

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
White River Field Office  
220 E Market St  
Meeker, CO 81641**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**NUMBER:** DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0155-EA

**CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:** None

**PROJECT NAME:** Rangely Rock Crawling Park Addition

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** T1N R102W Sections 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, & 16 6<sup>th</sup> PM

**APPLICANT:** Rangely Rock Crawlers (RRC)

**ISSUES AND CONCERNS** (optional): The Rangely Rock Crawling Park has grown outside the original boundaries delineated in Environmental Assessment (EA) [CO-110-2005-218-EA](#). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Rangely Rock Crawling Association (RRCA) was completed in June 2006. The concern is that the MOU is too general and does not specifically address proper roles and responsibilities to create or remove routes within or outside of the park boundary for use. Restricting vehicular travel is a concern because new routes have been created both inside and outside of the original boundary. The creators of some of the additional trails are unknown and speculative. However, the RRCA would like to include them in the Park Boundary and use them both during and outside of events held annually.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:**

**Background/Introduction:** The Rangely Rock Crawling Park was analyzed in EA CO-110-2005-218 which identified an area south of Rangely for an off highway vehicle (OHV) rock crawling park. The park is overseen in cooperation with the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association and the BLM White River Field Office (WRFO). The association has elected board members that meet once a month except during the winter months. The Rock Crawlers host several rock crawling events under a Special Recreation Permit (SRP). New trails have been created both interior and exterior to the approved Rock Crawling Park boundary. Improved informational kiosks, parking and signing of the routes will improve the RRCA's and the WRFO's ability in management of the park and aid in identifying unauthorized route use.

**Proposed Action:** The RRCA received an OHV grant to upgrade the parking areas and picnic areas, provide better signage for routes, and place information kiosks. The RRCA are proposing to upgrade three parking areas (see locations below) with pit run gravel and pack it down with a

road grader. The two parking areas are shown in the attached map and are located in T1N R102W Section 9 (1.5 acres) and T1N R102W Section 12 (2 acres). The proposed picnic and parking area are located in T1N R102W Section 10 (2 acres). The picnic areas will contain permanent picnic tables and information kiosks that will identify authorized routes and the rules for operation within the park. The RRCA will accomplish the work themselves and coordinate with companies to get all materials. They would like to start working in July. The BLM will oversee the project areas.

Through misunderstanding of the current MOU, the RRCA have created some trails along the park boundary that the group and public rock crawlers have been utilizing. Once notified about the mistake, the RRCA were instructed on the appropriate action to take in order to obtain permission to utilize these routes. The RRCA also have identified some trails that have not been used but would like to include in the park. Other trails were created by an unknown source but the RRCA have signed them and would like to add them to the Rock Crawling Park. The RRCA is proposing to include these new routes and additional areas to expand the park (see attached map for locations).

**No Action Alternative:** Under the no action alternative, the trails that were created will be abandoned and reclaimed where necessary and the parking/picnic areas along with the informational kiosks will not be upgraded.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD:** No additional alternatives were proposed.

**PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION:** The purpose of the proposed action is to manage multiple uses on Public Lands in a manner that avoids, minimizes, reduces, or mitigates potential impacts to other resource values.

**Decision to be Made:** The BLM White River Field Office (WRFO) will need to decide whether to authorize the improvements at the three identified parking areas and the use of the new trails within the Rangely Rock Crawling Special Recreation Permit or to not authorize the improvements or use and request reclamation of the new trails.

**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The proposed action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

**Name of Plan:** White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

**Date Approved:** July 1, 1997

**Decision Number/Page:** 2-44

**Decision Language:** “Develop motorized and non-motorized trails (e.g. mountain bike, hiking, horseback, ATV, 4-wheel drive, snowmobile, etc.) as demand/needs dictate.”

## **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES**

**STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH:** In January 1997, Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

## **NATURAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **AIR QUALITY**

*Affected Environment:* The proposed action is located in rural northwest Colorado in the White River Basin, more than ten miles from special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. Overall air quality conditions in the White River Basin are likely to continue to be good for some time due to effective atmospheric dispersion and limited transport of air pollutants from outside the area. The White River Basin has been classified as either attainment or unclassified for all air pollutants (National Ambient Air Quality Standards and Colorado Ambient Air Quality Standards), and most of the area has been designated for the prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) Class II. Because the historic air quality in the White River Basin has been good, small changes in air quality may have noticeable localized effects, especially on visibility.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action includes the use of existing roads and trails for several events per year. Trails and roads are also open to public use during the rest of the year. If these trails do not have adequate drainage features they are likely to deteriorate more quickly and dramatically increase dust production during use. During events dust production is likely, especially when conditions are dry and/or windy.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The rock crawling events would still be permitted on the previously identified trails, but not on the new routes. The new routes would be obliterated by using construction equipment to remove compaction, build erosion control structures and barriers and to seed areas for reclamation. Dust production during construction or deconstruction would occur due to surface disturbance, but long-term impacts would not occur from these new trails.

*Mitigation:* See the Soils section for mitigation.

### **SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)**

*Affected Environment:* Portions of the new routes pass through areas with steep slopes. It is estimated that 1.29 acres of soils greater than 35 % slope would be impacted by off-road activities. Considering that a portion of the steep areas are in stable rocky areas, erosion rates from these areas would not likely to be significantly greater than surrounding areas.

**Soil Classifications within 30 Meters of the Project (greater than 1 Acre in size)**

<b>Soil Classification</b>	<b>Range Site Description</b>	<b>Acres Potentially Impacted</b>
Turley fine sandy loam, 3-8% slopes	Alkaline Slopes	16
Cliffdown-Cliffdown Variant complex, 5-65% slopes	Salt-desert Breaks	1
Kinnear fine landy loam, 1-5% slopes	Loamy Salt-desert	4
Badland	None	10
Nihill channery sandy loam, 5-50% slopes	Salt-desert Breaks	4
Torriorhents-RockOutcrop, complex, 15-90% slopes	Stoney Foothills	57
Rock outcrops	None	18
Turley fine sandy loam, 0-3% slopes	Alkaline Slopes	4

Biological Soil Crusts (BSCs), highly specialized communities of cyanobacteria, mosses, and lichen, can be found in the project area and along some of the new trails. BSCs are an important component of soil productivity and are the result of an association between soil particles and cyanobacteria, algae, microfungi, lichens and bryophytes which live within or on top of the uppermost soil horizons. Different succession processes favor the formation of these crusts and BSCs play critical ecological roles in these processes. Depending on the site, BSCs are a significant factor in stabilizing soils and reducing erosion and they often play a decisive role in the success of vegetation and retention and/or production of soil nutrients. BSCs are typically more abundant in some locations due to microclimate conditions that are the result of vegetation modifying the local environment by providing nutrients, moisture, reducing sunlight and protecting BSCs from livestock grazing, wind and/or water erosion.

BSCs are well adapted to severe growing conditions, but poorly adapted to compressional disturbances and/or removal. Full recovery of BSCs from disturbances is a slow process, particularly for mosses and lichens. Recovery of pre-disturbance crust thickness can take up to 50 years, and mosses and lichens can take up to 250 years to recover.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action includes the use of existing roads and trails for several events per year. This analysis looks at the use of only approved or previously approved routes during events and the dispersed public use of lands between events. Trails and roads are open to public use during the rest of the year. If these trails do not have adequate drainage features they are likely to deteriorate more quickly. The most dramatic impacts are likely to occur on trails in drainages and when the trail climbs out of the drainages to access the rocky trail areas. Due to the poor quality of soils it is likely that use of these areas would cause erosion. The use of the easy trails by spectators during events in 4 wheel drive vehicles is also likely to produce erosion alongside the approved trails for rock crawlers.

Holding events in this location and advertising events is likely to result in increased public use of these routes during non-event days. It is also likely that due to the events and advertising undisturbed areas off approved routes would likely see increased use between events. Impacts would occur from this increased use as described above.

Surface disturbance from trail use would remove or bury BSCs when the trail crosses areas with BSCs, and hence decrease soil nutrients, soil stability, and organic matter in the soil horizon. Recovery of these areas would only occur after use of trails ceases and would come through nearby sources of inoculums (viable source of biological soil components that can be transported to the site via water, air and/or animals).

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The rock crawling events could still be permitted on the previously identified trails, but not on the new routes. The new routes would be obliterated by using construction equipment to remove compaction, build erosion control structures and barriers and to seed areas for reclamation. Impacts from construction activities are likely to be localized and isolated to construction activities used to obliterate the trails. As reclamation is successful impacts would decrease overtime and approach background conditions.

*Mitigation:* All event activity shall cease when soils, road and trail surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless activities are otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer (AO).

After Rock Crawling events an assessment of trail conditions will be done by the BLM to identify areas of erosion on approved routes. The design of waterbars will be specified by the BLM when they are identified as needed to mitigate erosion. Minor construction such as the installation of waterbars to reduce surface runoff in these areas will be performed in a timely manner by the Rangely Rock Crawlers to reduce long-term impacts from trail use.

Spur routes and parallel routes will be clearly marked with signs to discourage travel to keep vehicles on approved routes.

Use of areas off the approved routes during events will be strongly discouraged. If use off approved routes during events is observed by the BLM, the RRC and/or the BLM will revegetate the areas by removing the compaction and seeding with an approved BLM seed mix at double the rate recommended for drill seeding.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils:* Even with mitigation this action could result in the loss of productivity of soils impacted by surface disturbing activities. Areas of soil impacts are likely to be localized and not lead to overall losses of soil productivity, also mitigation described above would allow for addressing erosion and therefore the activities described are not likely to result in a failure of Land Health Standards.

## **WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID**

*Affected Environment:* There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored, or disposed of at sites included in the project area.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Accidental releases associated with equipment failures, equipment maintenance and refueling could cause soil, surface water, and/or groundwater contamination.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated for the new trails however accidental releases associated with equipment failures, equipment maintenance and refueling could still occur on the currently approved routes.

*Mitigation:* The RRC recommend carrying absorbent materials in case an oil pan, transmission or fuel tank is ruptured during activities. Spills should be cleaned immediately and if quantities left in the environment are more than 5 gallons or if the spill results in soil staining the BLM will be notified to develop a mitigation plan.

## **WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND** (includes a finding on Standard 5)

*Affected Environment:* The project lies entirely within the White River Basin, with the White River located about 3 to 4 miles north. The water quality classification (CDPHE, 2010) of Tributaries to the White River (segment 22) is for Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation Primary, and Agriculture. The warm designation means the classification standards would be protective of aquatic life normally found in waters where the summer weekly average temperature frequently exceeds 20 °C. The Warm 2 designation means that it has been determined that these waters are not capable of sustaining a wide variety of warm water biota. These waters would also have standards that are protective from non-primary contact recreation and agriculture. This area is classified as Use Protected, which means that activities should not be permitted that would change the current water quality.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action includes the use of existing roads and trails for several events per year. This analysis looks at the use of only of the proposed and previously approved routes during events and the dispersed public use of trails and roads during the rest of the year. Potential impacts to the surface waters from vehicle use include increased runoff; erosion and sedimentation due to soil disturbance associated with construction and trail use activities. Surface disturbance from construction and trail use would increase wind and water erosion and change soil properties leading to increased runoff and rain splash erosion. The magnitude of the impacts to surface water resources would depend on the proximity of the disturbance to drainage channels, slope aspect and gradient, degree and area of soil disturbance, soil character, duration of construction activities, and the timely implementation and success/failure of mitigation measures

OHV use of the routes would increase the wear and erosion on trails. This occurs when the drainage features on the trail are inadequate and surface runoff is concentrated along the trail itself. The proposed action is likely to result in periodic instability and erosion in some areas. Erosion impacts would likely be greatest during rock crawling events as a result of the direct disturbance of soils including rutting and compaction. Increased surface runoff or concentrated flows during intense storms may cause rills and gullies to form in upland hillsides. Unstable soils results in increased sediment production off effected environments.

Eroded material from areas disturbed during trail use may be transported to stream channels where it may be stored for months or years in sediment deltas or along the banks on terraces. This sediment would then be transported to surface waters during storm events. In this area localized and intense storms typically result in flood events that transport sediment to surface waters. The amount of additional sediment that would reach drainages downstream of the project area depends on natural factors and the effectiveness of erosion control measures. Natural factors which determine the amounts sediment transported into creeks include overland flow; the texture of the eroded material; the amount and kind of ground cover; the slope shape, gradient, and length; and surface roughness.

The generally poor soils and steep slopes make these areas prone to producing sediment. Once the sediment is eroded from the site it is likely to be transported to ephemeral draws that are tributary to the White River. Although the proposed action is likely to increase sedimentation in these ephemeral drainages and add to the sediment load in the White River, it is unlikely that the amount of sediment would be measurable. Sediment would be transported during episodic events with sediment from the entire river basin and therefore hard to differentiate or measure.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The rock crawling events could still be permitted on the previously identified trails, but not on the new routes. The new routes would be obliterated by using construction equipment to remove compaction, build erosion control structures and barriers and to seed areas for reclamation. Impacts from construction activities are likely to be localized and isolated to construction activities to obliterate the trails. As reclamation is successful impacts would decrease overtime and approach background conditions.

*Mitigation:* See mitigation in the Soils section.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality:* It is unlikely that this project would result in an exceedence of state water quality standards.

## **WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)**

*Affected Environment:* The unnamed intermittent drainage immediately west of Coal Mine draw supports a number of riparian obligate species including: Nebraska sedge, bulrush, baltic rush, cattail and several riparian indicator species such as tamarisk, saltgrass and foxtail. These species are present at low densities for approximately 400 meters.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Increased traffic through the channel may potentially lead to channel degradation in the form of vegetation loss, rutting, and erosion (headcutting), particularly if heavy use occurs during those times when the channel contains water. Additionally, increased activity may lead to a higher incidence of the drainage being used as a travel corridor especially north (downstream) of the proposed crossing where tamarisk would not impede vehicle use.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action but more widespread (if unmanaged), resulting in a higher incidence of channel (riparian) degradation (see discussion in above section).

*Mitigation:* Should the channel crossing (longitude -108.814873/ latitude 40.06523) show indications of rutting or damage/destruction to riparian plant species associated with vehicular travel, the proponent would be responsible for stabilizing the channel bottom (likely in the form of rock/gravel) throughout the life of the project to ensure that future degradation to vegetation upstream and downstream of the channel crossing would not occur. Any method used for stabilization must be approved by the BLM.

The proponent will be responsible for deterring vehicular travel within the drainage north and south of the channel crossing throughout the life of the project. The method will be approved by the BLM prior to installation.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems:* The project area currently meets the land health standards for riparian zones. If left unmitigated, the proposed action has the potential to negatively influence riparian resources. As mitigated, the proposed actions should not detract from the continued meeting of land health standards.

#### **VEGETATION** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

*Affected Environment:* The project area is primarily a hillside bunchgrass and juniper woodland vegetation type. On some sites which are south facing, sheep grazing during the 1950-1960s and use of these areas as bed grounds has left the soils trodden and void of nutrients to the point of preventing vegetation growth. The hillside bunchgrass sites contain, sagebrush, shadscale, winterfat, Salina wildrye, beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, squirreltail, Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass and a variety of forb species. The juniper sites contain Utah juniper and are found on rock escarpments.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* It is expected that vegetation will be disturbed in association with vehicle use of the area. Roads are expected to widen, segments may be abandoned once they become unusable, which could lead to the establishment of new roads. Vegetation damage is expected to be confined to the project area. If vehicle travel is limited to proposed pre-existing routes and across non-range sites such as rock outcrops, it is expected that vegetation disturbance will be minimal.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action, except unmanaged areas may result in more wide spread impacts to the area.

*Mitigation:* Vehicle travel should be limited to existing routes. All routes must be signed and all vehicular travel associated with the Rock Crawling would be limited to BLM WRFO authorized routes only.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities* (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Much of the project area is occupied by cheatgrass, and invasive, annual species. Vegetation communities that are now occupied primarily by cheatgrass are not considered to be meeting standards for public land health. These areas have crossed a successional threshold which often requires expensive and laborious human intervention to reverse. The proposed action is not expected to contribute to any additional acres of vegetation community not meeting public land health standards.

## **INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

*Affected Environment:* There are a number of noxious weed species that occur within the project area, or are capable of moving into the project area and exploiting the habitat. Species of concern include: cheatgrass, halogeton, Russian Knapweed, spotted knapweed, yellow starthistle and diffuse knapweed. These species all have the capability, if introduced, to establish in disturbed soils and move into the adjacent plant communities. With the exception of halogeton, all of these species are difficult to control and if allowed to spread, are expensive to control.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Off-road vehicle travel on public land increases the opportunity for introduction of noxious weeds including species that have not been found in the area or have been found in small populations and treated. Since vehicle travel will occur on existing routes, or non-range sites such as rock outcrops, it is expected ground disturbance associated with off-road vehicle travel will be limited. There is opportunity for invasive, non-native species to establish where ground is disturbed in association with parking areas. With this alternative it is hoped that wide scale off-road vehicle use occurring on public lands would be decreased.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Off-road vehicle use is expected to occur at a similar or greater rate with the opportunity for noxious weed introduction and spread. There would be no additional disturbance associated with parking areas, however there would continue to be opportunity for invasion by non-native species within existing parking areas and along existing routes.

*Mitigation:* The following mitigation measure from CO-110-2005-218-EA shall remain applicable: The Town of Rangely or designee would be responsible for yearly monitoring of the project area to document the occurrence of noxious weed species. With the exception of cheatgrass and halogeton the permit holder is responsible for weed control in accordance with bureau policy and approvals by the BLM.

## **THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES** (includes a finding on Standard 4)

*Affected Environment:* There are no plant species listed, proposed, or candidate to the Endangered Species Act, or plants considered sensitive by the BLM, that are known to inhabit areas influenced by the proposed action.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action should have no influence on special status plant species or associated habitats.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The No Action Alternative should have no influence on special status plant species or associated habitats.

*Mitigation:* None.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered Species:* The proposed and no action alternatives should have no influence on populations or habitats of plants associated with the Endangered Species Act or BLM sensitive species and, as such, should have no influence on the status of applicable land health standards.

#### **THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE ANIMAL SPECIES** (includes a finding on Standard 4)

*Affected Environment:* There are no animals listed, proposed or candidate to the Endangered Species Act, or animals considered sensitive by the BLM, that are known to inhabit or derive important use from the project area.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action would have no conceivable influence on special status animal species.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The No Action Alternative would have no conceivable influence on special status species.

*Mitigation:* None.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered Species:* The proposed and no action alternative would have no effective influence on special status species or associated habitat and would, therefore, have no potential to influence the status of applicable land health standards.

#### **MIGRATORY BIRDS**

*Affected Environment:* The project area is largely comprised of juniper and rock dominated ridgelines. Bottomlands are a mix of Wyoming big sagebrush, Gardner saltbush and greasewood. Herbaceous groundcover, particularly in the bottoms, contains a strong cheatgrass component with some perennial expression.

There are a number of migratory birds that fulfill nesting functions in the project area's juniper woodlands and sagebrush communities from late May through early August including: gray vireo, black-throated gray warbler, loggerhead shrike, black-throated sparrow and sage sparrow. Those species identified as birds of conservation concern by the US Fish and Wildlife service include Brewer's sparrow and juniper titmouse. None of the species associated with these communities are narrowly restricted in abundance, distribution, or habitat preference.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Increased activity during the breeding season (e.g., vehicle traffic, noise levels, human presence) is likely to disrupt the nesting functions of migratory birds, especially in those instances where the nest site is in close proximity (~ 100 ft) to a travel corridor. Increased human presence may result in temporary displacement of birds and in some cases, complete nest abandonment and subsequent nest failure.

There is concern that although routes will be identified by BLM, use of non-developed routes (those not authorized by the BLM) may occur. This would result in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for migratory bird species.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action but more widespread (if unmanaged), resulting in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for migratory birds.

*Mitigation:* See mitigation regarding use of established trails in Terrestrial Wildlife section.

#### **WILDLIFE, AQUATIC** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

*Affected Environment:* There is no aquatic wildlife or habitat that has the potential to be influenced by this action. Privately owned sections of the White River, representing the nearest aquatic habitat, are separated from most of the project area by about 1.5 miles of ephemeral channel.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action would have no conceivable influence on aquatic wildlife or associated habitats.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no action authorized that would have any direct or indirect influence on aquatic wildlife or associated habitats.

*Mitigation:* None

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities* (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): The nearest BLM-administered reach is over two miles from the project area. Neither the proposed nor the no action alternative would have any reasonable potential to influence the function or condition of the White River or its aquatic habitat values.

#### **WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

*Affected Environment:* The project area is generally characterized by ridges dominated with submature Utah juniper and rock outcrops. The bottoms are comprised of Gardner saltbush

and Wyoming big sagebrush, with an herbaceous understory of scattered perennial grasses containing a heavy cheatgrass component. These lower elevation woodland and shrubland communities are categorized by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) as mule severe winter range - a specialized component of winter range that periodically supports virtually all an area's deer under the most severe winter conditions (i.e., extreme cold and heavy snowpack). These ranges typically sustain big game use from December through April.

The project area's juniper woodlands may support a variety of nesting raptors including red-tailed and the accipitrine hawks and long-eared owl. Both long-eared owls and red-tailed hawks have been found nesting within the project area in recent years (~5 years). One of the known nest locations is 33 meters off of a proposed trail. Rock outcrops located within and adjacent to the project area provide nesting habitat for cliff-dwelling species such as golden eagle, great-horned owl and red-tailed hawk. The cliff face abutting the western end of the project area has historically been occupied since the early 1980's by golden eagles, however no eagles have been observed in recent years.

Nongame mammals and birds using this area are typical and widely distributed in extensive like habitats across the Resource Area and northwest Colorado; there are no narrowly endemic or highly specialized species known to inhabit those lands potentially influenced by this action.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Increased activity (e.g., vehicle traffic, noise levels, human presence) is likely to disrupt the nesting functions of woodland and cliff-dwelling raptors, especially in those instances where the nest site is in close proximity (~100 ft) to the proposed travel corridor. Increased human presence may result in temporary displacement of birds and in some cases, complete nest abandonment and subsequent nest failure. It is unlikely that considerable vehicular use will occur during the winter months; however, increased activity during the critical winter time frame may result in the displacement of wintering big game and may preclude use of the area.

There is concern that although routes will be identified by BLM, use of non-developed routes (those not authorized by the BLM) may occur. This would result in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for woodland and cliff-dwelling raptors. Similarly, unmanaged use may result in a greater incidence of disturbance to wintering big game.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Impacts are expected to be similar to the proposed action but more widespread, resulting in a higher incidence of displacement/nest abandonment and reduction of available forage and nesting habitat for raptors. Unmanaged use of the area would likely result in a greater incidence of displacement of wintering mule deer and may preclude use of the area.

*Mitigation:* Surveys will be conducted annually or biannually by BLM wildlife staff. If an active nest is located in close proximity to a travel corridor and it is determined that high levels of activity may negatively influence nesting success, the RRC will receive a written notice requesting that all or portions of the impacted route(s) be temporarily avoided during the raptor

breeding season (February 1 through August 15) or until the young have fledged and left the area. Temporary closures notifications will be posted in kiosks by RRC members.

No group/event related activity will be allowed within the project area from January 1 through April 30 to minimize undue stress and displacement of wintering mule deer.

It is recommended that the project area be monitored to ensure that use of identified routes remains enforced. Should unauthorized trails/corridors become established, it will be the responsibility of the proponent (RRC) to eliminate access (by a BLM approved method) and deter any subsequent vehicle use throughout the life of the project.

*Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities* (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This project, as mitigated, would not jeopardize the viability of any animal population. It would have no measurable consequence on terrestrial habitat condition, utility, or function, nor have any discernible effect on animal abundance or distribution at any landscape scale. The public land health standard would thus be met.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

*Affected Environment:* The proposed new parking area, picnic areas, kiosks, information sign areas, and newly designated trails have been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Selle in prep. 2010, WRFO CRIR #s: 10-10-15 and 10-10-23). New inventories resulted in the recording of seven historic properties. These include the following sites: historic gas well and artifact scatter 5RB6602, potentially historic pedestrian or horseback bridge 5RB6603, and an historic can scatter 5RB6604. The inventories also located four isolated finds: tested chert cobble 5RB6605, historic can friction lid 5RB6651, potentially historic collapsed cairn 5RB6652, and fully deflated and presumably prehistoric fire cracked rock concentration 5RB6653. The three sites recorded have been determined Not Eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The four isolated finds are categorically ineligible for NRHP listing.

The proposed picnic area in the NW/SE/NE/SE of T1N R102W Section 10 was not inventoried during recent fieldwork because it had previously been inventoried (Hadden 2000, WRFO CRIR# 00-10-09). Neither the previous inventory cited above nor any other prior survey located historic properties potentially Eligible for NRHP listing in or near the current project area. Previously recorded prehistoric isolated find 5RB3089, categorically ineligible for NRHP listing, may be impacted by the proposed project.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action will not impact any known historic properties potentially Eligible for NRHP listing.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no potential impact to cultural resources under the no action alternative.

*Mitigation:* 1. The proponent is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing

historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the proponent is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the AO. Within five working days the AO will inform the proponent as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the NRHP
- the mitigation measures the proponent will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate

If the proponent wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the proponent will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the proponent will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, 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 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

## **PALEONTOLOGY**

*Affected Environment:* Most of the proposed picnic and parking areas are located on alluvial soil, Nihill Channery Sandy Loam, or Turley fine sandy loam, which are not generally considered fossil producing (Armstrong and Wolny 1989). A portion of the project area has been previously inventoried for fossils with no material noted (Bilbey and Hall 2006, Compliance Dated 5/23/2006)

The proposed new routes and some picnic or informational sign areas are located in what is generally mapped as the Mesa Verde Group (Tweto 1979) which the BLM, WRFO has classified as a Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 5 formation meaning it is known to produce scientifically important fossil resources (Armstrong and Wolny 1989). Most fossil resources encountered during recent fieldwork throughout the park were common invertebrates (e.g., shrimp or insect burrows and *Innoceramus* clam shells). A vertebrate fossil locality, 5RB6654, has been located adjacent to the proposed loop trail in the SW ¼ of T1N R102W Section 9. As the trail is already well established and as the locality occurs on a steep slope well above the trail, no new disturbance of the locality is likely to occur if mitigations limiting expansion of the trail are enacted.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* Excepting the aforementioned loop trail in T1N R102W Section 9, the proposed facilities and trails will not potentially impact any known fossil resources. The existing loop trail in Section 9 does not appear to currently

impact vertebrate fossil locality 5RB6654. However, any expansion of the trail or unauthorized fossil collection in the vicinity of the trail could harm scientifically valuable fossil specimens.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Disallowance and closure of existing, unapproved trails would result in no potential impact to paleontological resources. Continuing and unmitigated use of unapproved trails could harm scientifically valuable fossils.

*Mitigation:* 1. The proponent is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing paleontological sites, or for collecting fossils. If fossil materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the proponent is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the AO. Within five working days the AO will inform the proponent as to:

- whether the materials appear to be of noteworthy scientific interest
- the mitigation measures the proponent will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible)

If the proponent wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the proponent will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the proponent will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Participants in events sponsored by the RRC will be notified that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing or collecting vertebrate fossils on public lands. Should future monitoring of paleontological locality 5RB6654 determine that actions associated with the use of the aforementioned rock crawling trails have negatively impacted vertebrate fossil remains, further mitigations may apply. These mitigations will be developed by the WRFO in conjunction with the RRC and the BLM Regional Paleontologist.

3. The loop trails must not be expanded beyond their current boundaries. To prevent any potential negative effects to locality 5RB6654, the RRC may choose to relocate the southeastern side of this loop trail up to 50 feet to the northwest. If the RRC propose to shift the location of this trail portion, the WRFO will provide further assistance upon request to ensure avoidance of the locality.

#### **ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:**

No flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, exist within the area affected by the proposed action. There are also no known Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

**OTHER ELEMENTS:** For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Other Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, Not Brought Forward for Analysis	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Visual Resources			X
Fire Management		X	
Forest Management	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights		X	
Rangeland Management			
Wild Horses	X		
Realty Authorizations			X
Recreation			X
Access and Transportation			X
Geology and Minerals		X	
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X		
Wilderness	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X		
Cadastral	X		
Socio-Economics	X		
Law Enforcement	X		

## VISUAL RESOURCE

*Affected Environment:* The proposed action is within a Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class IV area. The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action is small in scale relative to the surrounding landscape and the casual observer would generally travel along the Rio Blanco County Road 2 and 23 corridors. The improvements located at the entrances into the Rock Crawling Park on both the east and west sides are all that will be visible. Therefore, any modifications will be unseen to the casual observer, and VRM Class IV objectives will be met.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Under this alternative the impacts would be similar to what is present in the proposed action only there would be some reclamation of trails.

*Mitigation:* None.

## RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

*Affected Environment:* The project area is within the Johnson-Trujillo grazing allotment. The following table shows the acreage of public land and Animal Unit Months (AUMs) within the grazing allotment.

PERMITTED GRAZING USE (PERMIT #0501446)					
	Allotment Name	Public Land Acreage	Livestock Active Use (AUMs)	Suspended Use (AUMs)**	Total Permitted Use (AUMs)
06338	Johnson Trujillo	20,757	2022	0	2022

The following chart shows the authorized grazing use for the Johnson-Trujillo allotment.

GRAZING SCHEDULE					
ALLOTMENT	NUMBER CLASS	BEGIN PERIOD	END PERIOD	%PL	AUMs
Johnson-Trujillo	2980 sheep	January 1	February 28	100	1156
Johnson-Trujillo	2980 sheep	March 1	April 14	100	882

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The project area is used by sheep and the associated damage to vegetation would be a loss of forage for livestock. If use of the project occurs while livestock are present it is expected that livestock will leave the immediate area which also makes additional forage unavailable. There is the opportunity for livestock within the project area to be hazed by off-road enthusiasts which could cause physical damage to sheep during escape from the area. There is an opportunity for interaction between livestock protection dogs which are used to guard sheep from predators and recreationists if use of the park occurs during the permitted livestock use period. Although there is expected to be a loss of forage, this loss is not expected to be such that the permitted use would be reduced.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Impacts associated with this alternative would be similar to the proposed action, off-road vehicle use of the Rangely Rock Crawl Park would continue.

*Mitigation:* If rock crawling events will occur within the time period authorized for livestock grazing, notify BLM as far in advance as possible to prevent conflict between livestock operations and recreationists.

## RECREATION

*Affected Environment:* The area of the proposed action is southwest of Rangely, CO in the area designated as the Rock Crawling Park. The area is currently being advertised for two annual organized events, one in May and September and the general public travels the area primarily during dry conditions.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The proposed action to increase the routes for the events located both interior and exterior of the park boundary will increase the recreation use of the area. Increases in recreational use will result in increases to administrative controls such as signage, law enforcement patrols and an increase in the probability of interaction between users. Increased usage of the area will also increase the possibilities that the public may travel off of the designated trails and create new unwanted trails that may result in some resource damage.

Improving the existing parking areas by graveling the surface, adding picnic tables and improving the kiosks plus adding another parking area in the middle of the Rock Crawling Park will also encourage use of the area. Improvements to the kiosks will allow for additional information to be disseminated, increasing the overall knowledge of the rules and expectations for the public who utilize the trails. Improved parking will centralize the organized groups to specified areas which in turn will centralize the bulk of the trash generated by the events.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* Increase in unmanaged recreation use is highly likely and may lead to increases in negative experiences and increased resource damages.

*Mitigation:* The RRC group will enter into a MOU outlining the roles and responsibilities of the RRC group and the WRFO for management of the park. Any additional improvement activities and new routes will be proposed to the BLM WRFO for consideration. Removable, non-permanent markers should be used to identify the location and routes of proposed new routes and improvements.

## **ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION**

*Affected Environment:* The area of the proposed action has restricted travel from October through April to existing roads and trails. After May 1 the area is open to cross-country travel until October. The area has been used for Rock Crawling organized events since 2006 with 2 events annually. Additional use of the area is by individuals traveling the routes in preparation of events or for recreational purposes.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* The routes identified in the proposed action will increase the area of authorized use for the RRC group's organized events and encourage the public to follow the existing routes outside of the established events. Increased routes will increase the recreational use of the area which may increase the possibility of off road travel to explore new routes and possible increase to resource damage. Parking area improvements will concentrate the recreationist to three primary developed locations. Improvements to the kiosks would improve the ability to display the designated routes and rules of use within the area.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* The routes proposed could still be utilized for recreation activities but would not be managed and additional resource damage may be incurred.

*Mitigation:* See the Recreation section.

## **REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS**

*Affected Environment:* The proposed action is located in an area with multiple linear rights-of-way (ROW) and oil and gas activity. Realty authorizations include natural gas pipelines, telephone lines, power lines, a bike path, and oil and gas well access roads.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:* As the area becomes publicized, existing ROW uses should be protected. Indiscriminate use would increase the possibility of negative impacts on utility lines and oil and gas facilities, as well as possible conflict between the bike trail, oil and gas traffic, and the rock crawlers. Designated routes that coexist with existing ROWs will be inspected and managed to the benefit of both users of the ROW. There should be appropriate management of the area.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:* There would be continued use of the area on an informal, unmanaged basis.

*Mitigation:* Route identification and signage must create protection by avoiding or buffering the existing ROW uses. Damages to ROW will be addressed and a proposal to repair the damage will be presented by the RRC Group to the BLM WRFO for consideration. All repairs will be conducted by RRC Group using BLM WRFO approved methods and materials.

**CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:** There is a large amount of oil and gas development in and around the proposed action. This development includes access roads, well pads, and pipelines. Without the implementation of the proposed action, continued unmanaged route creation is likely to occur. Contribution of either of the alternatives to the impacts from these existing activities/facilities (spread of noxious weeds, soil erosion, and impacts to water quality) would be minimal.

#### **REFERENCES CITED:**

- Armstrong, Harley J. and David G. Wolny  
1989 Paleontological Resources of Northwest Colorado: a Regional Analysis. Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction, Colorado.
- Bilbey, Sue Ann and Evan Hall  
2006 Paleontological Field Survey Report for the Rangely Rock Crawl Area on the Bureau of Land Management Properties in the Northeast ¼ of Township 1 North, Range 102 West Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Uinta Paleontological Associates, Inc., Vernal, Utah.
- Colorado Department Of Public Health And Environment  
2010 Colorado Department Of Public Health And Environment, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 37 Classifications and Numeric Standards For Lower Colorado River Basin, Effective June 30, 2010
- Hadden, Glade  
2000 Cultural Resource Inventory of the Proposed Rio Mesa RMR Govt. 10-1 and 10-2 Wells in the Johnson Draw Locality of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. White River Resource Area, Meeker, CO.

Selle, Michael

2010 Archaeological Inventory of the Proposed New Picnic Area and Parking Lot for Rangely Rock Crawlers In Rio Blanco County, Colorado. White River Resource Area, Meeker, CO.

Selle, Michael

2010 Class III Cultural Resources Inventory for Additional Trails in the Rangely Rock Crawling Park, Rio Blanco County, Colorado. White River Resource Area, Meeker, CO.

Tweto, Ogden

1979 Geologic Map of Colorado. United States Geologic Survey, Department of the Interior, Reston, Virginia.

**PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:** The proposed action was presented to, and reviewed by the WRFO interdisciplinary team on 04/01/2010.

Date

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Wastes (Hazardous or Solids), Water Quality (Surface and Ground), Hydrology and Water Rights, and Soils	8/6/2010
Jill Schulte	Botanist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species	5/24/2010
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources	9/23/2010
Tyrell Turner	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation , Rangeland Management	8/5/2010
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Wetlands and Riparian Zones	8/5/2010
Jim Michels	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation,	8/3/2010
Jim Michels	Forester /Fire / Fuels Technician	Fire Management, Forest Management	8/3/2010
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	7/9/2010
Stacey Burke	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations	7/10/2010
Jim Michels	Natural Resource Specialist / Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources	8/3/2010
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horse Management	6/29/2010

# **Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)**

## **DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0155-EA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE:** The environmental assessment and analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

**DECISION/RATIONALE:** It is my decision to approve the proposed action and grant the construction of the three parking/picnic areas and the use of the newly identified routes based on the mitigated measures as identified below as conditions of this approval.

### **MITIGATION MEASURES:**

1. All event activity shall cease when soils, road and trail surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless activities are otherwise approved by the Authorized Officer (AO).
2. After Rock Crawling events an assessment of trail conditions will be done by the BLM to identify areas of erosion on approved routes. The design of waterbars will be specified by the BLM when they are identified as needed to mitigate erosion. Minor construction such as the installation of waterbars to reduce surface runoff in these areas will be performed in a timely manner by the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association to reduce long-term impacts from trail use.
3. Spur routes and parallel routes will be clearly marked with signs to discourage travel to keep vehicles on approved routes.
4. Use of areas off the approved routes during events will be strongly discouraged. If use off approved routes during events is observed during the BLM assessment the RRC and/or the BLM will revegetate the areas by removing the compaction and seeding with an approved BLM seed mix at double the rate recommended for drill seeding.
5. The RRCA will carry absorbent materials in case an oil pan, transmission or fuel tank is ruptured during activities. Spills shall be cleaned immediately and if quantities left in the environment are more than 5 gallons or if the spill results in soil staining BLM will be notified to develop a mitigation plan.

6. Should the channel crossing (longitude -108.814873/ latitude 40.06523) show indications of rutting or damage/destruction to riparian plant species associated with vehicular travel, the proponent will be responsible for stabilizing the channel bottom (likely in the form of rock/gravel) throughout the life of the project to ensure that future degradation to vegetation upstream and downstream of the channel crossing would not occur. Any method used for stabilization must be approved by the BLM.
7. The proponent will be responsible for deterring vehicular travel within the drainage north and south of the channel crossing throughout the life of the project. The method will be approved by the BLM prior to installation.
8. Vehicle travel shall be limited to existing routes. All routes must be signed and all vehicular travel associated with Rock Crawling will be limited to BLM WRFO authorized routes only.
9. The following mitigation measure from CO-110-2005-218-EA shall remain applicable: The Town of Rangely or designee will be responsible for yearly monitoring of the project area to document the occurrence of noxious weed species. With the exception of cheatgrass and halogeton the permit holder is responsible for weed control in accordance with bureau policy and approvals by the BLM.
10. Surveys will be conducted annually or biannually by BLM wildlife staff. If an active nest is located in close proximity to a travel corridor and it is determined that high levels of activity may negatively influence nesting success, the RRCA will receive a written notice requesting that all or portions of the impacted route(s) be temporarily avoided during the raptor breeding season (February 1 through August 15) or until the young have fledged and left the area. Temporary closure notifications will be posted in kiosks by RRCA members.
11. No group/event related activity will be allowed within the project area from January 1 through April 30 to minimize undue stress and displacement of wintering mule deer.
12. It is recommended that the project area be monitored to ensure that use of identified routes remains enforced. Should unauthorized trails/corridors become established, it will be the responsibility of the proponent (RRC) to eliminate access (by a BLM approved method) and deter any subsequent vehicle use throughout the life of the project.
13. If rock crawling events will occur within the time period authorized for livestock grazing, notify BLM as far in advance as possible to prevent conflict between livestock operations and recreationists.
14. The RRC group will enter into a MOU outlining the roles and responsibilities of the RRC group and the WRFO for management of the park.
15. Any additional improvement activities and new routes will be proposed to the BLM WRFO for consideration. Removable, non-permanent markers shall be used to identify the location and routes of proposed new routes and improvements.

16. Route identification and signage must create protection by avoiding or buffering the existing ROW uses. Damages to ROW will be addressed and a proposal to repair the damage will be presented by the RRC Group to the BLM WRFO for consideration. All repairs will be conducted by RRC Group using BLM WRFO approved methods and materials.
17. The proponent is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the proponent is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the AO. Within five working days the AO will inform the proponent as to:
- whether the materials appear eligible for the NRHP
  - the mitigation measures the proponent will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
  - a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate
18. The proponent is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing paleontological sites, or for collecting fossils. If fossil materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the proponent is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the AO. Within five working days the AO will inform the proponent as to:
- whether the materials appear to be of noteworthy scientific interest
  - the mitigation measures the proponent will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not feasible)
- If the proponent wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the proponent will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the proponent will then be allowed to resume construction.
19. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, 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 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
20. Participants in events sponsored by the RRCA will be notified that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing or collecting vertebrate fossils on public lands. Should future monitoring of paleontological locality 5RB6654 determine that actions associated with

the use of the aforementioned rock crawling trails have negatively impacted vertebrate fossil remains, further mitigations will apply. These mitigations will be developed by the WRFO in conjunction with the RRCA and the BLM Regional Paleontologist.

21. The loop trails must not be expanded beyond their current boundaries. To prevent any potential negative effects to paleontological locality 5RB6654, the RRCA may choose to relocate the southeastern side of this loop trail up to 50 feet to the northwest. If the RRC propose to shift the location of this trail portion, the WRFO will provide further assistance upon request to ensure avoidance of the locality.

**COMPLIANCE/MONITORING:** Monitoring of will be conducted by both the Rangely Rock Crawling Group and the Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office after each event to ensure that mitigation measures and environmental standards are being met.

**NAME OF PREPARER:** James Michels

**NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR:** Lisa Belmonte and Kristin Bowen

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:**



Field Manager

**DATE SIGNED:**

11/02/10

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Memorandum of Understanding between the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association and the BLM White River Field Office.

Attachment 2: Maps of Rangely Rock Crawler Park Additions

**MEMORANDIUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
between the  
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
**WHITE RIVER FIELD OFFICE**  
and  
**The Rangely Rock Crawlers Association**

This agreement is entered into by the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, White River Field Office, hereafter referred to as WRFO, and the Rangely Rock Crawlers Association, hereafter referred to as RRCA.

**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this document is to provide a general framework of cooperation between the above parties in the management of the Rangely Rock Crawling Park area.

**II. AUTHORITY:**

Section 307 (b) (c) of the federal Land Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA); and the BLM National OHV Management Strategy

**III. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFITS:**

The WRFO has worked cooperatively with the RRCA to construct and maintain the Rangely Rock Crawling Park. It is in the mutual benefit of both the organizations that the trails be well managed and the impacts and benefits of the trail be monitored and documented. The BLM has the responsibility to manage public lands for multiple uses, including recreation. The RRCA is a non-profit club formed to enjoy recreational off highway vehicle (OHV) use and as an organization to ensure appropriate access to public lands.

In consideration of the above premise the parties agree as follows:

**IV. WRFO SHALL:**

1. Monitor and maintain the Rangely Rock Crawling Park area.
2. Use internal and external funding to manage the Rangely Rock Crawling Park area.
3. Provide signs, maps and patrols to educate and inform the public about the trails and the responsibilities of the public land visitors specific to this recreation opportunity.
4. Designate routes/trails that may be used for recreational OHV opportunities.
5. Identify areas with timing limitations, trails requiring repairs and areas closed to this type of OHV activity.
6. Perform required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on all requested new trails for Rock Crawling Park and/or events.
7. Provide copies of the completed NEPA analysis and explain mitigation measures identified in the FONSI.

8. Train members of the RRCA in the techniques of monitoring of the trail and associated impacts.
9. Recognize the mission and goals of the RRCA especially as it relates to safe and enjoyable use of public lands for OHV opportunities.
10. Supervise volunteer activities by RRCA in support of the Rangely Rock Crawling Park area.
11. Organize and facilitate an annual meeting with the RRCA to review the currency of the Memorandum of Understanding (example; review tasks, address questions, etc...), and to review the condition of the Rangely Rock Crawling Park.

## **V. RRCA SHALL:**

1. Assist the BLM with monitoring and visitor surveys, signing and other routine maintenance work, which includes but is not limited to; reclamation of unauthorized trails, erosion control measures, clean up, etc.
2. Organize volunteers to work with the public to educate and inform them about the routes/trails and special conditions of use.
3. Distribute maps, fliers and public information pieces to the public.
4. Keep accurate accounting of volunteer hours so as to be able to apply for challenge cost share funding.
5. Assist BLM in discouraging trail and route use when requested by BLM to minimize stress on wildlife or for other natural resource protection purposes.
6. Identify and report new unauthorized trails.
7. Identify new routes and trails for future events utilizing removable, nondestructive methods of marking (for example flagging the route, small signs, etc).
8. Operate all events on the designated routes/trail established by the BLM.
9. Operate all events within the established boundaries of the Rangely Rock Crawling Park.
10. Will notify the BLM of any archeological and paleontological sites upon discovery and follow direction given by the BLM to maintain the site integrity.
11. Apply mitigation measure identified by the BLM in the FONSI of current and new NEPA analysis.
12. Attend annual meeting to review the currency of the MOU and to review condition of the Rangely Rock Crawling Park.

## **VI. IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT:**

1. Either party may terminate this memorandum in part or in whole by providing 30 days written notice to the other party whenever it is determined that the other parties have materially failed to comply with the conditions of this memo.
2. This agreement terminates 5 years from the date of the last signature. It may be renewed prior to the termination date by mutual agreement of the parties.
3. No funds will be transferred between the parties as a result of this memo.
4. Each party shall comply with Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964, that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participation, be on the benefits of, or otherwise subject to discrimination under any program or activity for which the recipient receives Federal financial assistance and will immediately take any measures to effectuate this memo.

5. No part of this memo shall entitle the parties to any share or interest in the project or the right to use and enjoy the same under the existing regulations of the Bureau of Land Management.
6. This agreement may be revised as necessary by mutual written consent of all parties.

The parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the last day written below.

Bureau of Land Management White River Field Office:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Field Manager

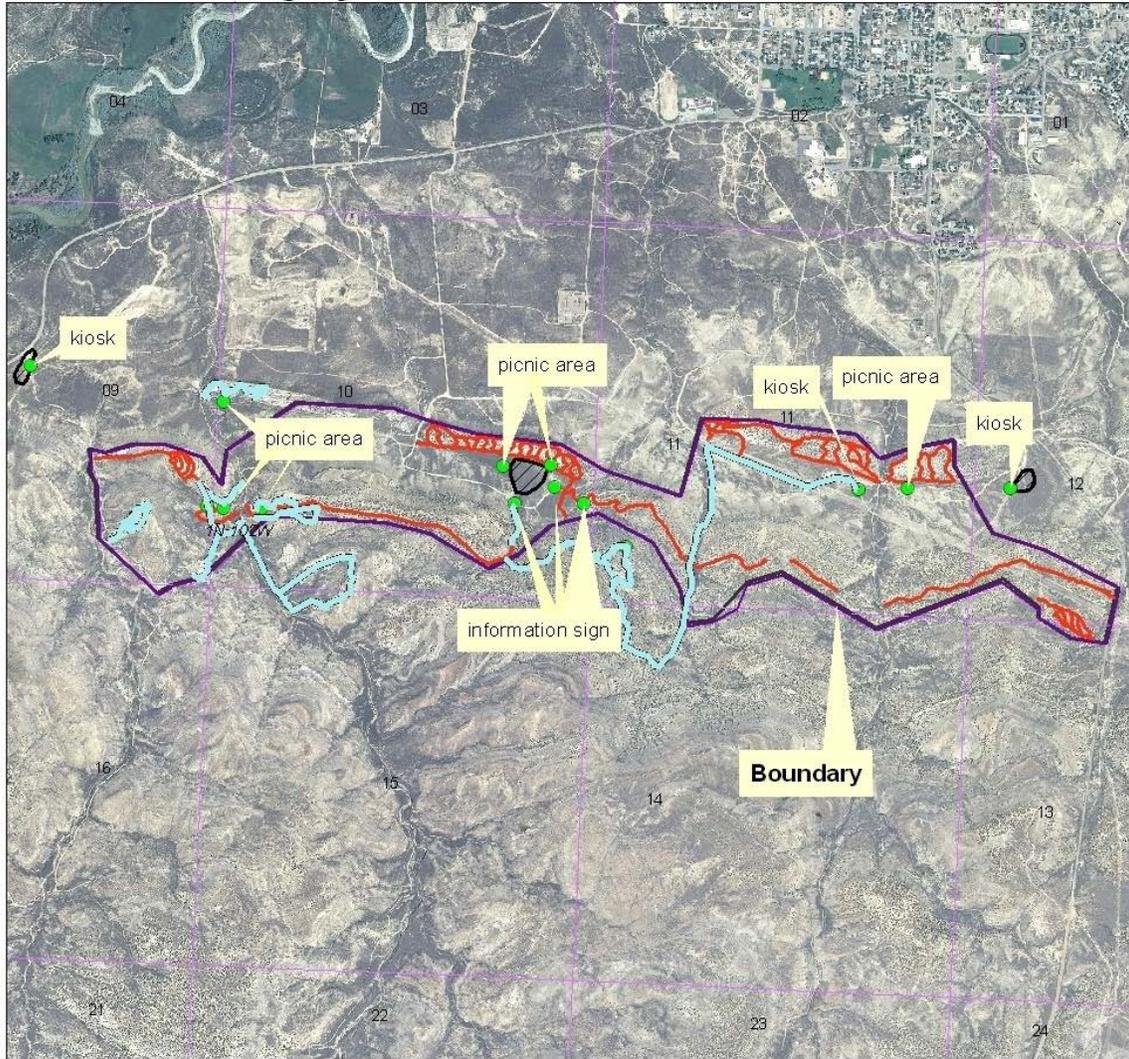
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Rangely Rock Crawlers Association:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0155-EA Rangely Rock Crawler Park Additions



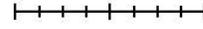
**T2N, R102W, 6th P.M.  
Sections 9, 10, 11, 12  
13, 14, 15, 16**



4/22/2010

- New Routes
- Original Routes
- Parking Area

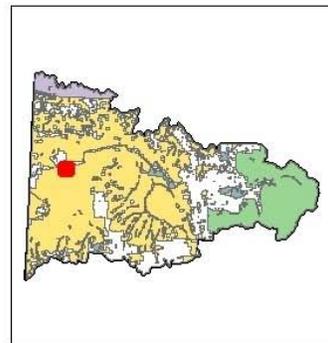
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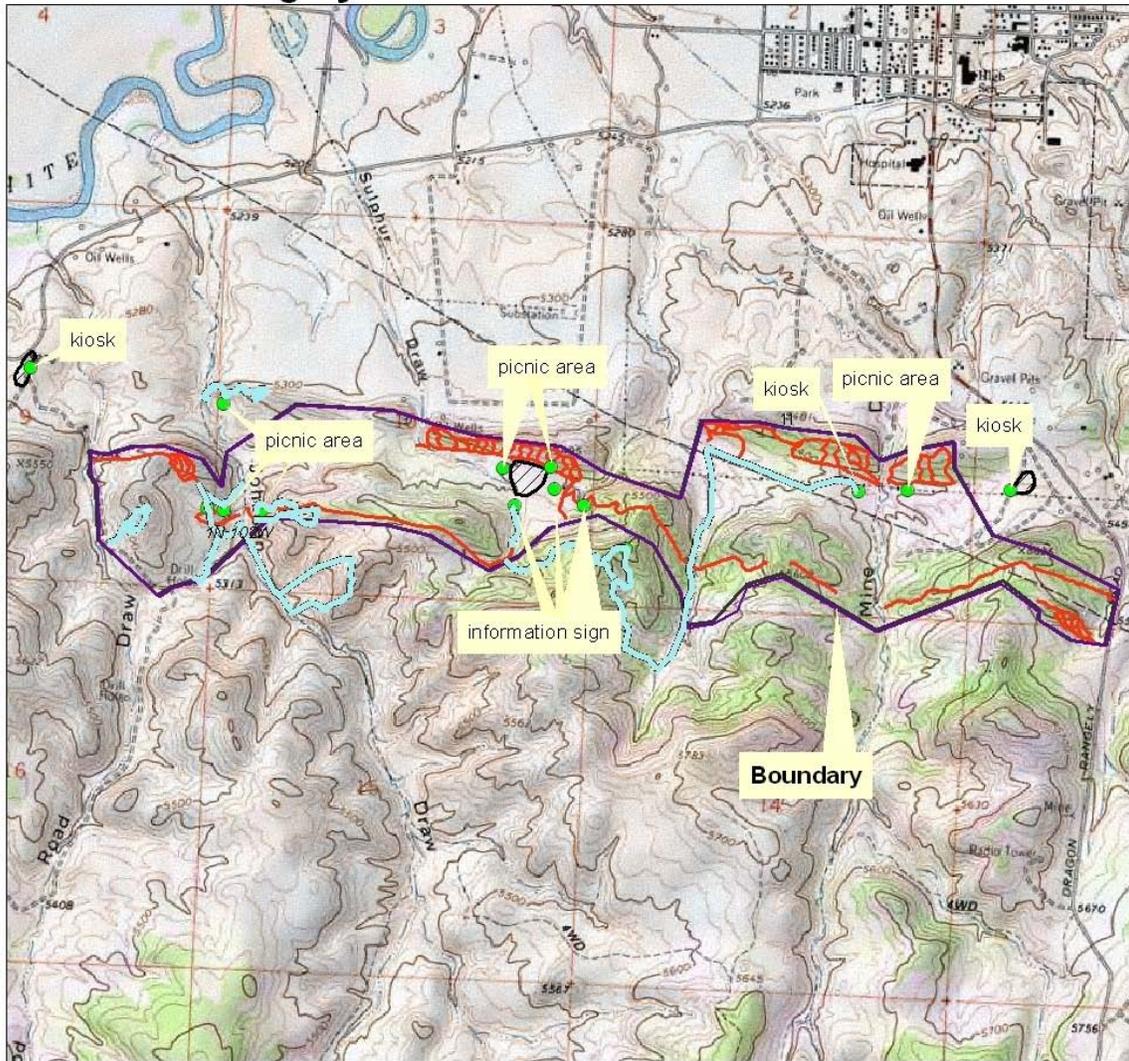
Sources:  
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.



**Disclaimer:**  
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# DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0155-EA Rangely Rock Crawler Park Additions



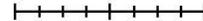
**T2N, R102W, 6th P.M.  
Sections 9, 10, 11, 12  
13, 14, 15, 16**



4/22/2010

- New Routes
- Original Routes
- Parking Area

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles



Sources:  
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

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