

**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-S050-2012-0019 EA)

DECISION: It is my decision to implement the proposed action modified by including a combination of all the alternatives analyzed within the EA. These modifications include changing 9.3 miles to motorized single track routes analyzed in Alternative 2, decreasing 4WD-2WD motorized routes by 1.5 miles, decreasing Non-motorized & Non-Mechanized single track by 0.1 miles, and decreasing non-motorized single track routes by 16.8 miles.

- 1) Change the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) area designation on public lands within the Burn Canyon Travel Management Planning Area from Limited to Existing Routes to Limited to Designated Routes Yearlong or with Seasonal Restrictions.
- 2) Close all routes to motorized and mechanized modes of travel from December 1 to April 30 to prevent disturbance to wintering big game. The Field Manager may modify the time frames upon consultation with CPW:
 - if monitoring information indicates that plant seasonal cycles or animal use patterns are inconsistent with dates established, or
 - under mild winter conditions for the last 60 days of the closure (severity of the winter will be determined on the basis of snow depth, snow crusting, daily mean temperature, and whether the animals were concentrated on the crucial winter range during winter months).
- 3) Designate:
 - 17.2 miles of motorized routes (8.4 miles existing and 8.8 miles of proposed routes) consisting of:
 - 9.3 in the Motorized Single Track travel use category for motorcycles, bicycles, horseback riding, and hiking
 - 2.9 miles in ATV 2-Track travel use category for ATVs, motorcycles, and non-motorized travel;
 - 5.0 miles in 4WD-2WD travel use categories for motorized and non-motorized travel.
 - 16.3 miles of non-motorized routes (6 miles of existing and 10.3 miles of proposed routes) consisting of:
 - 2.9 miles in the Non-Motorized & Non-Mechanized, Single Track travel use category for hiking and horseback riding (approximately 1.3 miles of proposed route construction would occur);

- 2.6 miles in the Non-Motorized & Non-Mechanized, Single Track and Administrative Use category for hiking, horseback riding, and full-size administrative use;
 - 8.8 miles in the Non-Motorized Single Track travel use category for hiking, horseback riding, and mechanized use (approximately 24.6 miles of proposed route construction would occur).
 - 2.9 miles of routes in the Administrative Uses Only category; motorized or mechanized uses by the public would not be allowed.
 - 16.9 miles closed to all modes of travel except for authorized users.
- 4) Construct five Travel Management Support Facilities. Each area will include a hardened graveled parking area, vehicular control devices, and kiosks/informational signs. Trailhead facilities will be a maximum of one acre each and the staging area will be a maximum of three acres of disturbed surface. Facilities could also include restrooms, fencing, hitching rails, native landscape islands, erosion and drainage control devices, and hardened access trails. See the “Final Decision” map for locations of the facilities.
- 5) Apply the following management to this decision:
- No new routes, except for the proposed ones authorized by this Travel Management Plan (TMP), will be permitted to be constructed or established unless reviewed, analyzed and authorized by the BLM. See the final decision map identifying routes and restrictions. User created routes not identified in the Ridgway TMP will be closed upon discovery.
 - Construction of new routes identified in this travel management plan will be coordinated and administered by BLM.
 - Access onto Public Lands from Private Lands Motorized and mechanized travel onto public lands from adjacent private lands will be limited to the public access points and designated routes provided. User created or constructed hiking or horseback riding trails will not be allowed off private lands onto public lands.
 - Any administrative motorized vehicle or equipment use off authorized routes on BLM Public Lands will require prior notification and approval by the authorized BLM official. In the case of an emergency, contact will be made with the authorized BLM official within 72 hours following emergency entry.
 - The use of wheeled, muscle-powered game carts or wagons will be permitted off designated routes to retrieve big game only during Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) authorized big game and mountain lion hunting seasons. Motorized vehicles will not be permitted off designated routes to retrieve big game.
 - All public lands will be available for horseback riding and hiking on routes or cross-country.

- Advanced Technology - Any advanced technology in regards to motorized or mechanized vehicles will adhere to the specified route width restrictions mentioned within the Definitions of Travel Use Categories found in Appendix A of DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2012-0019 EA.
- Parking - In order to limit resource impacts and help prevent new user-created routes, users will be allowed to park motorized or mechanized vehicles, appropriate to mode of travel immediately adjacent and parallel to available BLM designated routes. Parking will be limited to one vehicle-width from the edge of the route. Users will be encouraged to park motorized or mechanized modes of travel in already disturbed areas where possible, consider safety and keep routes passable for other users.
- As directed in 43 CFR 3809.420 - Surface Management - (b)(9) Protection of survey monuments: to the extent practicable, all operators shall protect all survey monuments, witness corners, reference monuments, bearing trees and line trees against unnecessary or undue destruction, obliteration or damage. If, in the course of operations, any monuments, corners, or accessories are destroyed, obliterated, or damaged by such operations, the operator shall immediately report the matter to the authorized officer. The authorized officer shall prescribe, in writing, the requirements for the restoration or reestablishment of monuments, corners, bearing and line trees.
- The Public Land Survey conditions in some of these areas are categorized as High Risk according to the latest Geographic Coordinate Data Base (GCDB) inventory. Official records indicate GCDB (and thus GIS) reliabilities to be over 100 ft. When implementing the approved travel management system, the following items related to the protection of the Public Land Survey System will be evaluated by the BLM Cadastral Surveyor in coordination with the project manager:
 1. An effort should be made by a qualified individual to locate, and protect any original monuments that may exist in this planning area.
 2. Local research should be conducted to identify private survey records that apply to this area. Any private monuments found as a result should be protected.
 3. Closure of roads within the planning area near private lands should be determined prior to road closure to avoid closing roads on private land not part of the project.
- Animals must remain on a leash at all trailheads and under audible or physical control in all other areas.
- Maps, brochures, and educational material would be developed and made available for the public in print and on the internet.

- The use of motorized or mechanized modes of travel, including snow machines during the execution of a land use authorization or permit, such as rights-of-way maintenance or construction, would be subject to the terms and conditions of each individual authorization. Additional environmental documentation and analysis will be required in some cases for these authorizations.
- Any existing or future road use or maintenance agreements with the Montrose and San Miguel County will continue according to the terms and conditions of those agreements. Designated routes will be incorporated into BLM scheduled maintenance plan.

6) Apply the following design features to reduce or eliminate impacts to resources.

- To minimize impacts to migratory bird populations, it is recommended that no surface disturbing activities occur from May 15 through July 15. Project activities shall retain and avoid modifying identified cavity trees, snags, and perches in the planning area.
- Impacts to currently known eligible cultural properties will be avoided, minimized or mitigated in consultation with State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO), and stipulations contained in applicable existing laws and protocols will be applied to known Sacred Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties. Where National Register eligible sites, or where Sacred Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties are known to be in danger or are currently being impacted by travel activities, routes will be closed to travel if necessary until the appropriate mitigation has been implemented.
- Nothing within this document will abrogate or restrict any rights of access to members of the several Ute Tribes concerning access as granted under the provisions of the Brunot Treaty of 1874. Tribal members and others having recognized rights of access to sacred sites and/or traditional cultural properties and use areas will continue to maintain those rights as guaranteed.
- Routes, parking areas and other facilities to be constructed will be intensively inventoried for cultural resources and surveyed for special status plant/animal species and habitat prior to construction or use. Where existing cultural inventories are sufficient, standard discovery stipulations will apply.
- Surface disturbing activities would not occur within 100 meters of known BLM sensitive plant populations. This buffer zone can be reduced to 50 feet for route maintenance activities following review and approval by the agency biologist.
- Surveys for nesting raptors would be conducted during the nesting season prior to construction of proposed routes. Surface disturbing activities, surface occupancy, and adverse habitat modification shall not occur within ½ mile of active nests of special status raptor species, or ¼ mile of active nests of non-special status raptor species.

- Proposed routes would be designed and located such that routes are generally greater than 50 feet from canyon rim edges, with vegetation screening used to reduce impacts to wildlife. An occasional segment of a route could be brought to rim's edge for views, but should not be longer than 100 feet along the canyon rim.
- Reroutes of existing or relocations of proposed new routes needed for erosion or other protection would be limited to a corridor 250 feet wide on either side of the centerline of all designated routes. Resource values to be considered in potential route reroutes include canyon rims, sage brush parks, eligible and/or high density cultural sites, Colorado Parks and Wildlife big game winter range critical areas, soil erosion, and wildlife corridors within in canyons.
- Design, construction and maintenance work for routes will be subject to the conditions and guidelines that create sustainable, low maintenance routes and maintain quality recreation.
- Surface disturbance will be kept to a minimum in order to maintain sufficient vegetation to protect soils, and the number of stream crossings will be kept to a minimum, in order to reduce impacts to wetlands and riparian areas. Route improvements would be implemented at drainage crossings to reduce channel or wetland impacts.
- Closures, rehabilitation and/or re-vegetation of routes would include ripping with equipment, reseeding, planting vegetation, and/or constructing barriers approximately the first 100 feet of the route or more if determined necessary. Fences and gates would be installed where necessary to increase compliance. The appropriate clearances would be completed prior to implementation or other ground disturbance if necessary.
- During rehabilitation, seeding with a BLM-approved seed mix will occur where areas of compaction exceed 3 feet in width, and natural re-vegetation is unlikely to occur over the next 3 years. Seed will be scattered on the surface and raked in.
- Prepare and implement a weed management plan that identifies all weed infestations and concerns on all routes and an action plan to eliminate or reduce noxious weeds. Noxious weed educational materials will be placed at all staging areas. Staging areas will be kept free of noxious weeds.
- If necessary, as use increases, dust generated in localized areas and from specific uses, seasons, or events will be reduced by watering or treating routes during certain times with approved dust abatement chemicals, or installing obstacles or rerouting trails in certain locations in a safe manner to reduce speeds and resultant dust.
- Informational/Directional signs will be installed where needed throughout the planning area. This includes kiosks on entry routes as appropriate. Signing for designated routes will be implemented by BLM over time and as funding allows.

- All trailheads and routes will be appropriately signed with allowed uses and seasons of use. Because signs are at times vandalized or removed, the user is responsible for determining the correct mode of travel based on official maps. Official maps will be made available to the public.

7) Apply adaptive management - BLM can further restrict travel and use, by mode of transportation or season, on any route to protect resources (natural or other) or infrastructure from being impacted from vehicular use in the event of extreme winters, wet conditions, to reduce safety hazards, or in other unforeseeable situations, or to better manage and protect sensitive resources or other values, such as big game or nesting raptors. These actions can include emergency closures of routes, permanent or additional seasonal closures of routes, or relocation of routes. These actions would be taken following appropriate emergency closure or after appropriate site-specific NEPA analysis.

Over time, changes may need to be made to the approved and adopted Travel Management Plan in terms of adding, re-designating, relocating, or closing certain routes, maintenance needs, and seasonal or other use restrictions on routes. These changes would be documented using appropriate BLM Land Use Planning regulations and NEPA procedures.

Additional actions will occur in the future:

Public access will be pursued in the Burn Canyon Travel Management Planning area as opportunities arise.

BLM administrative functions related to a variety of natural resource management objectives (e.g., wildlife habitat and species monitoring and management, noxious weed eradication, resource enhancement and restoration, and fence repair) that could potentially require cross-country travel using motorized vehicles or equipment off designated routes will be addressed at the project level with appropriate project specific and site specific environmental documentation and assessment.

Applications for Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) will be considered, subject to the approved Travel Management Plan designated route system, the existing approved Resource Management Plan and Amendments, and appropriate environmental documentation and stipulations that will be developed during the processing of these applications.

BLM will develop and maintain partnerships with key stakeholders to assist with managing and implementing travel decisions.

The BLM, in cooperation with other agencies and organizations, will prepare and implement a public education program in a variety of formats to promote wise use on public land, and will include information regarding controlling noise levels while recreating on public lands. Colorado noise level standards pertaining to the operation of motor vehicles, including provisions in Colorado Senate Bill 08-063, and any pertinent regulations that would be

promulgated will be incorporated. Accurate maps and other information relevant to travel management for public land visitors as well as contacting visitors on-site by BLM staff, volunteers, and partners will be a part of this program.

MONITORING:

Implementation would consist of installing signing/informational kiosks, constructing new proposed routes, maintaining or rerouting existing designated routes, installing barriers where needed, installing staging areas/trailheads as designated in the plan, rehabbing closed routes mechanically or manually where identified, as well as other actions identified within the document under the sections: Management Common to All Alternatives, Management Common to Proposed Action and Alternatives 1 and 2, and the Proposed Action which are solely dependent on funding (internal or external) and specialists' capability to work with seasonal staff contractors, and volunteers. A monitoring schedule would be prepared that would include timeframes monitoring which are also solely dependent on funding (internal or external) and specialists' capability to work with seasonal staff, contractors and volunteers. All implementation and monitoring projects would require BLM oversight and administration.

Construction of new routes, facilities, installation of signs, and route maintenance would be coordinated and administered by BLM or a BLM approved contractor.

Monitoring projects would require BLM oversight and administration. Levels and types of uses, and natural resource conditions such as soil erosion, spread of noxious weeds, and impacts to vegetation, would be monitored. Monitoring data is used to assess resource conditions, identify resource conflicts, and determine if resource objectives including land health standards are being met and to periodically refine and update goals and objectives and specific management actions in a process known as adaptive management. Monitoring tools could include traffic counter data, motion activated cameras, on-site patrols, surveys, and analysis of use.

RATIONALE:

The management actions are intended to balance recreational demands with resource needs, planning goals, and compliance with Public Land Health Standards. It addresses the key issues identified from scoping and provides a route system which will meet the project area's management goals and objectives. The plan was developed with careful consideration of BLM travel management strategies and policies and subjected to a thorough analysis of potential impacts to the area's resources and the route system's effect on public land health standards. The plan also remains consistent with adjacent public land agencies (State of Colorado and United States Forest Service) regulations, policies, and management.

COMPLIANCE WITH MAJOR LAWS:

This decision is in compliance with the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (1985), as amended in 2009, and applicable laws, regulations and policy, including the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (P.L. 94-325); Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703-712); Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 (Clean Water Act), as amended (33 U.S.C. Chap. 26); The Wild and Scenic Act (WSRA) of 1968 (P.L. 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 *et seq*); Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended (P.L. 88-206); Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-629, 7 U.S.C. 2801 *et seq*); National Historic Preservation Act

of 1966, as amended (P.L. 89-665); Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (P.L. 86-253); Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (P.L. 96-95); and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-601).

This decision is in conformance with BLM policy and guidance, under which designation of roads and trails are considered implementation decisions.

1. BLM policy on Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) use of public land as covered under Executive Order 11644 and Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 8340 0-5), and
2. BLM Colorado guidance on *Comprehensive Travel Management Planning and OHV Designations* as defined under BLM Instruction Memoranda No. CO-2007-020 (2/12/2007) and No. WO-2008-014.

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 decision (Proposed Action modified with parts of Alternative 1 and 2 as well as the No Action) will not have significant environmental impacts; 2) the decision is in conformance with the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan, as amended; and 3) the Decision does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Bureau of Land Management Uncompahgre Field Office started the initial phase of the environmental assessment for the Norwood-Burn Canyon Recreation Route proposal in April 3 and May 4, 2012. During the scoping period, approximately 33 comments were received revealing several issues (included below) requiring attention in conjunction with the proposal of new routes. In order to address these issues, the decision was made to conduct a comprehensive travel management plan for the area. A second scoping comment period was initiated in August 20 to September 21, 2014. The public was notified through press releases, web site postings, and letters sent to approximately 93 individuals and groups who had expressed an interest in participating in the travel management planning effort. Some changes were made to the proposed action and route designations based on the comments received. This decision is based largely on the proposed action, but after considering public comment, also includes some routes analyzed in alternatives 1 and 2 as well as No Action.

APPEALS:

Within 30 days of this decision, you have the right of appeal to the Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR 4.400, and specifically, 43 CFR 4.410. Appeal and stay procedures are outlined in Form CO-1840-191. Appeals must be made in reference to specific route designations and other decisions made in this Decision Record.

NAME OF PREPARER: Julie Jackson

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Jedd Sondergard

DATE _____

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL _____



Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office

DATE SIGNED 11-14-14

ATTACHMENT: Final Decision Map for Route by Route Designations and locations of Travel Management Support Facilities.

