

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

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0029-EA

January, 2015

Realignment of the Last Chance and 2100 Roads

Delta County, Colorado

Location: Approximately 6 miles north of Olathe, Colorado

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0029

CASE FILES: COC-74939 and COC-74940

PROJECT NAME: Realignment of Last Chance and 2100 Roads, Delta County, Colorado

PLANNING UNIT: Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Resource Management Unit

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 51 N., R. 10 W., Section 10, Lot 1; Section 11, Lot 4; Section 14, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, New Mexico Principal Meridian.

APPLICANT: Delta County

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) has prepared this environmental assessment (EA) to disclose and analyze the environmental effects of Delta County's proposal to realign two short segments of both Last Chance and 2100 Roads (see Map 1). The project is located approximately 6 miles north of Olathe and is within the planning area boundaries of the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA) but is actually outside of the GGNCA proper.

Safety concerns on both roads need to be addressed due to several sharp curves where accidents continue to occur and also because of an expected increase in traffic resulting from the approval of several subdivisions in the area. Both roads were acknowledged under RS-2477 Statute (circa 1866); however, a change in alignment of the existing roads requires issuing rights-of-way (ROWS) for these segments under the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

PURPOSE and NEED for the ACTION

The purpose is to realign two roads to provide safety improvements and to prepare for expected increases in traffic and future improvements to the Delta County road system.

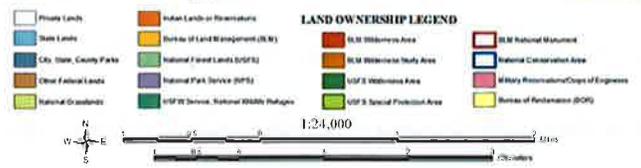
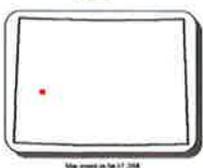
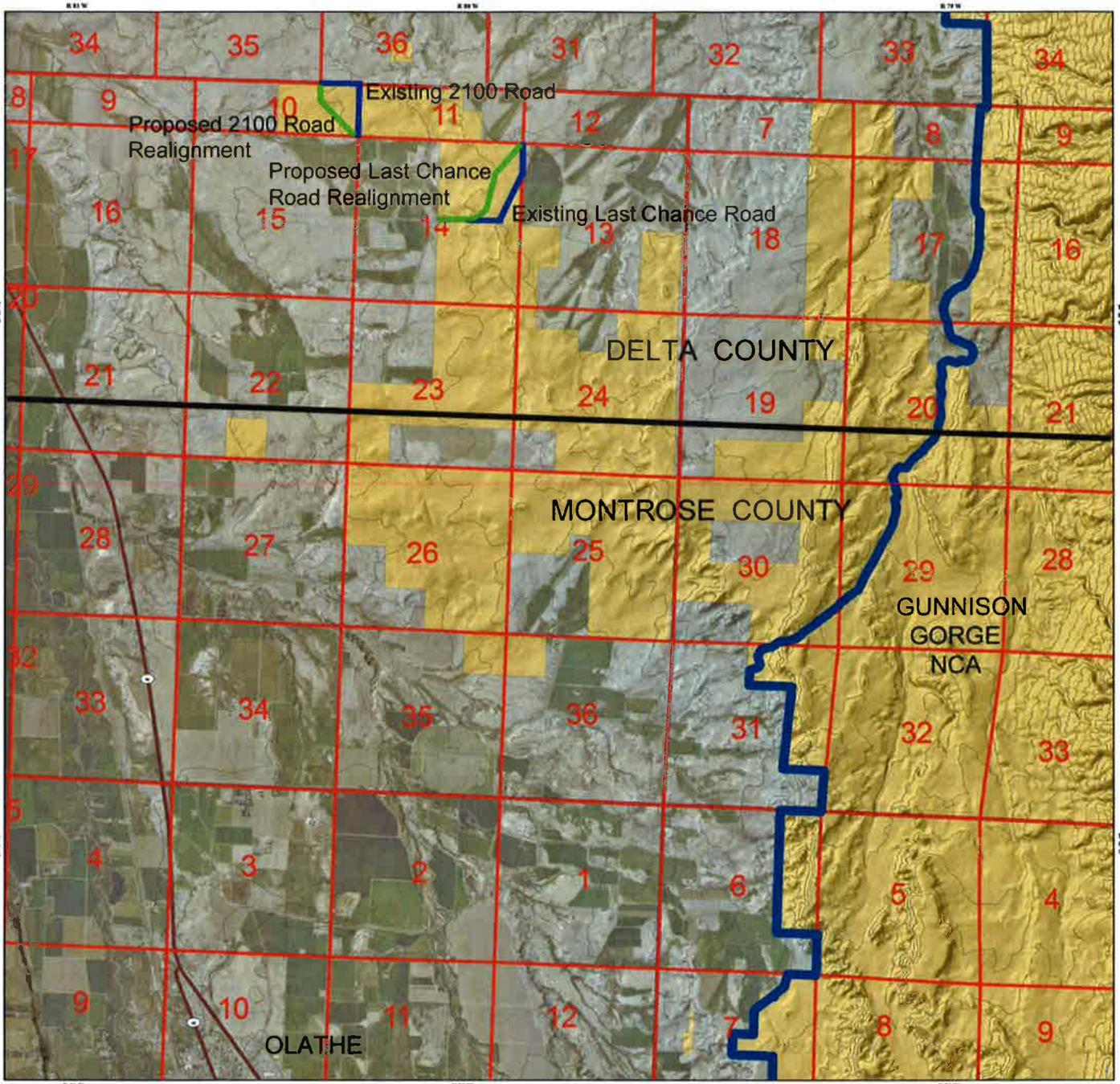
Last Chance Road: to eliminate a blind curve at the Selig Canal crossing, to eliminate a 90-degree curve at the northeast end of the segment, and to improve visibility with on-coming traffic.

2100 Road: to eliminate two 90-degree curves and improve visibility with on-coming traffic.

The BLM's need for the action is to respond to Delta County's ROW applications.

Decisions to be made: The BLM will decide whether or not to grant the ROWs to Delta County for the realignment of one or both roads, and if so, under what terms, conditions and stipulations.

Map 1: Project Location Map



Surface Management Responsibility - Custom 1:24,000 Scale

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
COLORADO STATE OFFICE

Map prepared by the BLM, Colorado State Office
January, February 2008

Scale: 1:24,000

Disclaimer: Land ownership data is derived from the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and is not intended to be used for any purpose other than the one for which it was prepared.

DESCRIPTION of the PROPOSED ACTION and ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action is to grant ROWs to Delta County to realign two short segments of the Last Chance and the 2100 Roads.

Details of the road realignments are as follows:

Last Chance Road:

- 1) Realign the road to eliminate a blind curve at the Selig Canal crossing and,
- 2) align the northeastern segment of the road with the existing road alignment thereby eliminating another sharp curve (see Figure 1 and Map 2).

The total length of the proposed road realignment on public land is 3,965 feet. The majority of the proposed new ROW disturbance will be 60 feet wide. However, a short segment approximately 312 feet in length will be 100 feet wide to allow for cut and fill to lessen the grade and improve line-of-sight distance over a hill with limited visibility. Taking into account the width variances, the areas of the proposed road realignment are 3,653 feet long and 60 feet wide, containing approximately 5 acres, and 312 feet long and 100 feet wide, containing approximately 0.7 acres. The total area of the realigned segment would contain approximately 5.7 acres on public land.

Approximately 800 feet by 60 feet of the existing Delta County B-50 Road (covering 1.1 acres) along the east-west road segment will be abandoned and reclaimed. The County will continue to maintain the existing north-south "by-passed" segment of Last Chance Road since landowners, water utility companies and the water users association will continue to need this route for access to private property, water utilities, private irrigation facilities and operation and maintenance of the Selig Canal. There will be a small turn-a-round area at the canal primarily used for equipment by the water users association. The existing/unchanged segment of Last Chance Road will be 2,326 feet long by 60 feet wide and contain approximately 3.2 acres. Existing ROW holders would continue to use this alignment as access. Therefore, amendments to these existing ROWs will not be required since their origination point from the existing county road will remain the same.

2100 County Road:

Realign the road segment to eliminate two 90 degree turns (see Figure 1 and Map 3). The segment of 2100 Road being realigned utilizes an existing two-track, user created, OHV dirt road alignment. This new road segment will be 2,241 feet long, 80 feet wide, and cover approximately 4.1 acres. The additional width for this new road alignment is being requested to accommodate an anticipated increase in traffic and therefore requires an upgrade in county road classification.

The existing north-south road segment on the eastern side of the BLM 40-acre parcel will remain as-is and will not be relinquished from the County's existing RS-2477 ROW. This segment of the existing road also directly accesses private property and without the county access, the

private land owners would be required to obtain a new ROW. This existing north-south segment is 1,676 feet long, 60 feet wide and covers approximately 2.3 acres. In addition, two 30 foot strips will be added on either side of the RS2477 ROW to make the total ROW width 120 feet for a total of 4.6 acres in order to allow for future development including a beltway.

The east-west segment along the northern boundary of the 40-acre parcel is 1,250 ft. long, 40 ft. wide and covers 1.2 acres. This segment would be abandoned and reclaimed. Construction on 2100 Road would not occur immediately but would be completed within approximately five years.

Both ROWs will be authorized under FLPMA and will be subject to the attached stipulations (see Appendix A).

Summary of Proposed Activities

Type of Activity	Last Chance Road				2100 Road				
	Feet	ROW Width (feet)	Miles	Acres	Feet	ROW Width (feet)	Miles	Acres	
New Disturbance	3653	60	0.69	5.0	2241	80	0.42	4.1	
	312	100	0.06	0.7	1676	60	0.32	2.3	
Total	3965.00		0.75	5.7	3917.0		0.7	6.4	
To be Reclaimed	800	60	0.15	1.1	1250	40	0.24	1.2	
Existing/Unchanged	2326	60	0.44	3.2	1676	60	0.32	2.3	
Totals	Feet	Miles	Acres	Total Disturbance New and Existing				Miles	Acres
New Disturbance	6206.0	1.5	12.1					2.3	17.6
To be Reclaimed	2050.0	0.4	2.3						
Existing/Unchanged	4002.0	0.75	5.5						

Design Features

The following design features will be incorporated into the stipulations as shown in Appendix A.

1. Traffic control methods will be utilized to direct traffic during construction.
2. Fugitive dust will be controlled by either constructing an asphalt pavement roadway or applying a magnesium chloride solution if the road has a gravel road bed. Road construction shall not commence without the proper resources in place to ensure immediate dust abatement measures.
3. The County will notify adjoining landowners prior to beginning construction on either the Last Chance or the 2100 County Road projects.
4. At intersections of the existing and new alignments, there may be traffic control concerns and the need for the County to post signs or flagmen in certain project areas.

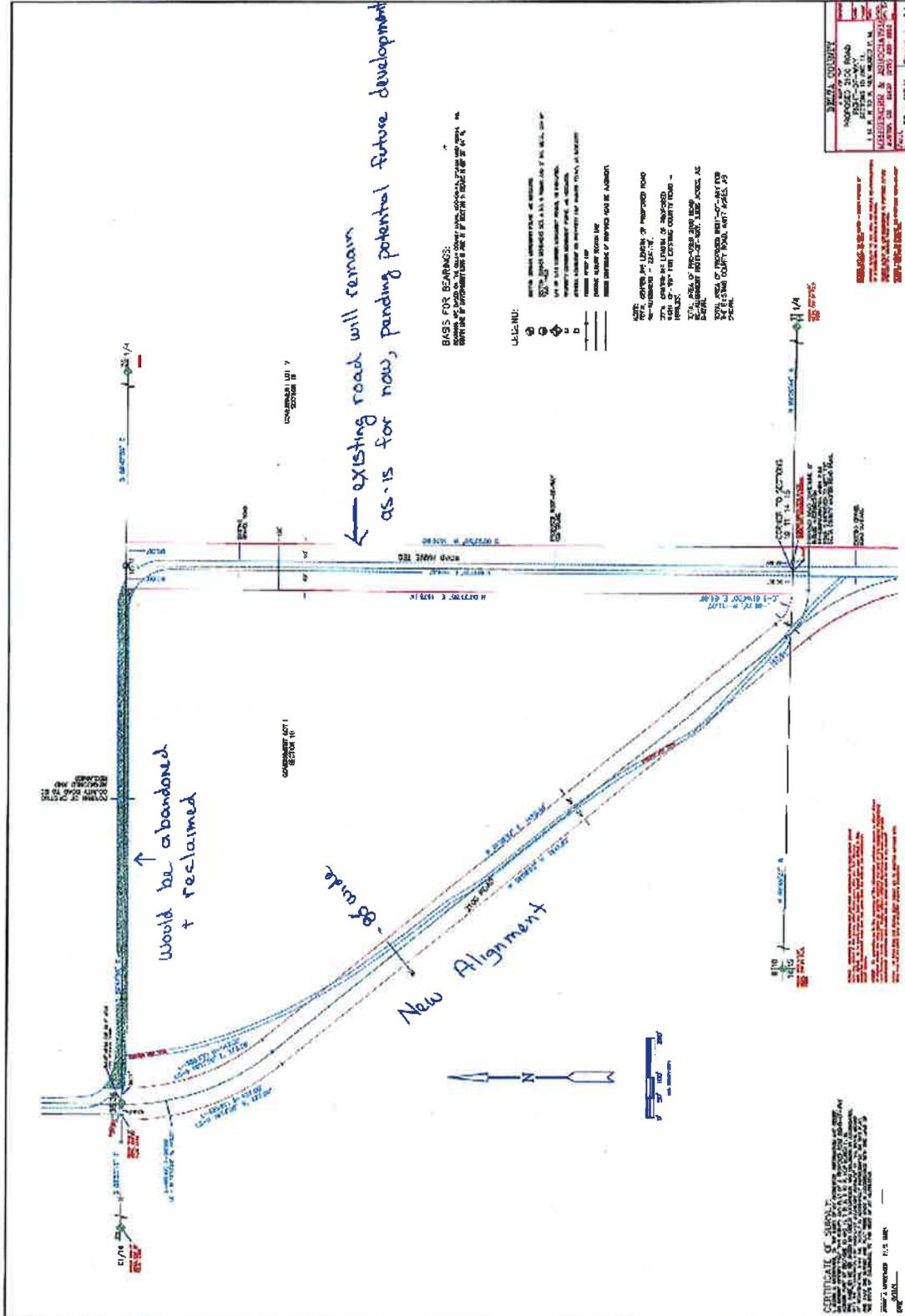
5. Any fueling or maintenance of vehicles or equipment will not be conducted within 100 feet of any live water, irrigation ditch/canal or drainage.
6. The County and/or its contractors will disinfect heavy equipment, hand tools, and any other equipment using high-pressure sprayers to remove dirt, mud and foreign debris that may contain noxious weed seed before equipment is brought on-site.
7. Application of herbicides on public land ROWs will conform to BLM policy including submission of a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) prior to application and a Pesticide Application Record (PAR) within 48 hours following application.
8. A pre-inventory of the area prior to the start of the project is required to determine if pre-treatment of noxious weeds is necessary.
9. The County shall be responsible for noxious weed control both inside and outside the limits of the ROW for weeds that can be demonstrated to have initially established within the ROW and have moved outside of the ROW due to failure to timely or effectively treat such spreading species. The County is responsible for consultation with the authorized officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods (within limits imposed in the grant stipulations) including pesticides/herbicides approved for use on BLM land. Refer to Uncompahgre Programmatic Weed Management Plan.
10. Herbicide use within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plant species will be restricted to the following 5 herbicides and associated rates as stated in current biological opinion for herbicide treatment (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

Active Ingredient	Buffer Width	Method(s) to Which Applied
Chlorsulfuron	<600 feet	Ground, ~ 1 oz./acre equal to 0.047 pounds acid equivalent/acre
	1,500 feet	Aerial
Clopyralid	<600 ft/Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, ≤16oz/ac equal to 0.37 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	0.5 mile	aerial
Glyphosate	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, ≤12oz/ac equal to 0.281 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, max rate; aerial ≤ 12 oz./acre.
Imazapic	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, typical or max rates
	Within Occupied Habitat	Aerial ≤ 6oz/ac equal to 0.093 pounds acid equivalent/acre
	900 ft	Aerial, max rate
Metsulfuron Methyl	<600 ft	Ground ≤ 1.5oz/ac equal to 0.056 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	0.5 miles	Ground or aerial, max rate

11. All herbicides proposed for use within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plants with the exception of Glyphosate and Imazapic will be applied by spot application only (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

12. Mixing of herbicides and cleaning of equipment will not occur within occupied threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plant habitats (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
13. Chlorsulfuron and Metsulfuron Methyl will only be used for hoary cress (whitetop) control, currently not within occupied habitat but within 600 feet (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
14. Within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plants or populations, Imazapic will only be utilized at the maximum rate for fall treatment of Russian knapweed (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

Map 3: 2100 Road



No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative BLM would not issue the FLPMA ROWs for these two segments of the road and Delta County would not be permitted to conduct road work outside of their existing 60 foot RS-2477 ROW. Delta County would not be allowed to realign the roads and eliminate the sharp curves thereby not improving visibility with on-coming traffic or reducing traffic accidents.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW

The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5-3, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Gunnison Gorge NCA Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: November, 2004

Decision Number/Page: Land-C-6, Page 2-9

Decision Language: The project area lies within Utility ROW Corridor #1. Several right-of-way (ROW) corridors, generally one-half mile in width, will be designated on public lands in the planning area and NCA. The BLM will encourage future applicants proposing new or upgraded linear utility and other projects to locate facilities within these ROW corridors. BLM will encourage use of potential, recommended, or designated ROW corridors and ROW Use Areas to the extent possible. However, depending on site-specific needs, actual locations may vary. Use of these areas and variances to these locations will be considered, provided such locations and uses are consistent with the prescriptions for the affected management unit(s) and the objectives for ROW corridors and ROW Use Areas.

Standards for Public Land Health: In January, 1997, the Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. A finding for each standard will be made in the environmental analysis (next section).

Standard	Definition/Statement
#1 Upland Soils	Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes. Adequate soil infiltration and permeability allows for the accumulation of soil moisture necessary for optimal plant growth and vigor, and minimizes surface runoff.
#2 Riparian Systems	Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water, function properly and have the ability to recover from major surface disturbances such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods. Riparian vegetation captures sediment, and provides forage, habitat and bio-diversity. Water quality is improved or maintained. Stable soils store and release water slowly.
#3 Plant and Animal Communities	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. Plants and animals at both the community and population level are productive, resilient, diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce and sustain natural fluctuations, and ecological processes.
#4 Threatened and Endangered Species	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.
#5 Water Quality	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. Water Quality Standards for surface and ground waters include the designated beneficial uses, numeric criteria, narrative criteria, and anti-degradation requirements set forth under State law as found in (5 CCR 1002-8), as required by Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT and ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION

This chapter provides a description of the human and environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action and presents comparative analyses of the direct, indirect and cumulative effects on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the Proposed Action. Cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action are shown in the analysis of each element.

Potential effects to the resources/concerns in the table (below) were evaluated to determine if detailed analysis is necessary. Consideration of some elements is to ensure compliance with laws, statutes, regulation or Executive Orders that impose certain requirements upon all Federal actions. Other items are relevant to the management of public lands in general or to the BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) in particular. Any element not affected by the Proposed Action will not be analyzed.

Elements	¹ Not Present	² Present / No Analysis Needed	³ Present / Requires Further Analysis	Rationale (if not analyzed)
Air Quality		X		Air Quality is not an issue. Use on the County Roads will not change as a result of the realignments. During construction, there would be some localized short term dust and construction equipment emissions which would not be noticeable cumulatively in the greater region.
ACEC	X			There are not any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern within or near the Proposed Action area.
Wilderness	X			There are not any Wilderness Areas or WSAs within or near the Proposed Action area.
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	X			There are not any lands with wilderness characteristics within or near the Proposed Action area.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X			There are not any eligible or suitable Wild and Scenic River segments within or near the Proposed Action area.

Elements	¹ Not Present	² Present / No Analysis Needed	³ Present / Requires Further Analysis	Rationale (if not analyzed)
Cultural		X		The project is contained within the Mancos shale lowlands, an area known to be of low probability for both prehistoric and historic cultural properties. Few cultural sites are expected to be found, and Eligibility properties are predicted to be found at densities of fewer than one site per section. The proposed road realignments were inventoried by the BLM archaeologist on July 9, 2013 with negative results. No National Register or otherwise eligible cultural properties are found within the project area and none are anticipated. No further work is required.
Native American Religious Concerns		X		As with cultural resources, few or no Traditional Cultural Properties or areas which may be of Native American religious concern are anticipated within the eco-zone represented by Mancos Shale lowlands. Inventory data and past consultations with the appropriate Native American tribal entities indicate that there are no known or anticipated sites, properties or landscapes of Native American concern within the project area.
Farmlands, Prime/Unique	X			There are not any prime/unique farmlands, within or near the project area.
Soils			X	
Vegetation			X	
Invasive, Non-native Species			X	
Threatened and Endangered Species			X	
Migratory Birds		X		The project area is a mat saltbush community and currently no migratory species of conservation concern either nest or spend significant time foraging in such habitat in the project area.

Elements	¹ Not Present	² Present / No Analysis Needed	³ Present / Requires Further Analysis	Rationale (if not analyzed)
Wildlife, Terrestrial		X		The project area does not offer suitable seasonal habitat for most terrestrial species. The isolated nature of the public lands situated amongst highly developed private lands coupled with lack of suitable visual and thermal cover contributes to the project area's unsuitable habitat features.
Wildlife, Aquatic	X			There are no water resources or aquatic wildlife within the project area or impacted by the project.
Riparian Zones & Wetlands	X			There are not any riparian zones or wetlands within the project area or impacted by the project.
Floodplains	X			There are not any floodplains within the project area or impacted by the project.
Water -- Surface			X	
Water -- Ground	X			Groundwater will not be impacted by the construction of these road segments.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid		X		Hazardous and solid wastes are not a part of the natural environment. Fuel, oil or lubricant spills from construction equipment are not anticipated. In the event of a spill occurring during construction, with prompt cleanup, the impacts would be expected to be minor and short term.
Environmental Justice and Socio-Economics	X			There is no environmental justice or socio-economic concerns associated with the Proposed Action.

Elements	¹ Not Present	² Present / No Analysis Needed	³ Present / Requires Further Analysis	Rationale (if not analyzed)
Access and Transportation	X			There will be no impact to access and transportation within the project area. The existing county roads will remain passable during construction of the realignments. Delta County will post warning signs to alert vehicles of the upcoming construction zone and to reduce the speed of traffic along the segments. If this is not adequate during certain phases of construction, the County would have flagmen stationed in the necessary areas.
Cadastral Survey	X			The Proposed Action will have no effect on existing surveyed boundaries.
Realty Authorizations		X		There are not any realty authorizations impacted by the Proposed Action.
Range Management	X			It is not anticipated that there would be any impacts to range management from the Proposed Action.
Forest Management	X			There are no forest products in the project area.
Fire	X			The Proposed Action would not impact the occurrence or control of wild land fire.
Noise	X			There is traffic related noise now, and this will continue at the same level after realignment. There would be short term daytime generation of noise from construction of the short road realignments. Noise level is not expected to be significant.
Recreation	X			Public recreational activities wouldn't change from the existing situation.
Visual Resources		X		BLM manages the proposed project areas as a Class IV area, and Class IV areas allow for visible changes that can dominate the landscape.
Geology and Minerals	X			There would be no impact to geology or minerals management from the Proposed Action.

Elements	¹ Not Present	² Present / No Analysis Needed	³ Present / Requires Further Analysis	Rationale (if not analyzed)
Paleontology	X			Mancos shale is within the PFYC 2 zone and few fossils of scientific importance are anticipated within the project area. Inventory of the project on July 9, 2013 revealed no surface traces of fossils of scientific interest, and no further work is required.
Law Enforcement	X			There are no law enforcement concerns associated with the Proposed Action.

SOILS (includes a finding on Public Land Health Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The road realignments are located on soils derived from the weathering of the Mancos Shale formation. In an area of approximately 225 acres surrounding and including the road realignments, soil textures are clay loams. Runoff potential ranges from low in some soil types to very high in other soil types. These ratings are dependent on the slope of the site, which is less than 10%. Selenium concentrations and the potential solubility are rated as very high. More soil properties can be seen in the table below from the Ridgway Soil Survey (USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service).

Soil Unit Name	Geomorphic Description	Texture	Erosion Hazard for Roads and Trails	Runoff Potential	Acres
Ellaybee-Persayo silty clay loams, 5 to 12 percent slopes	alluvial fans, stream terraces		Severe		78
Typic Torriorthents, 10 to 25 percent slopes	erosion remnants, hills		Severe	Very high	56
Persayo-Loutzenhizer complex, 2 to 5 percent slopes, nonirrigated	basin-floor remnants, erosion remnants		Moderate	Low	51
Aquisalids, occasionally flooded, 0 to 2 percent slopes	alluvial fans, stream terraces		Slight		19
Montrose-Delta complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes	alluvial fans, fan remnants, stream terraces		Slight	Low	16
Typic Torriorthents-Badland complex, 25 to 75 percent slopes	erosion remnants, hills		Severe	Very high	3

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action – Some of the expected direct impacts within the project area include:

- Removal of vegetation, exposing the soil to wind and water erosion.
- Mixing of soil horizons.
- Development of roads on slopes requiring minor cut and fill.
- Soil contamination from vehicle fuels, coolants and lubricants.
- Loss of soil productivity.

Building the two roads would have a direct, physical impact to soils. A total of 12.1 acres would be disturbed in the process of creating and maintaining the two new alignments. Portions of the existing roads would be abandoned and reclaimed totaling 2.3 acres, offsetting some of the new disturbance.

The lack of slopes exceeding 10% in the area would prevent mobilization of sediments with attendant dissolved salt and selenium from the site. Wind erosion is possible, but design feature number 2 requires fugitive dust control by applying magnesium chloride.

A total of 12.1 acres of more soil would be disturbed than the No Action alternative, but none of the soils described in the existing environment exceed a slope that would prevent the design features and stipulations from minimizing the impacts to areas outside of the new road realignments. After reclamation of 2.3 acres of the existing road beds, a net of 9.8 acres of soils would permanently be lost and no longer productive for native vegetation.

Cumulative Impacts – This action, when combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, would add to impacts from other activities on private and federal lands in the watershed, and would contribute to decreased soil health. The area analyzed for cumulative impacts included 225 acres surrounding the proposed road realignments. Other activities causing, or that could cause, impacts to soils on BLM lands in the area include grazing, other ROWs, seeping and leaky irrigation ditches, and recreation.

The entire 225 acres is included in the Selig canal allotment and is grazed by sheep. Several irrigation ditches bisect the area and seep through the soils mobilizing salt and selenium from the area. Recreation use in the area appears to be from local motorized use accessing the BLM land from public roads.

The 12.1 acres of disturbance from this action represents about 5% of the 225 acres. The lack of steep slopes on this site minimizes the additional impact from this action to the cumulative impacts.

No Action Alternative – No soils would be disturbed.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: During 2000, a Land Health Assessment (LHA) was conducted near the site (BLM, 2001). Soil health was assessed using the following indicators: evidence of excessive rills and pedestals, active gullies, appropriate groundcover and plant canopy cover (including Biological Soil Crust), adequate

plant litter accumulation, minimal litter movement, appropriate soil organic material, and plant species diversity and presence of vigorous, desirable plants. Much of the area's soils were rated as meeting the soil standard but with problems, meaning at least two of the above soil surface indicators were not adequate for the site. The specific rating for this site indicated a high level of bare ground was present. More detailed information can be found in the Gunnison Gorge Land Health Assessment (BLM, 2001). Development of the project area would increase surface disturbance, increasing the potential for deterioration of soil and vegetative health. Standard 1 would continue to be identified as "met" until further assessed.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Public Land Health Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The road realignments are located in mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugata*) and greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) communities. The 2100 Road realignment is centered around an existing two-track road which has disturbed the vegetation across its approximately 8 foot width. There are also small areas of vehicle disturbance associated with this two-track within the proposed ROW. This route passes through areas that are largely devoid of vegetation and other areas with scattered mat saltbush. The Last Chance realignment passes through a mat saltbush community with more diversity and less evidence of past disturbance from vehicles. It has been affected in some areas by water seeping from a ditch. The seepage supports small patches of highly salt tolerant inland saltgrass and greasewood communities.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action – The Proposed Action's new road realignments will permanently remove native mat saltbush vegetation from 12.1 acres. Additional vegetation disturbance can be expected in the ROW areas outside of the ROWs as the roads are being constructed and maintained. This will include crushing and removal of native plants, unintentional spread of weeds, and disruption of the native hydrologic patterns, which will in turn affect the remaining plant community in the project area. As a result, the plant community in the ROWs are expected to be slightly to moderately degraded in the project area. The abandoned and reclaimed road segments are not expected to return to native salt desert vegetation because past rehab efforts in the salt desert community have been almost entirely unsuccessful.

Placement of the 2100 Road realignment along an existing two-track has reduced the impacts to native vegetation by 0.4 acres. Constructing fenced exclosures, discussed as proposed mitigation in the TES species section, to protect endangered Clay-loving Buckwheat (Buckwheat) will prevent some off-site damage to the native plant community in the exclosures by preventing off road driving within them. Weed control measures will prevent some establishment and spread of perennial noxious weed species.

Cumulative Impacts – This action, when combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, would add to impacts from other activities on private and federal lands in the watershed, and would contribute to decreased vegetation health. The area analyzed for cumulative impacts included 225 acres surrounding the proposed road realignments. Other activities causing, or that could cause, impacts to vegetation on BLM lands in the area include sheep grazing, other ROWs, seeping and leaky irrigation ditches, and off-road vehicle use. The

Proposed Action is located in an area with a lot of private land, which are experiencing similar impacts to vegetation, in addition to residential development and agriculture. The 12.1 acres of vegetation removal and/or disturbance from this action represents about 5% of the 225 acres.

No Action Alternative – There would be no new impacts to vegetation under this alternative.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, also see Invasive, Non-native Species): The 2100 Road realignment is located in an area rated as “Meeting Standard 3”. The Last Chance Road Realignment is located on lands that are rated as “Meeting Standard 3 with problems”. Due to the limited disturbed surface area, the Proposed Action will have negligible impact to plant and animal communities within this LHA area.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Public Land Health Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Invasive species within the project area include weeds such as Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), white top (*Cardaria draba*), kochia (*Kochia scoparia*) and purple mustard (*Chorispora tenella*). These weeds are usually found in disturbed sites and areas that artificially collect and retain water, such as road drainage ditches, irrigation canals including their associated seepage areas, and natural draws. The annual noxious and invasive weeds Halogeton, Russian thistle, and purple mustard are currently wide spread within the project area.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action – The Proposed Action disturbs an additional 1.5 miles and 12.1 acres across the landscape, and proposes to rehabilitate 2.3 acres. In addition, there is going to be .75 miles and approximately 5.5 acres of existing road left open for access to private property, future use and canal maintenance. Total existing and new disturbance for the project is approximately 2.3 miles of road and 17.6 acres which could increase weed introduction, spread, and establishment through initial construction, rehabilitation and increased maintenance activities within the proposed project area.

By implementing design feature numbers 6 through 14, and by complying with the ROW stipulations, the Proposed Action is not expected to increase weed infestations to the point they directly compete with threatened and endangered species for habitat. However, increases in Russian knapweed and white top directly adjacent to the ROWs may occur due to the additional linear disturbance tied to increased maintenance, additional graveling and road bed grading. Gravel brought in from gravel pits that are not weed free contain weed seed that is laid down with the re-surfacing of roads. In addition, road grading has the ability to spread weeds through the dragging of plant material, seeds, and roots along the road during maintenance activity. The County currently treats noxious weeds such as Russian knapweed and white top within their ROWs or as stipulated in ROW grants from the BLM, therefore new infestations should be small and treatable.

Cumulative Impacts – This action, when combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, may combine with impacts from other activities on private and federal lands within the project area thus increasing the potential for noxious and invasive weed spread and establishment. The area analyzed for cumulative impacts included 225 acres surrounding the proposed road realignments. Other activities that may contribute to noxious and invasive weed spread and establishment on BLM lands in the area include grazing, existing and additional ROWs, seeping and leaky irrigation ditches, and off-road vehicle use.

No Action Alternative – There would be no additional miles or acres attributing to noxious and invasive weed spread or establishment.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, also see Vegetation): Increasing 1.5 miles and 12.1 acres of new disturbance increases the potential for noxious and invasive weed spread and establishment. In addition, the disturbance associated with the rehabilitation efforts on 0.4 miles and 2.3 acres within the project area would also contribute to weed establishment since rehabilitation in these lower elevation adobe soils is marginal. Nevertheless, most of the creeping perennial noxious weeds such as Russian knapweed and white top will stay within the ROWs and seep areas around irrigation ditches due to higher water requirements while the annual weeds will take advantage of all disturbance within the project area. Due to the limited disturbed surface area, the Proposed Action will have negligible impact to plant and animal communities within this LHA area.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED and SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Public Land Health Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

The Uncompahgre Field Office utilizes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *Information, Planning, and Conservation System* (IPaC) to generate the most current species list to analyze the effects of a Proposed Action on threatened, endangered and candidate species and designated critical habitat for these species (USFWS, 2012). In accordance with *BLM Manual 6840*, the goal of management is to prevent a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability for sensitive species.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (TES) Wildlife and Plants Report (available in the project record) lists potentially occurring federally listed species within the UFO and provides assessments for their occurrence within the project area (BLM, 2014). Only those species where the project is within the known range of the species and with potential habitat or known occurrences are discussed below.

Clay-loving Buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*)

Buckwheat is a near-surface, slow-growing, and long-lived sub-shrub known only to Delta and Montrose Counties, Colorado. Thought to be confined to one occurrence at the time of listing, this species is currently known to be represented in 14 element occurrences (EOs) totaling approximately 278,600 individual plants. Occupied habitat is estimated to total over 582 acres

and is distributed across an area of 11.5 miles wide (east to west) and 28.5 miles long (north to south) (USFWS, 2009). The 2009 *5-Year Review* of this species by the USFWS presents a thorough review of the species' status.

The primary threats identified for this species in the *5-Year Review* are destruction, modification, or curtailment of habitat and range, livestock use, herbicide use, and climate change. The factors contributing to habitat loss and modification include:

- (1) agricultural, urban, and residential development,
- (2) OHV recreation,
- (3) non-native invasive plants, and
- (4) livestock use.

The Last Chance realignment project area is occupied by two small sub-populations of Buckwheat totaling approximately 130 plants, occupying 0.02 acres and is situated approximately 104 meters NNW of the proposed ROW realignment. The 2100 Road project area is also occupied by two small sub-populations of Buckwheat totaling 87 plants, occupying 0.09 acres and is situated approximately 35 meters east of the ROW realignment (see Figure 2).

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action – The Proposed Action will directly and permanently impact 12.1 acres of salt desert shrub community that comprises the habitat for the endangered Buckwheat. In addition, there is a very low probability that the abandoned and reclaimed portions of 2100 Road (encompassing 1.2 acres) and Last Chance Road (1.1 acres) will be reclaimed to a level where a functioning native plant community would be present and functioning to provide ecosystem services to the Buckwheat habitat. The UFO has historically had very little success in restoring/reclaiming the Mancos Shale salt desert shrub community. Therefore, it is likely that the Proposed Action will increase surface disturbance to the habitat for the Buckwheat by a total of 12.1 acres.

Based on the alignments of the two new road segments, the design feature numbers 6 through 14 put forth by the applicant, and the mitigation described below, no direct impacts to Buckwheat or the occupied portion of its habitat are anticipated.

Indirect effects with the potential to affect Buckwheat and its associated habitat are anticipated as a result of the project. These include fragmentation of the habitat, increases in weeds, potential for increased OHV activity, and dust deposition.

Developing the new road alignments is likely to promote the spread of noxious weeds, with ensuing effects on native plant communities and listed plant habitat. ROW corridors and associated access roads also provide new access into areas that do not currently have roads, indirectly increasing effects to plants and habitat from recreation, especially OHV use. The roads will create an additional extensive linear disturbance that will further fragment the habitat. At least six different ROWs are already associated with the Proposed Action area. Three water pipeline ROWs (each 30 feet) and one access road (30 feet) are associated with the Last Chance Road. One water pipeline ROW (30 feet) and one gas pipeline ROW (50 feet) are associated

with the 2100 Road. Approval of the Proposed Action will increase the number of ROWs to eight. It is not anticipated that ROWs with in-the-ground features will be moved to parallel either new ROW, thus no additional widening of these proposed new ROWs is reasonably foreseeable. The water pipeline is the only ROW that is adjacent to the abandoned portion of 2100 Road. Thus the abandoned portion of 2100 Road could be subjected to future surface disturbance further diminishing the potential for reclamation success should repairs or upgrades be needed in the future.

The proposed 2100 Road realignment has been designed to take advantage of an existing, user created two-track, to minimize additional surface disturbance. The original proposal for Last Chance Road would have placed the new construction and ROW within 74 meters of the closest Buckwheat population. Consultation between Delta County and the BLM resulted in moving the ROW 163 meters, effectively doubling the buffer distance from the nearest Buckwheat population and decreasing potentially harmful environmental effects.

Because these isolated parcels are surrounded by agricultural and residential development, invasive species have likely been present on these parcels and interacting with Buckwheat since the adjacent parcels were first disturbed. This situation would continue to be present into the future because it is unrealistic to assume that the adjacent private land owners would adequately control invasive or noxious vegetation species. Therefore, on these affected parcels in the project area, the baseline study conclusion demonstrates a plant community where invasive and noxious weeds have been and would continue to be present. While weeds such as Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*), whitetop (*Cardaria draba*), and purple mustard (*Chorispora tenella*) are found within the project area, the only places they are found in densities capable of competitively excluding native species is restricted to areas that artificially collect and retain water, such as the sides of roadways, the canals and their associated seepage areas. Halogeton and purple mustard are currently ubiquitous within the project area, and implementing the Proposed Action is not expected to increase these weed infestations within the Buckwheat populations from current conditions. Delta County has committed to design feature number 9 to minimize the potential impacts to Buckwheat habitat.

In addition to the potential direct loss of Buckwheat plants, motor vehicles may impact Buckwheat habitat in several ways. One common effect is soil compaction, which diminishes water infiltration, destroys soil stabilizers, and increases erosion from water and wind (see OHV effects as summarized in Ouren, et al., 2007). The net result of a decrease in soil moisture and an increase in soil compaction is a generally reduced plant size. Soil compaction also increases the potential for invasive, non-native annuals and other early successional plants to establish rapidly in OHV routes. Other impacts such as edge effects, fragmentation, and dust impacts occur from OHV use. The Mancos Shale soils are particularly prone to OHV impacts because the clay is susceptible to compaction, and because there are no rocks and very minor native vegetation needed to resist erosion.

OHV use in the Buckwheat habitat area is problematic because it only takes a few motorized vehicle users to dramatically increase the magnitude of the risk to the species. To date no Buckwheat plants have been directly affected by motorized vehicles. While OHV use is currently

prohibited in the project area, based on recent field visits, at least two unauthorized user created routes are known to be utilized by motor vehicles. In addition, the open nature of the habitat makes it difficult if not impossible to curtail unauthorized OHV use in this project area. Because of the potential for impact, and because OHV use is dramatically increasing, the applicant will be required to implement the mitigation measure of fencing the four sub-populations closest to the proposed realignments and/or blocking user created routes during construction to eliminate the potential for unauthorized OHV use to injure or destroy Buckwheat or impact the occupied portion of the habitat.

High concentrations of fugitive dust has known detrimental effects on gas exchange and water budgets in plants (Farmer, 1993; Padgett et al., 2007) and through stigma clogging, which may affect the ability of pollen grains to germinate, penetrate the stylar tissue, and then to fertilize ovules. Because these air-borne dust impacts could indirectly impact Buckwheat, the applicant has committed to supporting design feature number 2. Magnesium chloride is unlikely to affect plants given that the native soils are already exceptionally saline. Also because in both road realignment locations, the Buckwheat populations are located up gradient from proposed road surfaces and therefore it is not anticipated that magnesium chloride will migrate through the soil and affect these plants.

The indirect effects described above will largely be minimized conditional upon compliance by the County with their committed design features and proposed mitigation measures defined below. The exception is the habitat fragmentation from the existing ROWs, uncertainty of reclamation, and the present and anticipated increase in unauthorized OHV use. Because of the Proposed Action's design features and these proposed mitigation measures, BLM has determined that the Proposed Action "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the federally endangered Clay-loving Buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*). The USFWS concurred with this finding on July 17, 2014.

Mitigation- The four Buckwheat populations closest to the road realignments will have permanent fenced exclosures constructed around them utilizing sheep tight woven wire fence built to BLM standards as described below (see Figure 2).

- 1) A 32 inch tall woven wire fence would be installed flush with the ground.
- 2) Two barbed wires (12.5 gauge American made) would be installed above the woven wire fence. Spacing of the barbed wire would be 8 inches and not exceed 42 inches above the ground.
- 3) Wooden H-braces would be used at the corners and be constructed of posts that meet or exceed 7 inches in diameter.

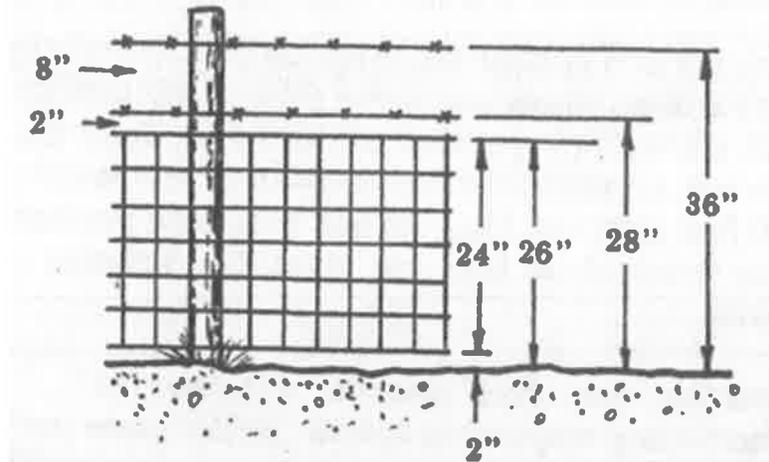


Figure 2: BLM Standard Sheep Fence Design

The approximate location of the exclosures is depicted in Figure 3. The 2100 Road exclosure will be 2.25 acres in size and the Last Chance Road exclosure will be 1.35 acres in size. The exclosures have been designed to encompass suitable habitat to afford the populations an opportunity to expand in size in the absence of surface disturbing activities. Location decision criteria included proximity to the populations, comparable slope, aspect, associated plant species, and soil type. The Buckwheat populations within proximity to the proposed road realignments will have this final long-term fencing installed according to BLM specifications *prior* to commencing road realignment construction.

A biological monitor will be required to be on site during major milestones of road realignment activities to assist in and ensure avoidance of Buckwheat in the area. These milestones include fence construction, initial grading, road base installation, guardrail/fencing, paving (if used), final erosion control installation, and final restoration, or any other instances where new work crews will be onsite.

The road construction crew will be instructed on avoidance of the plants and minimization of unnecessary surface disturbance to habitat prior to commencing work by the onsite biological monitor.

The County will block off the two unauthorized, user-created two-track OHV routes associated with the Last Chance Road realignment (see Figure 3) with either a fence (constructed to BLM specifications as detailed above) or other appropriate barriers to stop further unauthorized route creation across Buckwheat habitat.

Erosion will be managed and mitigated according to Delta County Roadway Design and Construction Standards (Delta County, 2005). Where erosion control best management practices (BMP) fail or are compromised by heavy precipitation events or lack of effective vegetation establishment, the County will maintain those features until adequate vegetation is established to prevent such erosional events.

The desired reclamation objectives are to achieve approximately 20% of the undisturbed surrounding area plant community cover and composition within ten years. Reclamation will be monitored by BLM personnel. Additional reclamation efforts may be required if these objectives are not met within the designated timeframe.

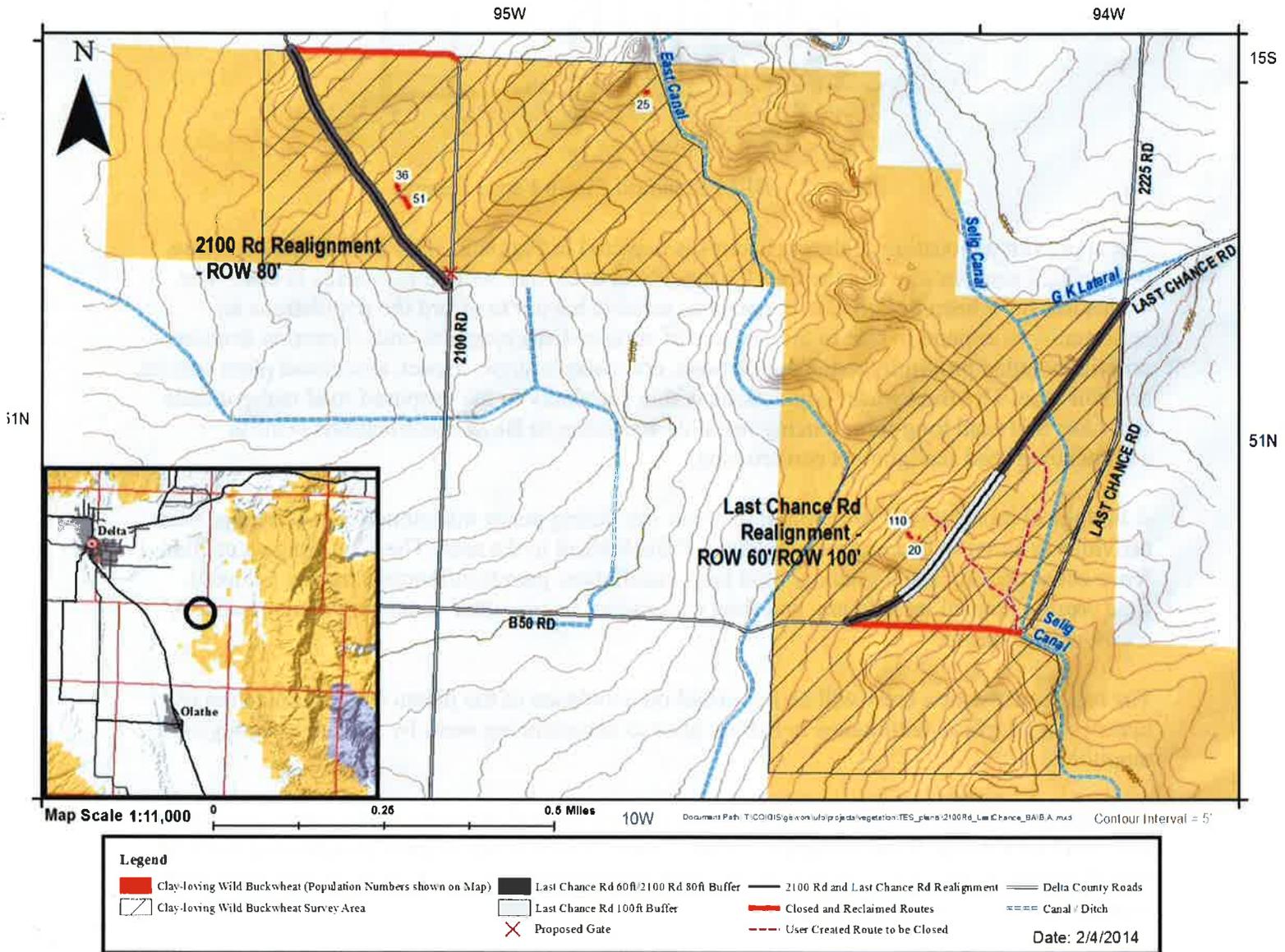


Figure 3: Map showing locations of Buckwheat and roads.

Impacts remaining after application of mitigation measures:

Constructing the two exclosures will essentially eliminate all direct impacts to the four affected Buckwheat populations. The exclosures have been designed to encompass habitat that appears to be suitable for the expansion of these small sub-populations of Buckwheat in the absence of surface disturbance. However, the threat of continued unauthorized OHV use will remain resulting in the potential for further fragmenting and degrading of habitat for Buckwheat. Requiring a biological monitor on site and educating the construction crews about Buckwheat conservation will add an additional level of assurance that direct impacts to the populations does not occur during the road realignments, and may minimize unnecessary disturbance to unoccupied habitat. Requiring the county to block access to the two user created two-track OHV routes along Last Chance Road would eliminate these routes as possible access points for unauthorized OHV use. However, the open-access nature of the project area is likely to result in the creation of new unauthorized user created routes along the new Last Chance road as well as the new alignment of 2100 Road. The fact that habitat for Buckwheat is so open, and the prevalence of unauthorized OHV use in the project area combined with the area of new road construction along with the remaining portions of the old roads being held open, it is highly likely that OHV use will increase in the project area as the project basically offers an increase in access opportunity. This will indirectly affect Buckwheat by further degrading the habitat from weeds, erosion, and fragmentation. The presence of the exclosures is expected to prevent the direct loss of Buckwheat plants from OHV activity. Requiring regular maintenance of erosion control features would reduce additional fragmentation but, it is not expected to ameliorate impacts that these roads would have on habitat described in the vegetation section. Defining reclamation objectives offers a measure of what reclamation success would look like and requires additional efforts should the initial reclamation work fail. This provides a process to reduce some of the Buckwheat habitat fragmentation present within the currently occupied habitat. However, as described in the vegetation section, reclamation of the Buckwheat habitat is difficult, if not impossible to achieve, and those reclaimed sites are likely to be dominated by invasive plants species into the foreseeable future.

Cumulative Impacts – The Proposed Action area is confined to land administered by the BLM. These BLM lands occur in a mosaic of private, local, State, and other federal lands, with private lands dominating. The area of analysis for cumulative effects is therefore federal and non-federal lands within the potential Buckwheat habitat areas. Just under half of all Buckwheat occurrences are located on private land (USFWS, 2009).

Activities that occur on private, local, and State lands within potential Buckwheat habitat areas include agriculture, both crop production and ranching; residential and commercial development; utility line development; road development; and recreation, including OHV use, hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. The human population within the area of analysis has grown tremendously since 1990. Between 1990 and 2009, the population in Delta County has grown 49 percent and in Montrose County, 70 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). This growth is likely to continue at near current rates for the foreseeable future, which will result in an increase in pressure from development and recreation on private, local, and State lands. These activities will continue to affect the Buckwheat through direct loss of plants and habitat, and through habitat modification. New construction, development and maintenance of irrigation

systems, use of herbicides, and increased pressure from recreation associated with residential development are just a few avenues by which these activities may adversely affect the Buckwheat species survival.

The USFWS estimates that about 40 percent of Buckwheat habitat has already been impacted by construction or agriculture (USFWS, 2009). As development continues within the action area for Buckwheat, recreational activities are likely to increase on private lands. The recreational activity with the highest potential for affecting the species is OHV use. Seventeen percent of known and historic Buckwheat populations have already been directly affected by OHV use. The effects that this activity may have on listed plants would be identical to those disclosed for BLM lands in the Affected Environment section. Effects to Buckwheat from energy development are expected to increase as well. As an example, a projected extension of the East Montrose Transmission Improvement Line south from the planned Miguel Road Substation may travel through or near Buckwheat occurrences on private land. Currently every known population of Buckwheat is subject to development pressure, but those sites that are either located on public lands or protected within a conservation easement are less vulnerable. In conclusion, the magnitude of this threat to Buckwheat habitat is high.

A conceptual beltway around the City of Montrose has been proposed that would run near several known populations of Buckwheat (USFWS, 2006). The alignment, as currently proposed, runs generally to the west of most known occurrences and not through BLM managed lands (Jenson, 2009). The conceptual route would be built in phases, would not be built in its entirety for 20 or 30 years, and is intended to be built and used when the Montrose community is larger (Jenson, 2009). The private lands where the beltway has been proposed have generally not been surveyed for Buckwheat. Because the beltway route is not finalized, the installation is not imminent, and because plant surveys have not occurred along the route, it is difficult to fully assess the effects of this beltway on the species.

Livestock grazing on public and private lands has and will continue to affect Buckwheat. Many of the BLM allotments in the Buckwheat habitat include both BLM managed lands and private surface property. Unpermitted trailing across BLM lands is likely occurring along State and county road ROWs. BLM regulations do not require a permit for this activity and therefore the Field Office has no discretion over this activity. Presumably this form of trailing is confined to the disturbed road ROW corridor, helping to minimize effects to listed plants species in the area. Damage to and loss of individuals is expected due to browsing, trampling, and range management activities, especially where livestock use is concentrated in bedding grounds and along routine trails used daily as the animals move to and from bedding grounds. The dwarf shrub lands located on Mancos Shale soils that the Buckwheat species is confined to are sensitive to surface disturbance, especially when wet, and as a result are slow to recover. Habitat degradation and loss of function is expected where use is concentrated. Although no studies have documented a quantitative effect of grazing on Buckwheat, potential effects are of concern given the highly restricted habitat preferences and range of the species. Moreover, the distribution of this species is heavily concentrated in one occurrence in the Fairview South - Wacker Ranch area. This makes Buckwheat more vulnerable in general to negative influences than would a species having a more even distribution over the landscape. BLM livestock grazing is currently authorized over 70 percent of the Fairview South-Wacker Ranch occurrence. Taking

into consideration the impacts described above, the effects from the BLM grazing program to the species are considered significant and not discountable.

Of particular concern is the concentration of 90 percent of all known individual plants (250,000 of 278,600) in one occurrence at the Fairview South-Wacker Ranch. This skewed distribution makes the species especially vulnerable to deleterious effects of all kinds. Protecting outlying, small occurrences from negative influences is important to maintaining the species range and very likely its genetic diversity. Protecting the occurrence that is the center of distribution of the species is especially important given that in plants, larger populations are positively correlated with individual fitness and genetic diversity (Leimu et al., 2006 and references therein). This results in a larger species population that is more resilient to disturbance and environmental variation.

No Action Alternative – The no action alternative would be the least impacting to the endangered Buckwheat and its associated habitat. The proposed new surface disturbance and associated fragmentation would not occur. The other indirect effects described above would be expected to continue as OHV non-compliance activity would continue to present threats to the affected populations.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The project area was rated as “meeting Land Health Standards” at the time of the last evaluation in 2011 for both upland vegetation communities and for sensitive species. The design features and mitigation measures proposed if properly implemented would help maintain LHA findings.

WATER -- SURFACE (includes a finding on Public Land Health Standard 5)

Affected Environment:

Selenium

Selenium is a naturally occurring, soluble non-metal element found in the marine sediments of the Mancos Shale. Selenium can be easily mobilized by applying irrigation water to soils derived from Mancos Shale or from surface disturbing activities located on Mancos Shale, and delivered to nearby waterways by irrigation return flow, groundwater, or overland flow. Once in the waterways, selenium can move through the aquatic environment, bio-accumulate in organisms, and potentially increase to toxic levels (Lemly, 2002).

In 1997, the Colorado State Water Control Commission revised the chronic aquatic-life criteria for dissolved selenium downward from 17.0 µg/L to 4.6 µg/L. The Selenium Task Force was created soon after to address selenium issues. The group is comprised of private, local, state, and federal agencies including the BLM.

As required by the Clean Water Act and its 303(d) listing requirements, the Colorado Water Quality Control Division released the total maximum daily limits (TMDL) in 2009 for both the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Rivers and their tributaries. This project is within the contributing area covered by the TMDL. Remediation strategies are implemented in part by the Selenium

Task Force as well as the Selenium Management Program administered by the Bureau of Reclamation.

In 2009, the USFWS issued a Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) under the Endangered Species Act to address the recovery of endangered fish species. The PBO addresses the Bureau of Reclamation's Aspinall Unit operations as well as all other public and private uses in the Gunnison Basin. The primary requirements of the PBO are the re-operation of the Aspinall Unit and the implementation of a Selenium Management Program. The BLM is a signatory agency to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Reclamation, State of Colorado, and local irrigation companies to assist in the development and implementation of a long-range plan. In the MOU the BLM agreed to, "evaluate options to conform to a goal of no net new selenium loading from land exchanges, sales, and other actions involving public lands."

Salinity

Salts are another naturally occurring component of the Mancos Shale and are easily mobilized. The soluble salinity content of the Mancos Shale can range as high as 20%, but typical concentrations are closer to 6% (Schumm and Gregory, 1986). The Bureau of Reclamation has estimated that half of the present salt concentration in the Colorado River system is due to natural sources and half being contributed by human induced such as agriculture. The annual salt loading above the Imperial Dam on the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona is estimated to be 10 million tons with the Gunnison River Basin contributing about 1.1 million tons (Leib, 2008).

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act passed in 1974 and amended in 1984 directs the BLM to minimize salt contributions to the Colorado River system from BLM administered lands.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action – Water quality would be directly impacted by the disturbance of approximately 12.1 acres for building both road realignments. Some of the expected direct impacts from road building include surface compaction leading to decreases in infiltration and an increase in sediment transport through erosion processes from road surfaces.

Impacts from the Proposed Action would include loss of soil to surface erosion during heavy precipitation events. Runoff and erosion would occur due to building roads and alteration in ephemeral stream channels and flow paths. Using the Water Erosion Prediction Project tool (USDA WEPP, 2013) 3,965 feet of new proposed road was modeled at the Last Chance Road site. The model estimated 862 pounds of sediment would be generated from the Last Chance road prism, but only 128 pounds would be mobilized beyond 130 feet from the road annually. This sediment could be transported by overland flow and impact the surrounding area.

The model was also used to estimate runoff from 2,241 feet of new proposed road at the 2100 Road site. The model estimated the road would mobilize 649 pounds of sediment and 53 pounds would be transported beyond 130 feet from the road annually. The model used 30 years of climate data including 2,114 storm events.

In summary, there would be a total of 181 pounds more sediment produced after road construction annually at the 2100 and Last Chance Road sites as compared to the No Action Alternative with the existing 2-track road.

Design feature number 2 of the Proposed Action would help to maintain water quality and further reduce the probability of sediment transport beyond the ROW area by using magnesium chloride or asphalt on the road surface. This would reduce the pounds of sediment produced and prevent further impairing the water quality in nearby streams.

Cumulative Impacts – This action, when combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, would add to impacts from other activities on private and federal lands in the watershed, and would contribute to decreased soil health. The area analyzed for cumulative impacts included 225 acres surrounding the proposed road realignments. Other activities causing, or that could cause, impacts to soils on BLM lands in the area include grazing, other ROWs, seeping and leaky irrigation ditches, and recreation.

The entire 225 acres is included in the Selig canal allotment and is grazed by sheep. Several irrigation ditches bisect the area and seep through the soils mobilizing salt and selenium from the area. Recreation use in the area appears to be from local motorized use accessing the BLM from public roads.

The 12.1 acres of disturbance from this action represents 5% of the 225 acres. The lack of steep slopes and the addition of magnesium chloride or asphalt on the road bed would minimize the additional impact of this action to the cumulative impacts.

No Action Alternative – Wind and water erosion would continue at the Last Chance Road and 2100 Road sites. The model predicted that 189 pounds of sediment would be expected to be generated annually from the existing 2-track road.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: During 2000, a LHA was conducted (BLM, 2001). No nearby stream segments were available, but Peach Valley Creek 2.5 miles away was analyzed. Soil surface indicators are used as surrogates to determine the potential ratings for water bodies. Surrogate indicators include the amount of bare soil surface, live plant basal coverage, and the amount of plant litter on the soil surface. The results for Peach Valley Creek indicated it was meeting land health standards. More detailed information can be found in the Gunnison Gorge Land Health Assessment (BLM, 2001). Development of the project area would increase surface disturbance, increasing the potential for deterioration of vegetative health and decreased downstream water quality. Public Land Health Standard 1 would continue to be identified as “met” until further assessed.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: The following BLM personnel have contributed to and have reviewed this environmental assessment.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
Linda Reed (retired)	Realty Specialist	Project Lead
Jedd Sondergard	Hydrologist	Soils, Surface Water
Ken Holsinger	Biologist	Threatened and Endangered Species
Lynae Rogers	Range Conservationist	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Amanda Clements	Ecologist	Vegetation
Nick Szuch	Realty Specialist	Lands & Realty

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STIPULATIONS

Standard

1. The holder shall contact the authorized officer at least ninety (90) days prior to the anticipated start of road construction or maintenance activities. For emergencies, the holder will contact the BLM as soon as possible after maintenance activities. The authorized officer may require and schedule a meeting with the holder prior to the holder's commencing such construction or maintenance activities on the right-of-way (ROW). The BLM authorized representative is Barney Buria, Environmental Protection Specialist, who can be reached at the Uncompahgre Field Office, 2465 South Townsend, Montrose, Colorado 81401 or phone at (970) 240-5333. An alternate contact is Nick Szuch, Realty Specialist, Uncompahgre Field Office, (970) 240-5322.
2. The holder shall construct, operate and maintain the segment of the county road within this ROW in conformance with Delta County road standards. Road maintenance shall be performed to minimize erosion along the roadway and adjacent public land. Road maintenance shall include, but is not limited to, road blading, surfacing as necessary, constructing side ditches and maintenance of culverts and cattle guards. The holder may perform winter maintenance of the road, i.e. snowplowing, as deemed necessary.
3. Any cultural and/or paleontological 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 any decision as to proper mitigation measures will be made by the authorized officer after consulting with the holder.
4. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer, by telephone, 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 thirty (30) days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
5. Prior to termination of the ROW, the holder shall contact the authorized officer to arrange a joint inspection of the ROW. This inspection will be held to agree to an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan as necessary. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, or surface material, re-contouring, topsoil application, or seeding. The authorized officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

6. The holder shall comply with applicable State standards for public health and safety, environmental protection and siting, construction, operation and maintenance, if these State standards are more stringent than Federal standards for similar projects.
7. The holder shall comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated regarding toxic substances or hazardous materials. In any event, the holder shall comply with the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, as amended (15 U.S.C. 2601, et seq.) with regard to any toxic substances that are used, generated by or stored on the ROW or on facilities authorized under this ROW grant. (See 40 CFR, Part 702-799 and especially, provisions on polychlorinated biphenyls, 40 CFR 761.1-761.193.) Additionally, any release of toxic substances (leaks, spills, etc.) in excess of the reportable quantity established by 40 CFR, Part 117 shall be reported as required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, section 102b. A copy of any report required or requested by any federal agency of state government as a result of a reportable release or spill of any toxic substances shall be furnished to the authorized officer concurrent with the filing of the reports to the involved Federal agency of State government.
8. The authorized officer may suspend or terminate in whole, or in part, any construction or maintenance activities, when in his judgment, unforeseen conditions arise which result in the approved terms and conditions being inadequate to protect the public health and safety or to protect the environment.
9. All construction, operation and maintenance shall be within the authorized limits of the ROW granted herein.
10. No construction or routine maintenance activities shall be performed during periods when the soil is too wet to adequately support such equipment. If the equipment creates ruts in excess of four (4) inches deep, the soil shall be deemed too wet to adequately support the construction equipment. Emergency repairs to restore access are exempt; however, any damages to resources caused by emergency repairs during wet conditions will be repaired as directed by the authorized officer as soon as possible after the occurrence.
11. The holder shall disturb the minimum amount of soils and vegetation necessary for road construction, maintenance and operation activities. The holder shall maintain the road to provide drainage and minimize erosion. Drainage crossings and water bars will be constructed to adequately reduce erosion. Culverts will be installed if necessary to maintain drainage and will be a minimum diameter of 18 inches. The holder will re-contour disturbed areas outside of the roadway as necessary by grading to restore the area to approximately the original contour of the ground as directed by the authorized officer. Any excess and/or unsuitable materials will be disposed of as directed by the authorized officer.
12. The abandoned segments of the existing county roads will be reclaimed. All materials such as culverts, gravel, etc. will be removed from the public land. The abandoned roadways will be re-contoured, sloped and drained to match the surrounding area and reseeded.

13. Existing water and gas pipeline ROWs shall be avoided to the extent possible. If they cannot be avoided, caution will be taken to ensure no impacts to facilities or disruption of use occurs. Delta County will contact ROW holders as necessary to coordinate any activities that occur within or near their facilities. The BLM Realty Specialist may be contacted for a list of authorized holders and facilities.

Design Features

14. The four Buckwheat populations closest to the road realignments will have permanent fenced enclosures constructed around them utilizing sheep tight woven wire fence built to BLM standards as described below (see Figure 2).
 - a.
 - i. A 32 inch tall woven wire fence would be installed flush with the ground.
 - ii. Two barbed wires (12.5 gauge American made) would be installed above the woven wire fence. Spacing of the barbed wire would be 8 inches and not exceed 42 inches above the ground.
 - iii. Wooden H-braces would be used at the corners and be constructed of posts that meet or exceed 7 inches in diameter.

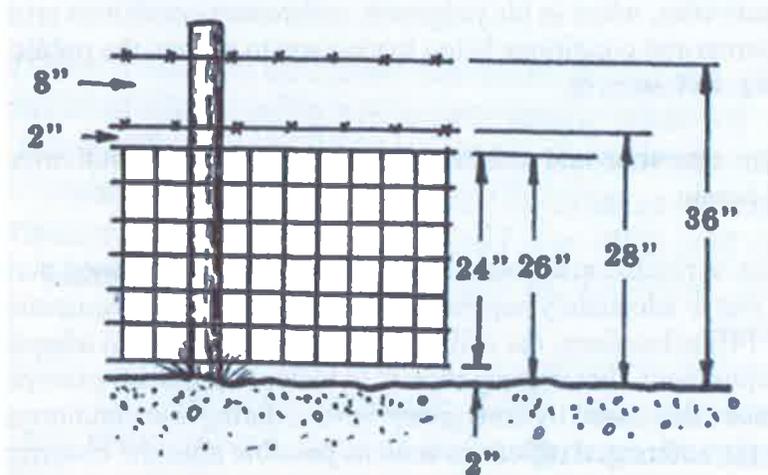


Figure 2: BLM Standard Sheep Fence Design

- b. The approximate location of the enclosures is depicted in Figure 3. The 2100 Road enclosure will be 2.25 acres in size and the Last Chance Road enclosure will be 1.35 acres in size. The enclosures have been designed to encompass suitable habitat to afford the populations an opportunity to expand in size in the absence of surface disturbing activities. Location decision criteria included proximity to the populations, comparable slope, aspect, associated plant species, and soil type. The Buckwheat populations within proximity to the proposed road realignments will have this final long-term fencing installed according to BLM specifications *prior* to commencing road realignment construction.
- c. A biological monitor will be required to be on site during major milestones of road realignment activities to assist in and ensure avoidance of Buckwheat in the area. These milestones include fence construction, initial grading, road base

- installation, guardrail/fencing, paving (if used), final erosion control installation, and final restoration, or any other instances where new work crews will be onsite.
- d. The road construction crew will be instructed on avoidance of the plants and minimization of unnecessary surface disturbance to habitat prior to commencing work by the onsite biological monitor.
 - e. The County will block off the two unauthorized, user-created two-track OHV routes associated with the Last Chance Road realignment (see Figure 3) with either a fence (constructed to BLM specifications as detailed above) or other appropriate barriers to stop further unauthorized route creation across Buckwheat habitat.
15. Erosion will be managed and mitigated according to Delta County Roadway Design and Construction Standards (Delta County, 2005). Where erosion control best management practices (BMP) fail or are compromised by heavy precipitation events or lack of effective vegetation establishment, the County will maintain those features until adequate vegetation is established to prevent such erosional events.
 16. The desired reclamation objectives are to achieve approximately 20% of the undisturbed surrounding area plant community cover and composition within ten years. Reclamation will be monitored by BLM personnel. Additional reclamation efforts may be required if these objectives are not met within the designated timeframe.
 17. Traffic control methods will be utilized to direct traffic during construction.
 18. Fugitive dust will be controlled by either constructing an asphalt pavement roadway or applying a magnesium chloride solution if the road has a gravel road bed. Road construction shall not commence without the proper resources in place to ensure immediate dust abatement measures.
 19. The County will notify adjoining landowners prior to beginning construction on either the Last Chance or the 2100 County Road projects.
 20. At intersections of the existing and new alignments, there may be traffic control concerns and the need for the County to post signs or flagmen in certain project areas.
 21. Any fueling or maintenance of vehicles or equipment will not be conducted within 100 feet of any live water, irrigation ditch/canal or drainage.
 22. The County and/or its contractors will disinfect heavy equipment, hand tools, and any other equipment using high-pressure sprayers to remove dirt, mud and foreign debris that may contain noxious weed seed before equipment is brought on-site.
 23. Application of herbicides on public land ROWs will conform to BLM policy including submission of a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) prior to application and a Pesticide Application Record (PAR) within 48 hours following application.

24. A pre-inventory of the area prior to the start of the project is required to determine if pre-treatment of noxious weeds is necessary.
25. The County shall be responsible for noxious weed control both inside and outside the limits of the ROW for weeds that can be demonstrated to have initially established within the ROW and have moved outside of the ROW due to failure to timely or effectively treat such spreading species. The County is responsible for consultation with the authorized officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods (within limits imposed in the grant stipulations) including pesticides/herbicides approved for use on BLM land. Refer to Uncompahgre Programmatic Weed Management Plan.
26. Herbicide use within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plant species will be restricted to the following 5 herbicides and associated rates as stated in current biological opinion for herbicide treatment (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

Active Ingredient	Buffer Width	Method(s) to Which Applied
Chlorsulfuron	<600 feet	Ground, ~ 1 oz./acre equal to 0.047 pounds acid equivalent/acre
	1,500 feet	Aerial
Clopyralid	<600 ft/Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, ≤16oz/ac equal to 0.37 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	0.5 mile	aerial
Glyphosate	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, ≤12oz/ac equal to 0.281 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, max rate; aerial ≤ 12 oz./acre.
Imazapic	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, typical or max rates
	Within Occupied Habitat	Aerial ≤ 6oz/ac equal to 0.093 pounds acid equivalent/acre
	900	Aerial, max rate
Metsulfuron Methyl	<600 ft	Ground ≤ 1.5oz/ac equal to 0.056 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	0.5 miles	Ground or aerial, max rate

27. All herbicides proposed for use within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plants with the exception of Glyphosate and Imazapic will be applied by spot application only (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
28. Mixing of herbicides and cleaning of equipment will not occur within occupied threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plant habitats (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
29. Chlorsulfuron and Metsulfuron Methyl will only be used for hoary cress (whitetop) control, currently not within occupied habitat but within 600 feet (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

30. Within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plants or populations, Imazpic will only be utilized at the maximum rate for fall treatment of Russian knapweed (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401**

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0029 EA

Project Name: **Realignment of the Last Chance and 2100 Roads**

Location: T. 51 N., R. 10 W., Section 10, Lot 1; Section 11, Lot 4;
Section 14, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, New Mexico Principal Meridian.

Applicant: Delta County

Background

The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office has completed Environment Assessment (EA) # DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0029, which analyses the effects of Delta County's proposal to realign two short segments of both Last Chance and 2100 Roads. The project is located approximately 6 miles north of Olathe and is within the planning area boundaries of the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA) but is actually outside of the GGNCA proper.

BLM posted the proposed project on the UFO NEPA register on June 13, 2011. BLM has received no comments.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0029 EA, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. The proposed action includes design features to reduce impacts and stipulations that will be included in the ROWs granted to Delta County.

Rationale

This FONSI is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

Context

Safety concerns on both roads need to be addressed due to several sharp curves where accidents continue to occur and also because of an expected increase in traffic resulting from the approval of several subdivisions the area. Both roads were acknowledged under RS-2477 Statute (circa 1866); however, a change in alignment of the existing roads requires issuing rights-of-way (ROWs) for these segments under the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

Intensity

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

Beneficial impacts would include safety improvements and a reduction of the number of vehicular accidents, and the preparation for expected increases in traffic and future improvements to the Delta County road system.

Adverse impacts due to the permanent loss of approximately 9.8 of additional acres of native saltbrush habitat, include: the loss of vegetation, soil by wind and water erosion, and a probable increase of invasive species.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.

The proposed project is expected to have beneficial public health and safety effects.

3) Unique Characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There are no known unique characteristics in the project areas.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The types of impacts to the human environment are well understood and typical for this type of ground disturbing project.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

There are no known effects on the human environment that are expected to be highly uncertain or that may involve unique or unknown risks.

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This decision is not precedent setting. The project involves typical ground disturbing activities associated with a right-of-way.

7) *Consideration of the action in relation to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

Other ROWs have been granted in proximity to these project areas, but it is not anticipated that cumulative impacts of any significance would occur. The limited scale of these two road realignments creates minimal individual effects, as well as minimal cumulative effects when added to the existing situation and other potential activities.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

No cultural or historic sites are expected to occur in the project areas to be affected by this decision. If any unidentified sites are discovered during implementation, they would be avoided or mitigated so that they would not be impacted.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.*

Clay-loving Buckwheat has several occurrences in the two project areas. Because of the Proposed Action's design features and proposed mitigation measures, BLM has determined that the Proposed Action "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the federally endangered Clay-loving Buckwheat (*Eriogonum pelinophilum*). The USFWS concurred with this finding on July 17, 2014.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The Proposed Action does not violate or threaten violation of any federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Determination

This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the information contained in the EA and my consideration of criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27). It is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant environmental impacts; 2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Gunnison Gorge NCA Resource Management Plan; and 3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

Authorized Official:


Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office

2-5-15
Date

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401**

Decision Record

(DOI-BLM-CO-S054-2011-0029 EA)

DECISION: It is my decision to issue two rights-of-way to Delta County for the Last Chance and 2100 road realignments as described in the proposed action of DOI-BLM-CO-S054-2011-0029 EA.

Standard Stipulations

1. The holder shall contact the authorized officer at least ninety (90) days prior to the anticipated start of road construction or maintenance activities. For emergencies, the holder will contact the BLM as soon as possible after maintenance activities. The authorized officer may require and schedule a meeting with the holder prior to the holder's commencing such construction or maintenance activities on the right-of-way (ROW). The BLM authorized representative is Barney Buria, Environmental Protection Specialist, who can be reached at the Uncompahgre Field Office, 2465 South Townsend, Montrose, Colorado 81401 or phone at (970) 240-5333. An alternate contact is Nick Szuch, Realty Specialist, Uncompahgre Field Office, (970) 240-5322.
2. The holder shall construct, operate and maintain the segment of the county road within this ROW in conformance with Delta County road standards. Road maintenance shall be performed to minimize erosion along the roadway and adjacent public land. Road maintenance shall include, but is not limited to, road blading, surfacing as necessary, constructing side ditches and maintenance of culverts and cattle guards. The holder may perform winter maintenance of the road, i.e. snowplowing, as deemed necessary.
3. Any cultural and/or paleontological 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 any decision as to proper mitigation measures will be made by the authorized officer after consulting with the holder.

4. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer, by telephone, 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 thirty (30) days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
5. Prior to termination of the ROW, the holder shall contact the authorized officer to arrange a joint inspection of the ROW. This inspection will be held to agree to an acceptable termination and rehabilitation plan as necessary. This plan shall include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, or surface material, re-contouring, topsoil application, or seeding. The authorized officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.
6. The holder shall comply with applicable State standards for public health and safety, environmental protection and siting, construction, operation and maintenance, if these State standards are more stringent than Federal standards for similar projects.
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8. The authorized officer may suspend or terminate in whole, or in part, any construction or maintenance activities, when in his judgment, unforeseen conditions arise which result in the approved terms and conditions being inadequate to protect the public health and safety or to protect the environment.
9. All construction, operation and maintenance shall be within the authorized limits of the ROW granted herein.
10. No construction or routine maintenance activities shall be performed during periods when the soil is too wet to adequately support such equipment. If the equipment creates ruts in excess of four (4) inches deep, the soil shall be deemed too wet to adequately support the construction equipment. Emergency repairs to restore access are exempt; however, any damages to resources caused by emergency repairs during wet conditions will be repaired as directed by the authorized officer as soon as possible after the occurrence.

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Design Features

14. The four Buckwheat populations closest to the road realignments will have permanent fenced exclosures constructed around them utilizing sheep tight woven wire fence built to BLM standards as described below (see Figure 2).
 - a.
 - i. A 32 inch tall woven wire fence would be installed flush with the ground.
 - ii. Two barbed wires (12.5 gauge American made) would be installed above the woven wire fence. Spacing of the barbed wire would be 8 inches and not exceed 42 inches above the ground.
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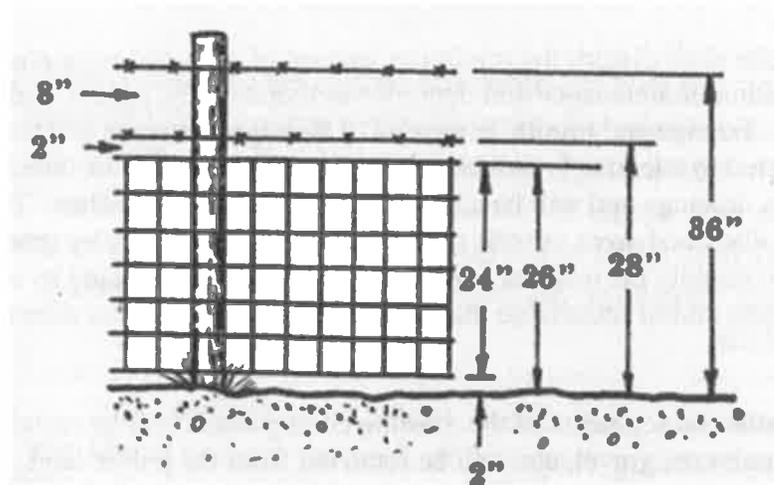


Figure 2: BLM Standard Sheep Fence Design

- b. The approximate location of the exclosures is depicted in Figure 3. The 2100 Road exclosure will be 2.25 acres in size and the Last Chance Road exclosure will be 1.35 acres in size. The exclosures have been designed to encompass suitable habitat to afford the populations an opportunity to expand in size in the absence of surface disturbing activities. Location decision criteria included proximity to the populations, comparable slope, aspect, associated plant species, and soil type. The Buckwheat populations within proximity to the proposed road realignments will have this final long-term fencing installed according to BLM specifications *prior* to commencing road realignment construction.
 - c. A biological monitor will be required to be on site during major milestones of road realignment activities to assist in and ensure avoidance of Buckwheat in the area. These milestones include fence construction, initial grading, road base installation, guardrail/fencing, paving (if used), final erosion control installation, and final restoration, or any other instances where new work crews will be onsite.
 - d. The road construction crew will be instructed on avoidance of the plants and minimization of unnecessary surface disturbance to habitat prior to commencing work by the onsite biological monitor.
 - e. The County will block off the two unauthorized, user-created two-track OHV routes associated with the Last Chance Road realignment (see Figure 3) with either a fence (constructed to BLM specifications as detailed above) or other appropriate barriers to stop further unauthorized route creation across Buckwheat habitat.
15. Erosion will be managed and mitigated according to Delta County Roadway Design and Construction Standards (Delta County, 2005). Where erosion control best management practices (BMP) fail or are compromised by heavy precipitation events or lack of effective vegetation establishment, the County will maintain those features until adequate vegetation is established to prevent such erosional events.
 16. The desired reclamation objectives are to achieve approximately 20% of the undisturbed surrounding area plant community cover and composition within ten years. Reclamation

will be monitored by BLM personnel. Additional reclamation efforts may be required if these objectives are not met within the designated timeframe.

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18. Fugitive dust will be controlled by either constructing an asphalt pavement roadway or applying a magnesium chloride solution if the road has a gravel road bed. Road construction shall not commence without the proper resources in place to ensure immediate dust abatement measures.
19. The County will notify adjoining landowners prior to beginning construction on either the Last Chance or the 2100 County Road projects.
20. At intersections of the existing and new alignments, there may be traffic control concerns and the need for the County to post signs or flagmen in certain project areas.
21. Any fueling or maintenance of vehicles or equipment will not be conducted within 100 feet of any live water, irrigation ditch/canal or drainage.
22. The County and/or its contractors will disinfect heavy equipment, hand tools, and any other equipment using high-pressure sprayers to remove dirt, mud and foreign debris that may contain noxious weed seed before equipment is brought on-site.
23. Application of herbicides on public land ROWs will conform to BLM policy including submission of a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) prior to application and a Pesticide Application Record (PAR) within 48 hours following application.
24. A pre-inventory of the area prior to the start of the project is required to determine if pre-treatment of noxious weeds is necessary.
25. The County shall be responsible for noxious weed control both inside and outside the limits of the ROW for weeds that can be demonstrated to have initially established within the ROW and have moved outside of the ROW due to failure to timely or effectively treat such spreading species. The County is responsible for consultation with the authorized officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods (within limits imposed in the grant stipulations) including pesticides/herbicides approved for use on BLM land. Refer to Uncompahgre Programmatic Weed Management Plan.
26. Herbicide use within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plant species will be restricted to the following 5 herbicides and associated rates as stated in current biological opinion for herbicide treatment (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

Active Ingredient	Buffer Width	Method(s) to Which Applied
Chlorsulfuron	<600 feet	Ground, ~ 1 oz./acre equal to 0.047 pounds acid equivalent/acre
	1,500 feet	Aerial
Clopyralid	<600 ft/Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, ≤16oz/ac equal to 0.37

		pounds acid equivalent/ac
	0.5 mile	aerial
Glyphosate	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, ≤12oz/ac equal to 0.281 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, max rate; aerial ≤ 12 oz./acre.
Imazapic	Within Occupied Habitat	Ground, typical or max rates
	Within Occupied Habitat	Aerial ≤ 6oz/ac equal to 0.093 pounds acid equivalent/acre
		9 Aerial, max rate
Metsulfuron Methyl	<600 ft	Ground ≤ 1.5oz/ac equal to 0.056 pounds acid equivalent/ac
	0.5 miles	Ground or aerial, max rate

27. All herbicides proposed for use within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plants with the exception of Glyphosate and Imazapic will be applied by spot application only (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
28. Mixing of herbicides and cleaning of equipment will not occur within occupied threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plant habitats (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
29. Chlorsulfuron and Metsulfuron Methyl will only be used for hoary cress (whitetop) control, currently not within occupied habitat but within 600 feet (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).
30. Within 600 feet of threatened, endangered, candidate and proposed plants or populations, Imazapic will only be utilized at the maximum rate for fall treatment of Russian knapweed (ES/GJ -6-C0-13-F -001).

MONITORING:

BLM staff will be on site at least once every week during construction and reclamation work.

RATIONALE:

This project will grant two rights-of-way to Delta County for the purposes of realigning short segments of both Last Chance and 2100 Roads.

COMPLIANCE WITH MAJOR LAWS:

The decision is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policy, including the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, National Historic Preservation Act.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICAN IMPACT:

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared, based on the information contained in the EA and my consideration of criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27). It is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant

environmental impacts; 2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan; and 3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

BLM posted the proposed project on the UFO NEPA register on June 13, 2011. BLM has received no comments.

APPEALS:

Within 30 days of receipt of this decision, you have the right of appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR 4.400. Appeal and stay procedures are outlined in Form CO-050-1842-1.

NAME OF PREPARER: Nick Szuch

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Jedd Sondergard



DATE 1/14/15

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL



Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office

DATE SIGNED 2-5-15

