required to be onsite during project implementation. If concrete

is proposed as part of the project, all concrete washout water needs to be contained and properly disposed of at a permitted offsite disposal facility.

MITIGATION: None

CONCLUSION

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Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

SIGNATURE OF PROJECT LEAD: /s/ Kalem Lenard

SIGNATURE OF NEPA COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

SIGNATURE OF NEPA SUPERVISOR: Melissa K.S. Garcia

SIGNATURE OF THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: /s/ Keith E. Berger
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE: 5/9/13

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.