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-200-2014-0043 DN

CASEFILE: (if applicable)

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Trail Re-routes on Midland trail and fence installation in Buena Vista area

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Chaffee County, Sixth Principal Meridian,
T. 14 S., R. 78 W., Sec. 11, 13 and 14.
T. 13 S., R. 78 W., Sec. 31 and 32

APPLICANT (if any): BLM, Kep Heinitz, Ark Valley Velo Bicycle Club

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

The BLM proposes a trail improvement project in the Fourmile area near Buena Vista. The Midland trail follows the route of the historic Midland Railroad. The Proposed Action would re-route sections of the non-motorized trail used to divert around missing railroad trestles and also re-route the 1450A trail. The location of these routes on the Midland trail is shown on map 1.

In addition, the Proposed Action would install posts in 3 areas to keep motorized travel on designated routes. These areas are located north of Buena Vista along route 375 shown on map 3. Some of these areas currently have buck and rail fence that is deteriorating.

1450 east of Midland Trailhead see map 2
The Midland Trail offers a gentle sloping grade to beginning bike riders, equestrian travel and hikers. The grade is interrupted by intermediate to advanced detours at Midland trestle 1 and 2 as shown on map 2. These existing routes were not designed for sustainability or using current construction techniques. The routes are damaged from erosion and heavy use. The trail management objective for the trail is to keep an easy to intermediate difficulty level for bicycles while accommodating equestrian use, runners and hikers.

The Proposed Action would reroute two sections of railroad trestle diversions Midland Trestle 1 and 2, which drop off the existing grade steeply into the drainage. Total distance for proposed routes is approximately 0.78 miles in length. The Proposed Action will re-design routes to follow the contours and lessens the grade allowing better water drainage in an area where heavy rains

are normal but infrequent. The existing 1600 foot sections of existing trail will be rehabilitated and blocked with physical structures or signed to prevent further use.

1450A – new see map 2
The current route follows a road grade straight up the fall line of the hill encouraging water flow down the trail and causing excess erosion. The Proposed Action would construct a sustainable single track route approximately 1.3 miles in length. The existing roadbed would be blocked and rehabilitated in a joint project with the Forest Service (FS). Because the proposed route diverts around the FS boundary, work on the route restoration project would not occur until NEPA is completed by both agencies.

Construction of the re-routes and post installation will be accomplished using hand tools and chainsaws as applicable. The Proposed action will install vertical posts in areas shown on **map 3**. Posts would be spaced to prevent motorized travel by vehicles 50" or wider. Some posts may include horizontal rails or cable if motorcycle travel is a concern. Fencing could include all routes in the Turtle Rock area and open meadow sections along 375(map 4) as needed. It would replace Buck and Rail fencing that is deteriorating. At the intersection of 375 and 6037 (map 5), the Proposed Action would install posts to contain vehicles on the turn-around and also allow a vehicle to park on the side for day use or camping.

All trail construction would follow International Mountain Biking Association's (IMBA) trail guidelines and standards to provide a sustainable high quality trail recreation opportunity. These include but are not limited to:

1. A trail's grade should not exceed half the grade of the hillside or side slope where it is located;
2. An average trail grade of 10 percent or less is most sustainable;
3. Maximum trail grade should not exceed 10-20 percent and should be based on considerations such as soil type, number and type of users, and annual rainfall;
4. Frequent grade reversals (such as rolling dips, drainage dips, etc.) should be used to promote drainage of water; and
5. Trail tread should be out sloped (5 percent recommended) to encourage water to sheet across and off the trail.

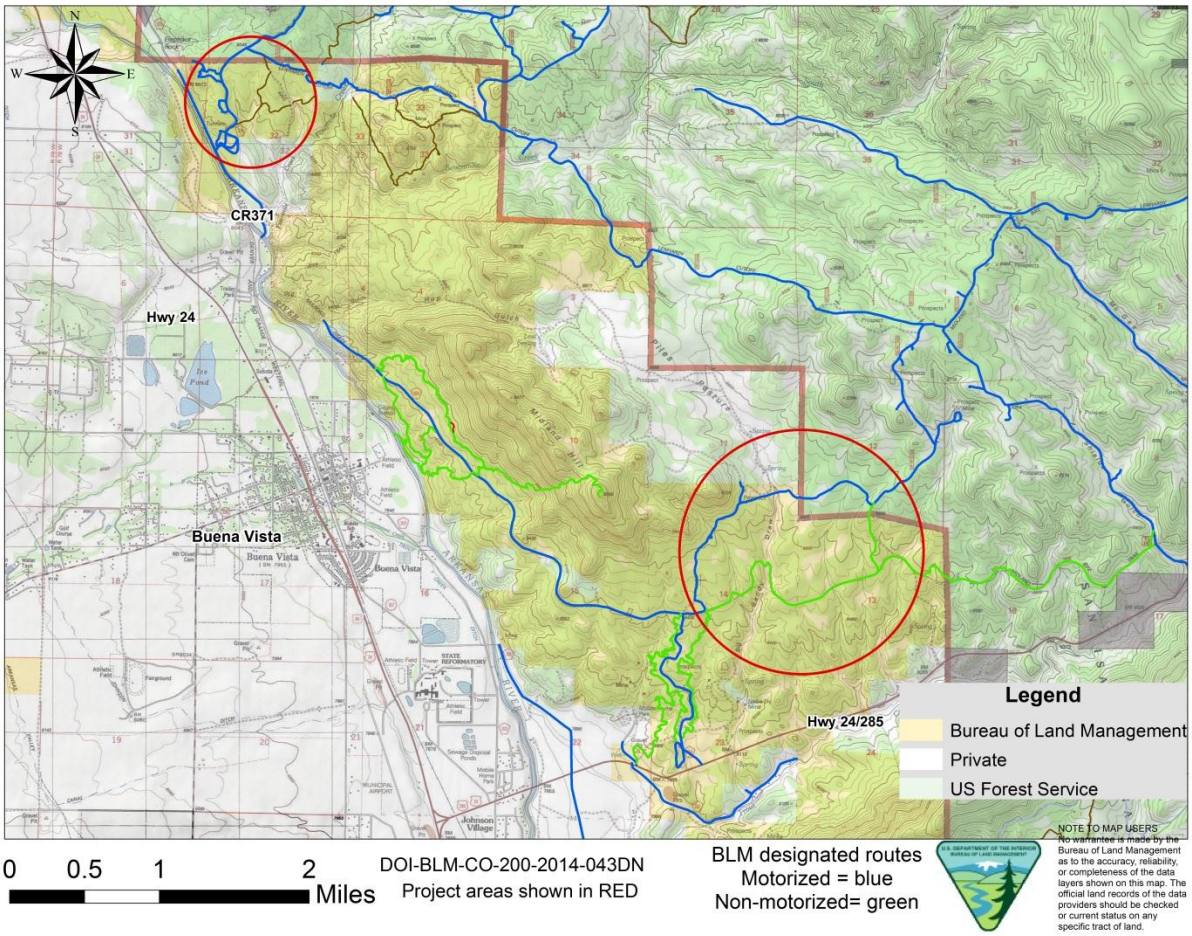
The existing trail sections and areas where vehicles have caused a loss of vegetation will be closed and rehabilitated as needed. Work will include adding rock to deep cuts, raking top soil, and covering with mulch or duff and seed. To facilitate seeding, physical structures or signs will be installed to prevent further use and to minimize erosional effects of water.

Seasonal restriction that requires vegetation disturbance would be avoided from May 15 through July 15. This is the breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds. Any action that results in a measurable impact to a species' population will not be allowed.

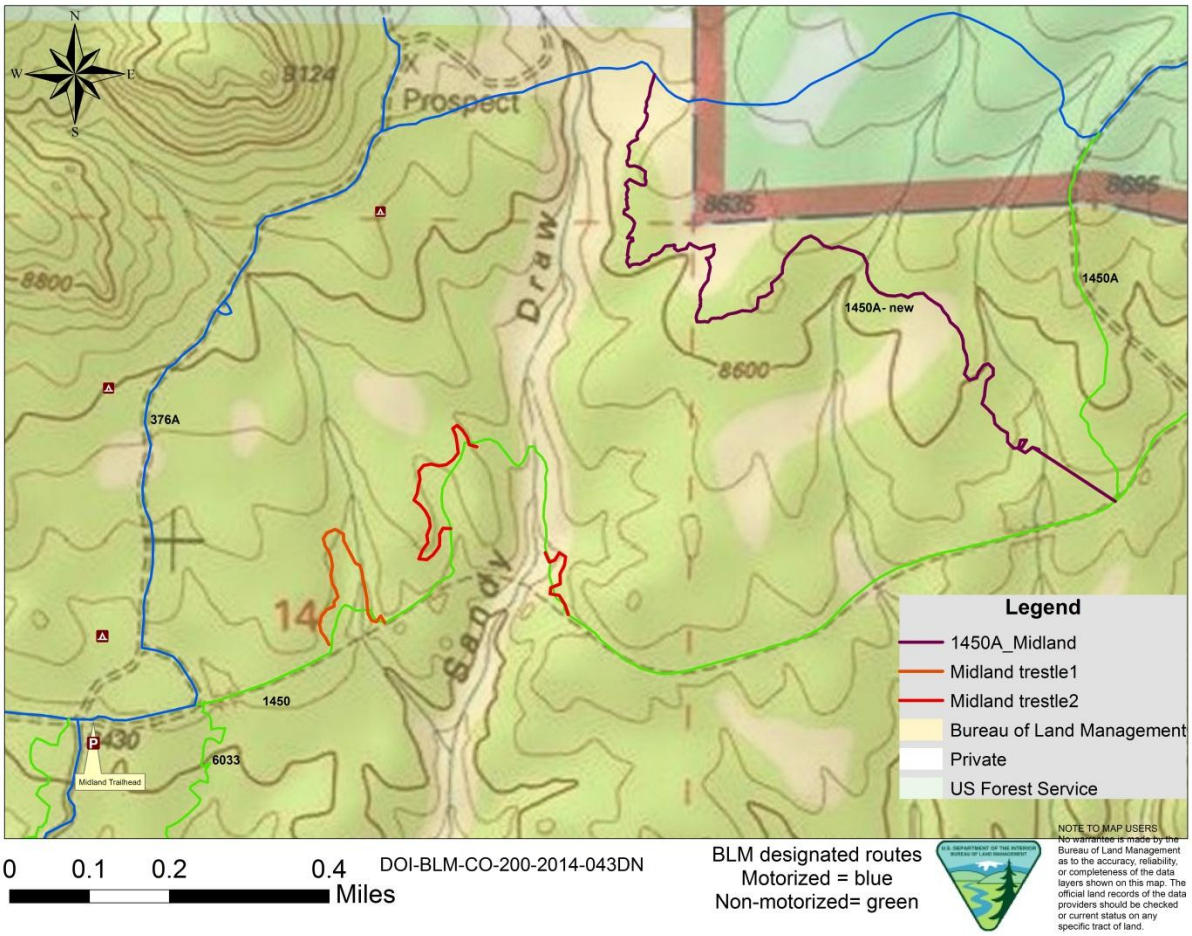
Midland trestle 2 reroute on the east side and a short section of Midland trestle 1(map2) reroute only require cutting 2-3 trees and would be completed in summer. Corridor cutting of larger numbers of pinon pine trees would be scheduled for colder months as advised by the forester.

If gasoline powered equipment is used for construction, an adequate spill kit and shovels would be onsite during project implementation. The project proponent will be responsible for adhering to all applicable local, State and Federal regulations in the event of a spill, which includes following the proper notification procedures in BLM's Spill Contingency Plan.

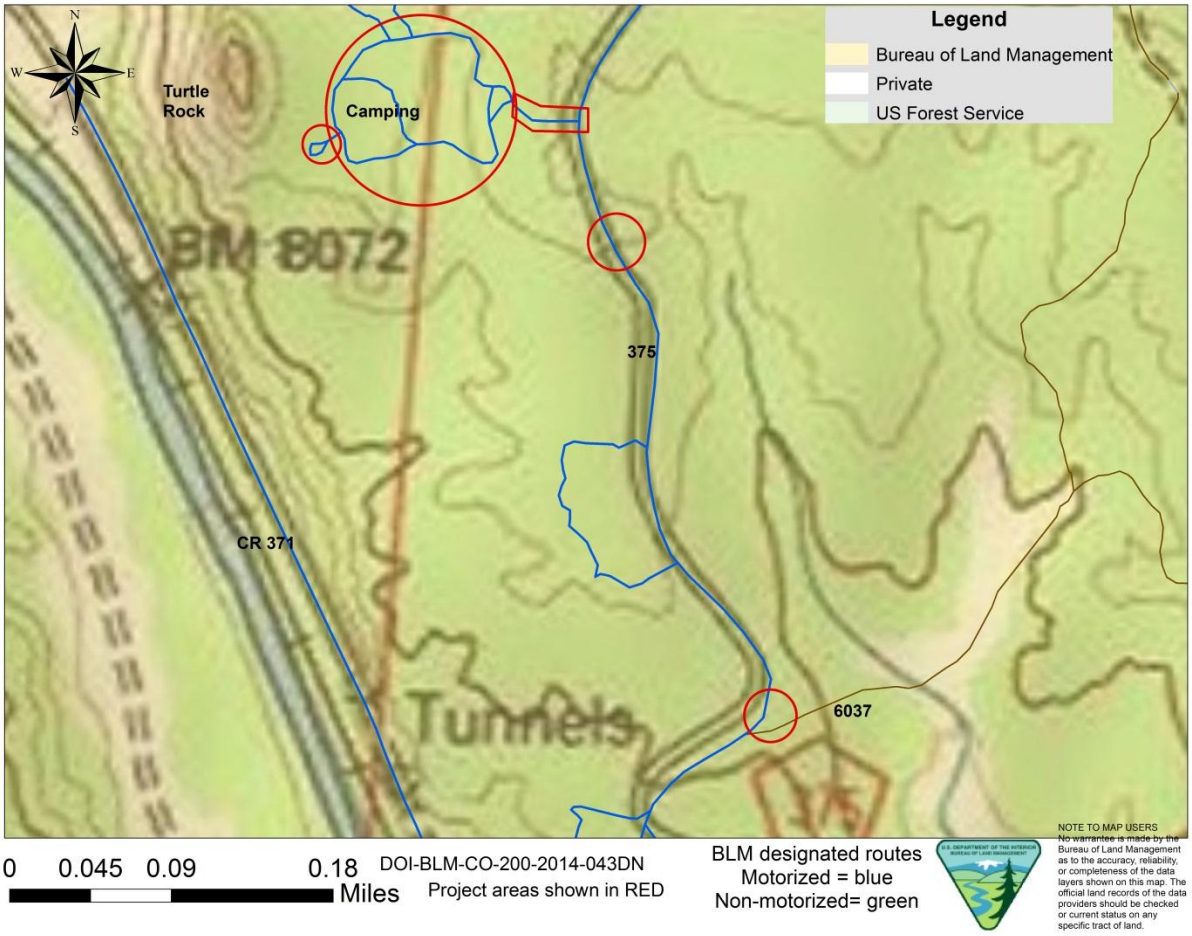
Map 1 Overview of project areas north and east of Buena Vista, CO



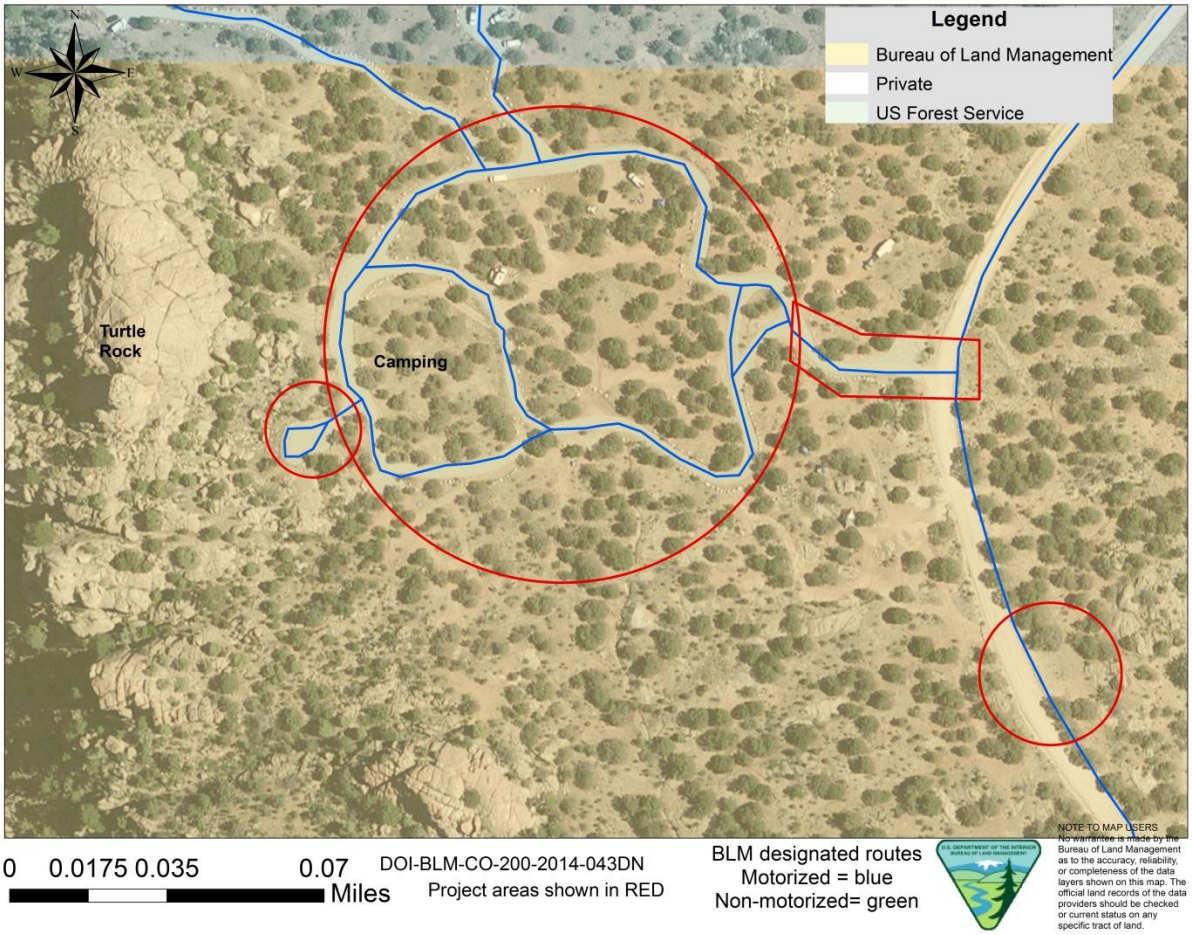
Map 2 Trail Reroute on Midland Trail (shown in red & orange) and 1450A (shown in purple)



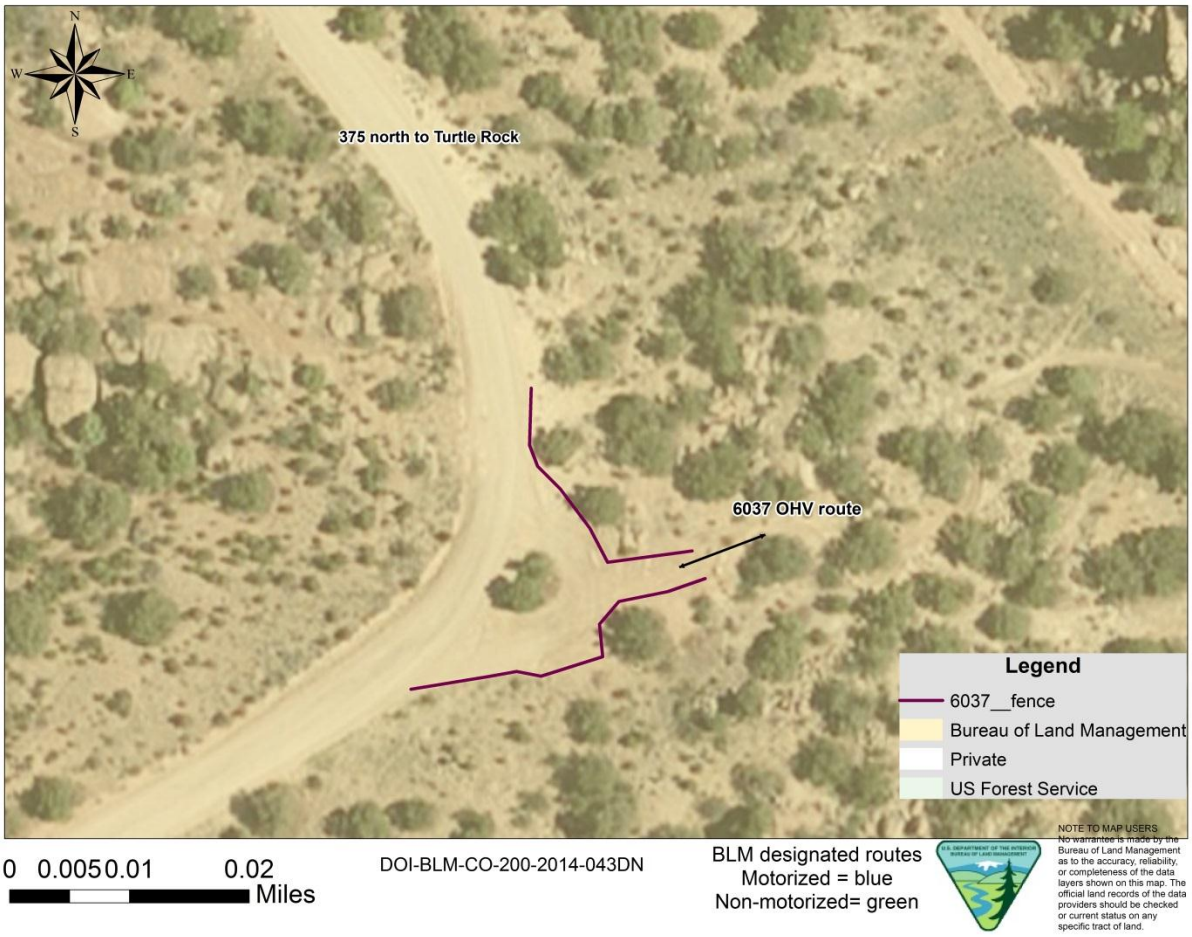
Map 3 Overview of post installation areas in Fourmile north of Buena Vista



Map 4 Proposed post installation areas in Fourmile north of Buena Vista by Turtle Rock



Map 5 Proposed post installation areas in Fourmile north of Buena Vista at intersection of 375 and 6037



B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan	Date Approved: 05/13/96
Other Document	Date Approved

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; additional opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, off-highway vehicle use,

interpretation, and horseback riding; facility development will be accomplished to reduce user conflicts and to improve visitor health and safety.

1-83: Recreation on the larger part of this sub-region will be managed intensively in a special recreation management area.

1-86: Various actions will occur to enhance recreation: upland recreation opportunities emphasizing a balance between resource protection and tourism; coordination with various volunteer and user groups; monitoring and visitor contacts to ensure visitor safety, resource protection, and visitor information availability; provide for acquisitions or easements to enhance water based recreation, mountain biking, off-highway vehicle use, hiking horseback riding, hunting, and natural/cultural resource interpretation.

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

Fourmile Travel Management Plan (TMP); CO-200-2002-0034EA, 03/18/2002

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 similar to the Fourmile TMP decision record and is essentially in the same analysis area of the existing NEPA documents listed above. The Proposed Action re-routes 3 sections of trails where the route is eroding and the proposed changes improve sustainability and encourage better water drainage. The Proposed Action to restrict motorized use to designated routes is addressed in the Fourmile TMP.

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?

Yes. Three alternatives were analyzed in the Fourmile Travel Management Plan #CO-200-2002-0034EA. Alternative A was the No Action alternative and included all 253 miles of routes including user created routes, on the ground as of 2002. Alternative C reduced motorized access. Alternative B was the Proposed Action that included all forms recreational opportunities and travel types (motorized and non-motorized). The final decision was to implement the Proposed Action alternative authorizing a blend of motorized and non-motorized routes. The new Proposed Action will improve sustainability of the routes identified in the existing NEPA document.

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?

Yes. The information remains valid and germane to the Proposed Action. There is no new information, relative to other resource values, that has changed since being analyzed in the Fourmile Travel Management plan.

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?

Yes. The proposal is within the parameters of the impacts identified in the EA. The current action improves trails analyzed in the Fourmile Travel Management plan. The cumulative impacts discussion remains unchanged from the NEPA document. The action is expected to have a positive effect on cumulative impacts as it seeks to rehabilitate and better manage existing routes.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes. The public involvement and review remains adequate for this action. The public involvement and interagency review for the Travel Management Plan included public notices, public meetings, stakeholder interviews, and coverage by local and regional news media outlets. A citizen's group was formed and submitted a Citizens Proposal. Interagency review was accomplished at the local, state and regional level with other Federal agencies, state agencies, and counties and municipalities. The Fourmile TMP analysis and decision was accomplished mainly between the Forest Service, Salida Ranger District and the BLM, Royal Gorge Field Office and their associated public lands.

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, 6/17/14
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 7/14/14
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	----------
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Weeds	JL, 06/11/2014
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 6/17/14

Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	----------
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	MJS, 7/16/2014
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 6/10/14
Ty Webb	Fire Management Officer	Air Quality	TW, 6/15/14
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 7/15/14
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 6/18/2014
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	----------
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 6/23/14
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 6/10/14
Michael Troyer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	----------
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	GDV, 07/14/2014
Ty Webb	Fire Management Officer	Fire	TW, 6/15/14

REMARKS:

Cadastral: GCDB point reliability in the project area range from +/-20 ft. to +/- 280 ft. Section 31 of T. 13 S., R. 78 W. was dependently resurveyed. The rest of the project areas are located in original late 1800's surveys.

Cultural Resources: Although historic properties (those eligible for the NRHP) were found near the area of potential effect (5CF354; see Reports CR-RG-02-22 P, CR-RG-05-21 P, and CR-RG-14-116 P), they will not be affected by the proposed undertaking. Therefore, no further work is necessary.

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 any 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. Pursuant to BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-050, to reduce impacts to Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC), no habitat disturbance (removal of vegetation such as timber, brush, or grass) is allowed during the periods of May 15 - July 15, the breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds. The provision will not apply to completion activities in disturbed areas that were initiated prior to May 15 and continue into the 60-day period.

An exception to this timing limitation will be granted if nesting surveys conducted no more than one week prior to vegetation-disturbing activities indicate no nesting within 30 meters (100 feet) of the area to be disturbed. Surveys shall be conducted by a qualified breeding bird surveyor between sunrise and 10:00 a.m. under favorable conditions.

Land with Wilderness Characteristics: An update to the inventory was conducted in 2013. This area was found to not possess wilderness characteristics therefore there would be no impacts to this resource.

Abandoned Mine Lands: There are several hazardous openings around the midland trail area, that are relics of historic mining that took place in the area hundreds of years ago. Many of these features have been safeguarded but there is always a chance of finding new hazardous mine openings as projects are implemented and as more people use an area. If any hazardous mine openings are found during project implementation, do not enter or go near the opening, record the location and report them to the BLM immediately.

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: Linda Skinner

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: 7/22/14

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.