

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-N05-2014-0057-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: Special Recreation Permits within the WRFO Involving Special Areas, More than 14 Days Consecutive Use, and/or Staging Areas Greater than Three Acres

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: White River Field Office (WRFO)

BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION:

Special Recreation Permits

Under the authority of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), the BLM uses the recreation permitting system to satisfy recreational demand within allowable use levels in an equitable, safe, and enjoyable manner while minimizing adverse resource impacts and user conflicts. BLM recreation permits authorize the permittees' use of public lands and/or related waters for specified purposes. The use of public lands and/or related waters is a privilege subject to the terms and conditions of the permits.

From 2010 to 2014 the WRFO Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program has consisted of the issuance, renewal, monitoring, and administration of approximately 45-55 SRPs per year. The majority of these permits are for commercial big game hunting outfitting and guiding (33 of 52 permits in 2013). The next largest type of permit has been for commercial mountain lion hunting guiding and outfitting (13 of 52 permits in 2013). Other types of permits the WRFO has administered in the past five years include: commercial horse rental operations, commercial canoeing guided trips, competitive trail running races, rock crawling events, at-risk youth organized camping trips, and college outdoor adventure trips.

All commercial, competitive, and organized group special recreation permit (SRP) proposals are evaluated on a case by case basis, and their approval or disapproval will be at the discretion of the Authorized Officer (AO). At any time and without prior notice, the AO may choose not to issue permits for certain activities or use areas; decisions could be based on a variety of factors such as planning decisions, potential resource impacts, existing outfitters in the same area, overcrowding, and past poor performance. All SRPs are subject to site-specific review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permits must be in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Application procedures are in accordance with the most current national and state policy as identified in the BLM SRP Handbook H-8372-1. All SRP applicants and permittees are required to read, abide by, and provide signature on the most current version of BLM Colorado SRP Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations for All Permitted Activities (Attachment 1), the White River Field Office SRP Policy and Application Package (Attachment 2), and if applicable, the BLM Colorado Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Vehicle Events (Attachment 3). Additional stipulations may be added to each permit as the AO considers necessary.

NEPA Review

A decision to issue an SRP is a Federal action that is subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Categorical exclusions (CXs) are types of actions that the BLM has determined “do not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (individually or cumulatively), and which, therefore neither an EA nor an EIS is required” in order to comply with NEPA (BLM NEPA Handbook, page 17). The BLM NEPA Handbook directs that field offices should use categorical exclusions to comply with the NEPA when appropriate to improve processing times.

As per 516 DM 11.9, H1, the BLM may use a CX for “Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan. This CX cannot be used for commercial boating permits along Wild and Scenic Rivers. This CX cannot be used for the establishment or issuance of Special Recreation Permits for “Special Area” management (43 CFR 2932.5)”. “Special areas” (43 CFR 2932.5) include areas “for which BLM determines that the resources require special management and control measures for their protection” and in the WRFO include Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and the Canyon Pintado National Historic District (NHD).

The majority of existing SRPs in the WRFO, which are for commercial big game or mountain lion outfitting, do not always meet the criteria for this CX. Typically commercial operations for big game and mountain lion guided hunting span greater than 14 consecutive days and have been permitted in Special Areas. There is also potential for future events to require staging areas larger than 3 acres such as OHV events, concerts, or any other large competitive events or organized group events.

Preparing a programmatic EA for SRPs that do not meet the CX criteria rather than preparing case-by-case NEPA documents would allow the BLM to examine the impacts from these types of events at a landscape-level and respond appropriately. The WRFO did complete a SRP Programmatic EA in 2002 (CO-017-WR-070), however, an updated review is necessary to incorporate new information and be more responsive to new recreation trends. A programmatic EA also sets an expectation for applicants as to the type of standards they must meet to be considered as eligible for an event, thus making the permitting process more efficient for everyone. While site-specific NEPA analyses would be required for each permit, the WRFO would likely tier to the programmatic EA for some of the impacts analysis conducted at the programmatic level, thus reducing the costs and time needed to complete the NEPA process. The

BLM would only tier to the programmatic EA if the analysis is detailed enough for the type of action to show that BLM took the requisite hard look as required by the NEPA. It is expected that most future SRP proposals would have impacts similar to those disclosed in this EA, therefore facilitating preparation of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). The standard procedure for the WRFO is to have at least a staff biologist, a staff archeologist, and a staff ecologist review and provide input on all DNA proposals. This business practice is intended to reduce redundant analysis, improve response times for SRP applications, and improve operational efficiency.

PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION:

The purpose of this action is to provide for a broad spectrum and diversity of recreation opportunities by issuing SRPs to qualified applicants for commercial, competitive, and organized group activities that may occur within special areas, span more than 14 consecutive days, or impact more than 3 staging area acres while incorporating the necessary terms and conditions required to minimize impacts to other resources and resource uses. The proposed action would also provide a more updated and efficient process to meet public demands for commercial, competitive, organized group and event SRPs in the White River Field Office. SRPs are discretionary authorizations that provide a means to deliver recreational opportunities and experiences to the public that would otherwise not be able to be realized, manage visitor use, protect natural and cultural resources, and achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the RMP. The need for the Proposed Action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to respond to a request for a SRP. SRPs are required for commercial, competitive, and organized group activities under 43 CFR 2930.

Decision to be Made: The BLM will decide whether or not to issue SRPs for commercial uses, competitive events, and organized group use (under 43 CFR 2930) in special areas, for activities that span more than 14 consecutive days, that may impact more than 3 staging area acres. The BLM will also decide what terms, stipulations, or conditions would be necessary to reduce impacts to other resources and resource uses.

SCOPING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AND ISSUES:

Scoping: Scoping was the primary mechanism used by the BLM to initially identify issues. Internal scoping was initiated when the project was presented to the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 02/25/2014. External scoping was conducted by posting this project on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 03/06/2014. A meeting has held with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Meeker Office to discuss this EA. All recent SRP holders were sent a letter on February 26, 2014 indicating that this EA would be discussed at the annual WRFO SRP meeting on March 18, 2014. Seven SRP holders attended this meeting where this EA was discussed further. No issues or concerns were identified during these meetings.

Issues: No issues were identified during public scoping.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is to issue SRPs on public lands administered by the BLM WRFO for competitive, commercial, and organized group events that may occur within special areas, span more than 14 consecutive days, and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres. SRPs that meet one or more of these criteria could include big game and mountain lion guided hunts, motorized and non-motorized competitive events, drop camps or extended camping activities, and filming.

Competitive SRPs:

Competitive use means any organized, sanctioned, or structured use, event, or activity on public land in which two or more contestants compete and either of the following elements apply: participants register, enter, or complete an application for the event; or a predetermined course or area is designated. One or more individuals contesting an established record such as speed or endurance is also considered to be a competitive use. Competitive events may include, but are not limited to, mechanized (e.g., mountain biking), motorized (e.g., off-highway vehicles or OHVs), running or pedestrian events, equestrian or horseback riding events, or shooting events.

As a component of a competitive event, an SRP may also authorize vending. Vendor permits are temporary, short-term, non-exclusive, revocable authorizations to sell goods or services on public lands in conjunction with a recreation activity. If the permittee for the event will control the vending, the vending may be included in the SRP for the event. In this case, revenue from vending would be included in the permittee's gross receipts. Vendors may also apply to vend at recreation attraction sites, not in conjunction with an event. In either case, vending should directly support or enhance the recreation experience and be appropriate for the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class of the area. The authorized officer shall place stipulations on the SRP associated with vending to provide for the health and safety of visitors and protection of natural resources.

Competitive SRPs and vending may be proposed within special areas, span more than 14 consecutive days, and/or require more than 3 staging area acres.

Design Features Applicable to Competitive or Vending SRPs:

1. All competitive use of Public Lands will comply with the current version of the BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (Attachment 1).
2. Competitive events are subject to BLM Colorado Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Events (Attachment 3).
3. Competitive OHV events are not permissible within Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and the Moosehead Mountain Road Closure Area as these areas are closed to motorized vehicles per the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.
4. Competitive OHV events are not permissible from August 15 through November 30 in the Cow Creek and Timber Gulch/Hay Gulch areas (Figure 1) as these areas are closed to motorized vehicles per the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.

5. When working on lands administered by the BLM WRFO, notify Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) in the event of any fire. The reporting party will inform the dispatch center of fire location, size, status, smoke color, aspect, fuel type, and provide their contact information. The reporting party, or a representative of, should remain nearby, in a safe location, in order to make contact with incoming fire resources to expedite actions taken towards an appropriate management response. The applicant will not engage in any fire suppression activities outside the approved project area. Accidental ignitions will be suppressed by the applicant only if safety is not endangered and if the fire can be safely contained using hand tools and portable hand pumps. If chemical fire extinguishers are used the applicant must notify incoming fire resources on extinguisher type and the location of use. Natural ignitions caused by lightning will be managed by Federal fire personnel. The use of heavy equipment for fire suppression is prohibited, unless authorized by the Field Office Manager.
6. Grazing permittees will be notified by a BLM Rangeland Specialist if competitive events are authorized or proposed in their permitted grazing allotment.

Commercial SRPs:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) manages hunting and fishing on public lands and establishes appropriate seasons for various types of game hunts (muzzleloader, bow, etc.). Hunters may conduct licensed and/or recreational hunts on public land without specific permit or authorization from the BLM. However, when a hunt is guided and/or outfitted by a commercial enterprise, the BLM requires that the activity be authorized through a SRP (BLM Handbook H-2920-1). Within the WRFO, most commercial guiding activities are for big game and mountain lion.

Drop camps can be authorized as part of a big game commercial SRP. In some cases drop camps are authorized to support other recreational activities such as commercial backpacking trips. Drop camps are often, but not always, set up and used for periods greater than 14 consecutive days.

Commercial photography or filming can be authorized under the SRP guidelines. In the event that commercial filming or photography is permitted under another authorization (43 CFR 2920), that authorization may take precedence over and remove the need for a filming permit under the SRP regulations. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis for each Field Office. Filming permits may be issued in conjunction with any (Commercial, Competitive, Vending, Group, or Special Area) SRP.

Commercial SRPs may be proposed within special areas and span more than 14 consecutive days but it is unlikely that drop camps would impact more than 3 acres.

Design Features Applicable to Commercial or Filming SRPs:

1. All commercial use of Public Lands will comply with the current version of the BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (Attachment 1).

2. When working on lands administered by the BLM WRFO, notify Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) in the event of any fire. The reporting party will inform the dispatch center of fire location, size, status, smoke color, aspect, fuel type, and provide their contact information. The reporting party, or a representative of, should remain nearby, in a safe location, in order to make contact with incoming fire resources to expedite actions taken towards an appropriate management response. The applicant will not engage in any fire suppression activities outside the approved project area. Accidental ignitions will be suppressed by the applicant only if safety is not endangered and if the fire can be safely contained using hand tools and portable hand pumps. If chemical fire extinguishers are used the applicant must notify incoming fire resources on extinguisher type and the location of use. Natural ignitions caused by lightning will be managed by Federal fire personnel. The use of heavy equipment for fire suppression is prohibited, unless authorized by the Field Office Manager.
3. Grazing permittees will be notified by a BLM Rangeland Specialist if commercial SRPs or filming permits are authorized or proposed in their permitted grazing allotment.

Organized Group Event SRPs:

Any organized or structured group uses or events or activities occurring on Public Lands where "special management" is needed will require an individual SRP, including insurance and appropriate use fees (and if deemed necessary additional cost recovery charges). Special management is where resource conditions, use, health and safety concerns or other factors that are not casual in nature require specific actions or manpower to maintain resource objectives. Examples of uses which might require a SRP include: large civic club events, large private organization functions, concerts, large scout gatherings, black powder rendezvous, target shooting events, etc.

Design Features Applicable to Organized Group Event SRPs:

1. All Organized Group use of Public Lands will comply with the current version of the BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (Attachment 1).
2. When working on lands administered by the BLM WRFO, notify Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) in the event of any fire. The reporting party will inform the dispatch center of fire location, size, status, smoke color, aspect, fuel type, and provide their contact information. The reporting party, or a representative of, should remain nearby, in a safe location, in order to make contact with incoming fire resources to expedite actions taken towards an appropriate management response. The applicant will not engage in any fire suppression activities outside the approved project area. Accidental ignitions will be suppressed by the applicant only if safety is not endangered and if the fire can be safely contained using hand tools and portable hand pumps. If chemical fire extinguishers are used the applicant must notify incoming fire resources on extinguisher type and the location of use. Natural ignitions caused by lightning

will be managed by Federal fire personnel. The use of heavy equipment for fire suppression is prohibited, unless authorized by the Field Office Manager.

3. Grazing permittees will be notified by a BLM Rangeland Specialist if Organized Group Events SRPs are authorized or proposed in their permitted grazing allotment.

No Action Alternative:

The BLM would not issue SRP permits in special areas or for activities that span 14 consecutive days and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres. SRPs could still be considered individually through a stand-alone NEPA analysis (i.e., most likely an environmental assessment). It is possible that applications would be delayed or even denied if the SRP application could not be processed under CX 516 DM 11.9, H1.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None.

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 (White River ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Page 2-43

Decision Language: *“Special recreation permits (SRPs) will be issued to qualified guides and outfitters based on need and demand for services. Use limits or allocations will be made based on services provided, prior use history, responsiveness, and proven responsibility of applicants. Allocations may also be used to resolve conflicts, protect resources, or reduce impacts to resources, clients, and other public land users. Commercial operations would be encouraged to diversify the services and opportunities offered on the public lands. Permits would be issued for competitive events and other services as required.”*

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Standards for Public Land Health: In January 1997, the Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, special status 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 (EA). These findings are located in specific elements listed below.

Cumulative Effects Analysis Assumptions: Cumulative effects are defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.7) as "...the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions." Table 1 lists the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the area that might be affected by the Proposed Action; for this project the area considered was the WRFO. However, the geographic scope used for analysis may vary for each cumulative effects issue and is described in the Affected Environment section for each resource.

Table 1. Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Action Description	STATUS		
	Past	Present	Future
Livestock Grazing	X	X	X
Wild Horse Gathers	X	X	X
Recreation	X	X	X
Invasive Weed Inventory and Treatments	X	X	X
Range Improvement Projects : Water Developments Fences & Cattleguards	X	X	X
Wildfire and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation	X	X	X
Wind Energy Met Towers			X
Oil and Gas Development: Well Pads Access Roads Pipelines Gas Plants Facilities	X	X	X
Power Lines	X	X	X
Oil Shale	X	X	X
Seismic	X	X	X
Vegetation Treatments	X	X	X

Affected Resources:

The CEQ Regulations state that NEPA documents "must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail" (40 CFR 1500.1(b)). While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues raised warrant analysis in an environmental assessment (EA). Issues will be analyzed if: 1) an analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) if the issue is associated with a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact, or where analysis is necessary to determine the significance of the impacts. Table 2 lists the resources considered and the determination as to whether they require additional analysis.

Table 2. Resources and Determination of Need for Further Analysis

Determination ¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
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Determination¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
Physical Resources		
PI	Air Quality	See discussion below.
NI	Geology and Minerals	SRPs as described in the Proposed Action would have minimal impacts to the geologic and mineral resources.
PI	Soil Resources*	See discussion below.
NI	Surface and Ground Water Quality*	See discussion below.
Biological Resources		
PI	Wetlands and Riparian Zones*	See discussion below.
PI	Vegetation*	See discussion below.
NI	Invasive, Non-native Species	See discussion below.
PI	Special Status Animal Species*	See discussion below.
PI	Special Status Plant Species*	See discussion below.
PI	Migratory Birds	See discussion below.
PI	Aquatic Wildlife*	Impacts to aquatic wildlife would be similar to those discussed in both the Wetlands/Riparian Zones and Special Status Animal Species (aquatic) sections.
PI	Terrestrial Wildlife*	See discussion below.
PI	Wild Horses	See discussion below.
Heritage Resources and the Human Environment		
PI	Cultural Resources	See discussion below.
PI	Paleontological Resources	See discussion below.
PI	Native American Religious Concerns	See discussion below.
NI	Visual Resources	Activities permitted by the Proposed Action would be temporary in nature and may cause very short term and minimal visual impacts.
NI	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	Based on the criteria identified in the Design Features of the Proposed Action, there are stipulations designed to prevent impacts from hazardous or solid wastes that all SRP holders must agree to and sign off on.
NI	Fire Management	The Proposed Action would have little effect on fire management within the WRFO. All activities will be short term and have little to no impacts on the management and response to wildfires.
NI	Social and Economic Conditions	Implementing the Proposed Action facilitates a more efficient permitting process but should not affect the quantity and/or types of permits proposed and issued overall. Therefore the Proposed Action is not expected to impact Social and Economic Conditions.

Determination ¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
NP	Environmental Justice	According to the Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income populations within the WRFO.
NI	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	Activities permitted by the Proposed Action would be temporary in nature and are not expected to cause any long term impacts to wilderness characteristics in areas that have been identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.
Resource Uses		
NI	Forest Management	The Proposed Action would have little effect on woodlands within the WRFO. The greatest impact would come from incidental harvest of firewood. However, if activities anticipate removal of trees then those trees must be purchased from the BLM.
PI	Rangeland Management	See discussion below.
NI	Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights	All activities will be short-term and not result in any structural changes to floodplains or hydrology. No water use that would impact water rights is proposed.
NI	Realty Authorizations	Activities permitted by the Proposed Action would be temporary and would be evaluated on a case-by case basis, thus there would be minimal impacts to realty authorizations.
PI	Recreation	See discussion below.
PI	Access and Transportation	See discussion below.
NP	Prime and Unique Farmlands	There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands within the project area.
Special Designations		
PI	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	See discussion below
PI	Wilderness	See discussion below.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers in the WRFO.
NI	Scenic Byways	Activities permitted by the Proposed Action would be temporary in nature and are not expected to cause any impacts to Scenic Byways.

¹ NP = Not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives. NI = Present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required. PI = Present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA.

* Public Land Health Standard

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The White River Field Office is an attainment area for national and state air quality standards. The attainment designation means that no violations of ambient air quality standards have been documented in the area (EPA 2013). Non-attainment areas are designated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as having air pollution levels that persistently exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) or Colorado Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). General conformity regulations require that federal activities do not cause or contribute to a new violation of NAAQS; that actions do not cause additional or

worsen existing violations of the NAAQS; and that attainment of these standards is not delayed by federal actions in non-attainment areas.

The Proposed Action is within the Western Counties Monitoring Region of Colorado (APCD 2010). Local air quality parameters including particulates and ozone are measured at monitoring sites located at Meeker, Rangely, and Dinosaur and near the Flat Tops Wilderness Area. The closest location for an Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) site is near the Flat Tops Wilderness, northeast of the Project Area. IMPROVE sites measure visibility impairment from air borne particles.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The Proposed Action would result in short-term impacts on air quality during competitive events and longer use of drop-camps. Competitive events that involve OHVs would likely have the greatest direct impacts due to emissions from engines and dust generation as compared to non-OHV competitive events. Transportation and parking at staging areas will also generate emissions from vehicles and generate airborne dust.

Drop camps may result in emissions from wood, gas, or coal burned to heat and cook with. Winter inversions may make this smoke visible, but due to the few camps and relatively short use, no impacts on regional air quality are likely.

Increases in the following criteria pollutants would occur due to combustion of fossil fuels from these activities: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and ozone (a secondary pollutant formed photo chemically from volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x)).

Particulate matter or dust is made up of a number of components, including acidic aerosols (such as nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, soil or dust particles, and allergens (such as fragments of pollen or mold spores). Dust production is most likely during large competitive events when conditions are dry and/or windy. Fine particles (less than 2.5 μm) are efficient in scattering and absorbing light and are the major contributor to visibility problems. The effects of particulates include visibility degradation, climate change, vegetation damage and human health impacts.

Even with these increased pollutants the Proposed Action is unlikely to result in an exceedance of NAAQS or CAAQS, and is it likely to comply with applicable PSD increments and other significant impact thresholds.

Cumulative Effects: Air quality in Region 11 (Western slope of Colorado) is affected by both mobile and stationary emitters of air pollutants (CAPCD 2013). Fugitive dust can come from natural sources that are not preventable, such as volcanic eruptions, large regional dust storms, and wildfires. PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are also created from windblown dust and soil from fields, agricultural crops, agricultural livestock, paved road re-entrained dust, unpaved roads, construction activities, and mining and quarrying, construction sites, automobile and diesel engine exhaust, waste burning, soot from wood fires, and sulfates and nitrates from combustion sources such as industrial boilers (CAPCD 2013). The following criteria pollutants would be

emitted during the combustion of fossil fuels: CO₂, NO₂, SO₂, and ozone (a secondary pollutant formed photo chemically from VOCs and NO_x).

Downward trends in annual NO₂, CO, and SO₂ have been measured at air quality monitoring sites in the region and are likely the result of national emissions control programs. For example, between 1990 and 2012, national emissions of NO_x and VOC emissions have declined 56 percent and 35 percent, respectively (CAPCD 2013). Decreases in SO_x emissions from diesel fuel and power plants coincides with in a decrease in SO₂ measured at IMPROVE and other air quality monitoring programs.

Nationally, about 55 percent of the oxides of nitrogen emissions come from on and off-road vehicles and about 28 percent come from industrial sources (CAPCD 2013). Industrial sources of NO₂, CO, and SO₂ that affect air quality in this region include stationary source facilities such as gas compressor plants, sand and gravel pit operations. Portable industrial sources of these pollutants include facilities such as drill rigs, well completion activities, gravel crushers, and asphalt plants. Mobile (or non-point) sources of emissions within the region would include highway or on-road vehicles, off-road vehicles such as construction related equipment (track dozers, loaders, backhoes, etc.), and recreational vehicles (snowmobiles, ATVs, and dirt bikes). Smoke from grass and forest fires and natural dust events represent non-point source emissions that can also impact air quality.

In general air quality within the region is good due to few emission sources, good dispersion characteristics and national trends showing a decrease in some air pollutants. However, some emissions have caused localized or regional level increases in pollution monitoring values such as ozone and PM_{2.5} within the past ten years. This has led to an increase in air quality monitoring in the region including the BLM supported Federal reference air quality monitoring sites in Rangely and Meeker.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: No increase in impacts to air quality would occur from the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Impacts for the Western Slope of Colorado would be similar to those described for the action alternative.

Mitigation: None.

SOIL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The USDA has mapped soil resources in most of the WRFO Planning Area (NRCS, 2008). Soils are the product of the climate, the underlying bedrock lithology, erosional processes and the topography. Many of the soils in the WRFO Planning Area are derived from lithologies such as the sandstones, siltstones, and marlstones associated with the Uinta Formation and the Green River Formation; and the claystones, shale, and sandstones associated with the lower part of the Green River Formation, the Mesaverde Group, the Wasatch Formation, the Fort Union Formation, and the Mancos Shale.

The 1997 White River ROD/RMP included a list of fragile watersheds including Wolf Creek, Evacuation Creek, Douglas Creek, Cathedral Creek, Willow Creek in the Douglas Creek watershed, Soldier Creek, Black Sulphur Creek, and Willow Creek in the Piceance Creek watershed, Piceance Creek, and Yellow Creek. No assumptions about the type of soils that may be impacted by activities can be made since soils are variable throughout the field office and depend on surface geology. Impacts of competitive events, such as OHV, mountain bikes or running races could cover a diversity of soils and topography. Staging areas or large areas for competitive events and drop-camps are likely to be located in flat areas with stable soils, but these areas might also be more prone to saturated conditions during use since they are more likely to be in valley bottoms.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: All permittees are required to practice tread lightly and leave no trace land ethics which would reduce unnecessary damage to soils. Use of trails and roads during competitive events may cause erosion in localized areas that will depend on the type of activity and number of participants. Drop-camps, organized events, and staging areas are likely to result in compacted soils that may change rainfall and runoff responses in soils. Soils that are likely to become saturated during use of staging areas should be avoided when possible. Competitive events should be postponed or canceled when the use of roads or trails will cause ruts and deteriorate drainage features of roads or trails.

Indirect impacts to soils are unlikely since most direct impact will be short-term and since BLM will manage use under active permits.

Cumulative Effects: Oil and gas exploration and development in the WRFO will result in road and pad construction, pipeline installation, drilling and completion activities that have the potential to impact soils. Livestock grazing occurs on public and private lands in the area and these activities may reduce canopy cover and lead to localized erosion in some reclamation areas. There is some dispersed recreation, mostly hunting and livestock grazing that disturb soils, result in changes in surface runoff, create some localized erosion and decrease the productivity and stability of soils in some locations. This action is not likely to add to or reduce overall cumulative effects. Permitted activities may reduce soil productivity in localized areas of disturbance, but are unlikely to impact overall soil productivity.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Activities considered in the Proposed Action may be permitted after an individual NEPA analysis.

Cumulative Effects: Same as those described for the Action Alternative.

Mitigation: For all associated activity for commercial or competitive OHV events, SRP permittees must have a contingency plan for canceling the event or changing the venue due to inclement weather for operations that would create damage to soils and create rutting. This plan will be implemented when soils are saturated to a depth of three inches unless the activity is approved by the Authorized Officer. Damage to soil due to erosion caused as a result of an event

that is beyond what could be expected during normal use will be identified by the permittee or BLM, and if needed, BLM will be notified in order to formulate a plan to stabilize the site and reduce the potential for future impacts.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: This action is unlikely to reduce the productivity of soils impacted by surface disturbing activities.

SURFACE & GROUND WATER QUALITY

Affected Environment: The lands managed by the WRFO are located within four basins of the Colorado River Region (Yampa, Green, White, and Upper Colorado River basins). The White River basin comprises almost 90 percent of the WRFO. The White River is formed by forested headwater creeks in the eastern portion of the WRFO Planning Area, flows to the west and is joined by Piceance Creek, Yellow Creek, Douglas Creek, and other minor tributaries as the White River approaches the Colorado-Utah state line. A small segment of the WRFO Planning Area extends south to encompass portions of the Roan Plateau in Garfield County. This part of the WRFO Planning Area is drained by Parachute and Roan Creeks, which flow south into the Colorado River. The northwestern portion of the WRFO Planning Area, located in Moffat County, contains the upper portions of several small watersheds that flow north into the Yampa River and Green River.

Water quality is influenced by the type of rock and soils that water has come in contact with, as well as vegetation, groundwater interaction, and pollutants discharged into water bodies from point and non-point sources. Water quality typically varies as a function of flow conditions. The quality of runoff in ephemeral and intermittent stream channels is largely dependent upon the amount of salts, sediments, trace elements and organic materials that accumulate in dry stream channels between flow periods.

Colorado Department of Health and the Environment (CDPHE) established water quality classifications for stream segments in Colorado. These classifications for the WRFO are generally for cold water aquatic life in the perennial headwaters and warm water aquatic life in ephemeral, intermittent and lower elevations of perennial stream segments. The monitoring and evaluation list for water bodies that are impaired includes about 16 river segments that are at least partially within the WRFO, including 13 segments within the White River drainage, 1 segment within the Yampa River drainage, and 2 segments that drain into the lower Colorado River.

Groundwater occurs naturally through springs that originate from confined bedrock aquifers and unconfined alluvial aquifers that occur near the land surface within the WRFO Planning Area. Groundwater contributes to the base flow of streams and creates springs, where the water is available for plants, wildlife, and livestock.

Environmental Consequences of Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts with regard to surface disturbance and potential erosion are described in the Soil Resources section. With mitigation and design features these

activities are unlikely to contribute measurable changes in water quality with the exception stream crossing for competitive events and the location of staging or drop-camps close to perennial waters.

Stream crossings during competitive events can disturb the stream bed, introduce sediment or pollutants to the stream, increase turbidity and disturb vegetation that may be important for stabilizing stream channels. Perennial crossings should be evaluated before and after competitive events, and if necessary, mitigation such as adding gravel should be considered. Changes to channel form or the stability of crossing after events should be addressed by a BLM approved reclamation effort to mitigate potential impacts to water quality.

Staging areas and organized events within 500 feet of perennial waters or wetlands increases the potential to impact water quality by introducing pollutants or changing the runoff and infiltration properties of compacted soils. An undisturbed buffer of 500 feet around these features should reduce the potential impacts by filtering out generated pollutants and allowing for infiltration of increased runoff by stable vegetation between the staging area and the perennial water or wetland. According to Section XIII.D of the BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (2014 version), drop camps will be located 200 feet from springs, streams, lakes, ponds or reservoirs unless specifically authorized.

Issues that may result from human waste, pollutants, livestock, and trash disposal are addressed in recreation permit term, conditions and stipulations and should be adequate to address potential impacts from these types of issues that could occur due to the use of staging areas and drop camps.

No impacts to groundwaters are anticipated with the standard conditions in the permit and the mitigation proposed for water quality and soils.

Cumulative Effects: Oil and gas exploration and development in the WRFO will result in road and pad construction, pipeline installation, drilling and completion activities that have the potential to impact both surface and groundwaters. There is also surface water use for oil and gas activities including drilling, domestic use, construction, dust abatement, well completion activities, and hydrostatic testing of pipelines. Livestock grazing occurs on public and private lands in the area and these activities may reduce canopy cover and lead to localized erosion in some reclamation areas. There is some dispersed recreation, mostly hunting and livestock grazing that disturb soils, result in changes in surface runoff and creates some localized erosion. This action is not likely to add to or reduce overall cumulative effects. Permitted activities may reduce soil productivity in localized areas of disturbance, but are unlikely to impact water quality.

Environmental Consequences (No Action):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Activities considered in the Proposed Action may be permitted after an individual NEPA analysis.

Cumulative Effects: Impacts would be similar to those described for the action alternative.

Mitigation:

1) Perennial stream crossings for competitive events will be evaluated before and after events. If measures such as adding gravel to the crossing bottom would help stabilize the channel, with BLM approval, the permittee will implement appropriate mitigation before the event. If a result of the event, there are impacts to the crossing that reduce the stability of the stream crossing, a BLM approved reclamation plan will be implemented to stabilize the crossing.

2) Staging areas will not be located within 500 feet of perennial water bodies, wetlands, or springs unless specifically authorized.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #5 for Water Quality: With mitigation in the soils and this section, impacts to surface or groundwater quality are not expected.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: Riparian and wetland areas are those areas that contain water during all or a portion of the growing season. Riparian and wetland areas are scattered throughout the Resource Area and account for 0.6 percent of the vegetation communities within the Resource Area. These areas support a variety of vegetation (from herbaceous to woody species) that is typically adapted to life in saturated soil conditions. For a more detailed discussion on riparian/wetland communities and their occurrence within the Resource Area refer to Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1.2 Riparian and Wetland Communities (pages 3-40 through 3-42) of the WRFO Oil and Gas Development Draft RMPA/EIS. See also the Affected Environment in the Vegetation section below for a list of species that commonly comprise riparian and wetland communities.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Due to their nature and location, riparian and wetland areas are often subjected to inordinately high levels of recreational use. Impacts to riparian habitats would depend on the type, duration, and intensity of the activity. Short-term, non-motorized activities (e.g., running or biking events) may result in some trampling of vegetation, but in most cases these events would likely be confined to existing roads or trails. Motorized activities or activities that involve larger concentrations of participants and larger areas would be expected to result in vegetation trampling and, depending on the intensity, may even result in the direct loss of vegetation. Loss or modification of riparian habitat has the potential to influence aquatic wildlife (see discussion in Special Status Animal Species section) and water quality. Recreational activities that directly or indirectly involve riparian or wetland values afforded protection through the RMP or other pertinent law or regulation would be subject to RMP-authorized stipulations, BMPs, and NEPA-derived Conditions of Approval.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts are difficult to address without knowing the exact location and type of activity being analyzed. Other activities that commonly occur within the Resource Area include but are not limited to: oil and gas development (including access roads, pipelines etc.), with the heaviest development occurring in Piceance Basin and Coal Oil Basin, and livestock grazing, which is common throughout the Resource Area. Cumulative impacts to riparian communities will vary based on the type of activity and the location of the activity.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to riparian and wetland communities would be similar to those discussed above under the Proposed Action. The greatest difference would be that each application would be evaluated independently and would likely require a stand-alone environmental assessment for each individual activity.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be similar to those discussed in the Proposed Action.

Mitigation: Recreational activities that would result in surface disturbance or occupation in the mapped 100-year floodplain or areas within 500 feet from streams, springs, and wetland/riparian areas would not be permitted.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #2 for Riparian Systems: The condition of riparian communities within the Resource Area ranges from properly functioning condition to non-functional. For a description on how these systems are assessed and the condition of each system refer to Chapter 3, section 3.3.1.2 Riparian Proper Functioning Condition (pages 3-44 through 3-45) of the WRFO Oil and Gas Development Draft RMPA/EIS. Currently within the Resource Area 121 miles are classified as properly functioning, 116 miles are classified as functioning at risk, and 82 miles are non-functional. Impacts from the Proposed Action on Land Health Standard #2 would depend on the type and intensity of activity and current condition of the riparian system. As mitigated, it is unlikely that proposed activities would result in adverse modification of riparian or wetland systems.

VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The WRFO comprises fourteen vegetation community types outlined in Table 3. Pinyon-juniper (*Pinus edulis*, *Juniperus osteosperma*, *J. scopulorum*) woodlands are the dominate vegetation type occupying approximately 46 percent of the resource area. The understory of pinyon-juniper woodlands generally consist of big sagebrush (*Artemisia spp.*), rabbit brush (*Chrysothamnus spp.*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), and antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*). Depending on substrate, aspect, and elevation, associated grasses consist of bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), galleta grass (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), salina wildrye (*Leymus salinus*), and the native bluegrasses *Poa secunda* and *P. fendleriana*.

Sagebrush shrublands make up approximately 21 percent of the resource area and includes basin big sagebrush (*A. tridentate ssp. tridentata*), Wyoming sagebrush (*Artemisia t.ssp. wyomingensis*), mountain big sagebrush (*A. t. var. pauciflora*). Associated native perennial grasses commonly include galleta grass, Indian ricegrass, western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), prairie junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comate*) and bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*).

Table 3 Plant Community Breakdown in the WRFO*

Community Type	Acres	% of WRRRA
UPLAND SHRUB AND GRASSLANDS		
Grassland	74,577	5.1%
Sagebrush	307,066	21.1%
Mountain Shrub	161,799	11.1%
Greasewood	5,324	0.4%
Salt desert shrub	63,700	4.4%
RIPARIAN WOODLAND AND SHRUBLANDS		
Riparian/wetland	968	0.1%
UPLAND FOREST AND WOODLANDS		
Pinyon/Juniper	670,340	46.1%
Aspen	7,377	0.5%
Douglas-fir	24,125	1.7%
Spruce-fir	6,452	0.4%
Lodgepole	738	0.1%
BARREN LANDS		
Barren Land	67,652	4.7%
Rock Outcrop	54,688	3.8%
Surface water/unknown	9,199	0.6%

*Taken from the 1997 White River Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Mountain shrub vegetation is a major component of the middle elevations of the WRFO. These shrublands include a mixture of serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), squaw apple (*Peraphyllum ramosissimum*), mountain-mahogany, and antelope bitterbrush. These communities are generally located between the lower elevation pinyon-juniper woodlands and the higher elevation aspen and mixed conifer communities.

Coniferous forests (Douglas-fir, Spruce-fire, and Lodgepole) generally occur at higher elevations within the resource area. Depending on aspect, elevation, and substrate, the following species may be present: Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), and limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*)—the last species only on exposed, windswept ridges. Aspen woodlands are often times mixed in with coniferous forests or big sagebrush often times along drainages or other areas with higher moisture. Aspen woodlands have understories that consist of mountain brome (*Bromus marginatus*), slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), Colorado blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), and elk sedge (*Carex geyeri*).

Grasslands consist of perennial grasses, native perennial forbs as well as low growing shrubs. At low to middle elevations, needle-and-thread grass, bluebunch wheatgrass, and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) are often dominant. At higher elevations, subalpine grasslands are dominated by Thurber's fescue (*Festuca thurberi*), Columbia needlegrass (*Achnatherum nelsonii*), and Letterman's needlegrass (*A. lettermanii*).

Salt-desert shrublands occur in the lower elevations of the western portion of the WRFO, at elevations below 6,000 feet and on saline soils. These areas are dominated by saltbushes such as shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), fourwing saltbush (*A. canescens*), and Gardner's saltbush (*A. gardneri*). Other common shrubs include greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), Wyoming big sagebrush, and rabbitbrush. Prevalent grasses include galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*) and bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*).

Riparian communities are generally located along perennial streams and rivers as well as along intermittent streams, ponds, spring, and seeps. Dominant riparian species may include narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), plains cottonwood (*P. deltoides*), boxelder (*Negundo aceroides*), willows (*Salix* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), and a variety of riparian forbs. Associated species commonly include quaking aspen and blue spruce (*Picea pungens*). Shrubs in addition to willow species may include water birch (*Betula occidentalis*), thinleaf alder (*Alnus tenuifolia*), chokecherry, hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.), redtwig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), and silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*).

Unvegetated areas of the resource area include barren lands, rock outcrops, or talus/scree slopes. Typically steep slopes, aspect, and soil conditions are the factors that keep vegetation from establishing in these areas.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects:

Competitive Events: Impacts to vegetation for the issuance of a competitive event SRP will generally be limited to trampling/crushing of vegetation where the event is taking place. The level of impact will vary depending on the type of event taking place. Running and mountain biking type events would be expected to have very limited impacts to vegetation, while an OHV event may have higher levels of impacts to vegetation. Staging areas of greater than 3 acres where competing vehicles, vendors, and spectators may gather would see the greatest level of trampling and crushing of vegetation.

As a whole, impacts to vegetation from competitive events will be limited because WRFO in general does not permit many of these events, and there is not expected to be a large increase in the amount of competitive events held in the resource area.

Commercial SRPs: Impacts to vegetation from commercial SRPs are expected to generally be limited to trampling and crushing of vegetation. The level of impacts to vegetation is expected to be very minimal since most commercial use authorized in WRFO revolves around hunting. Impacts from hunting are generally more dispersed and do not impact vegetation at as high of a level. Drop-camps where hunters congregate do have a potential to trample and kill vegetation due to the extended use of the area, and there is the possibility of vegetation cover to

be reduced if the same camp is used year after year due to higher level of use in a concentrated area.

Organized Groups: Impacts to vegetation from organized groups will generally involve trampling/crushing of vegetation. The level of impacts again will be variable based on the event to be authorized. Events where large numbers of people will congregate in an area for an extended time will result in higher levels of impacts to vegetation as opposed to events with fewer people that are not congregated in a small area. Overall impacts are expected to be minimal based on the number of organized events that have been authorized in the WRFO in the past.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts are difficult to address without knowing the exact location and type of activity being analyzed. Other activities that commonly occur within the Resource Area include but are not limited to: oil and gas development (including access roads, pipelines etc.), with the heaviest development occurring in Piceance Basin and Coal Oil Basin, and livestock grazing, which is common throughout the Resource Area. Cumulative impacts to vegetation will vary based on the type of activity and the location of the activity.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: There will be no impacts to vegetation from issuing SRPs.

Cumulative Effects: There will be no impacts to vegetation from the No Action Alternative therefore there will be no cumulative effects to vegetation.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #3 for Plant and Animal Communities: Public land health standards vary throughout the resource area. Most areas that do not meet land health standard 3 in WRFO is due to increased levels of downy brome (cheatgrass). Cheatgrass is an annual invasive species that is very aggressive and can form monocultures in vegetative understories.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The state of Colorado classifies noxious weeds into three categories: List A, List B, and List C. List A species are species designated for eradication, List B species have (or will have) a state noxious weed management plan developed to stop their spread. List C species are species for which the commissioner, in consultation with the state noxious weed advisory committee, local governments, and other interested parties will develop and implement state noxious weed management plans for use of noxious weed management for the jurisdictions that choose to do so. There are currently no known List A noxious weeds that occur within the WRFO. List B species that are present are Black Henbane, Bouncing bet, Bull Thistle, Canada Thistle, Common Teasel, Dalmatian Toadflax, Diffuse Knapweed, Hoary Cress, Houndstongue, Leafy Spurge, Musk Thistle, Perennial Pepperweed, Redstem Filaree, Russian Knapweed, Russian-olive, Salt Cedar, Scotch Thistle, Spotted Knapweed, Sulfur Cinquefoil, and Yellow

Toadflax. List C species that are present are Common Burdock, Common Mullein, Downy Brome (Cheatgrass), Field Bindweed, Halogeton, and Jointed Goatgrass.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts from the proposed action are expected to be limited in terms of impacts to vegetation. There is the potential for some mortality of desirable grasses and forbs due to trampling and crushing from the Proposed Action. Mortality of vegetation does create a potential gateway for noxious and invasive species to establish through the removal of vegetation that provides direct competition against the establishment of weeds. There is also the potential for noxious weed seeds and propagules to be transported to and from areas within the WRFO on vehicles and animals used for SRPs. This would increase the likelihood of new weed infestations to establish in areas that were previously void of noxious and invasive weeds.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts are difficult to address without knowing the exact location and type of activity being analyzed. Other activities that commonly occur within the Resource Area include but are not limited to: oil and gas development (including access roads, pipelines etc.), with the heaviest development occurring in Piceance Basin and Coal Oil Basin, and livestock grazing, which is common throughout the Resource Area. Cumulative impacts to noxious weeds include the potential spread of noxious weeds within the resource area to areas that previously did not have noxious weeds.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be no impacts to noxious and invasive weeds from the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Effects: There would be no further cumulative impacts to noxious weeds from the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: SRP holders should ensure all equipment and animals that may be carrying seeds are free from noxious weeds seeds and propagules before coming onto BLM lands.

SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES

Affected Environment: While there are 10 federally listed species that may occur in the project area, the only species that have potential to be influenced by the Proposed Action are the Colorado pikeminnow and black-footed ferret. Greater sage-grouse, a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and a BLM sensitive species, occur within the Resource Area. For a more detailed discussion on the Resource Area's special status species refer to Chapter 3, section 3.3.3.1 Federal Endangered, Threatened, Proposed and Candidate Animal Species (pages 3-62 through 3-65) of the WRFO Oil and Gas Development Draft RMPA/EIS.

Upper Colorado River Basin Fish: (Colorado pikeminnow, bonytail chub, humpback chub and razorback sucker)

The Colorado pikeminnow occurs in the White River below Taylor Draw Dam and Kenney Reservoir, although the White River and its 100-year floodplain from Rio Blanco Lake to the

Utah state line are designated critical habitat for the fish. The White River in Colorado does not appear to support spawning activity, young-of-year nurseries, or juvenile concentration areas for the Colorado pikeminnow. Additionally, while the listed bonytail, humpback chub, and razorback sucker do not occur in the White River, its flow contributions are important in supporting these species' downstream habitats in the Green River.

Black-footed ferret

Reintroduced ferrets and their offspring in northwestern Colorado and northeastern Utah are designated as a nonessential experimental population. All of the WRFO Planning Area within Rio Blanco and Moffat counties west of SH 13 to the Utah state line is within the boundaries designated for the nonessential experimental population. Black-footed ferrets were initially reintroduced into the Wolf Creek Management Area beginning in 2001 with supplemental releases continuing annually through 2008. Minimum population size steadily increased from 2002 through 2007, with a minimum population estimate of 16 individuals in the fall of 2007. Beginning in 2008, a decline in ferret numbers was observed during fall surveys. This reduction in individuals is coincident with a plague epizootic discovered in the Wolf Creek prairie dog population during the summer of 2008. Monitoring efforts conducted in 2009 and 2010 did not yield any confirmed sightings of black-footed ferrets. A single ferret was recorded in the WRFO Planning Area during a 2010 survey effort along the Utah border and was believed to be a wild-borne kit that originated from Utah.

In addition, several other BLM sensitive species are found throughout the Resource Area including: Brewer's sparrow, northern goshawk, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, bald eagle, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, midget-faded rattlesnake, northern leopard frog, Great Basin spadefoot, Colorado River cutthroat trout, flannelmouth sucker, mountain sucker, roundtail chub, bluehead sucker, white-tailed prairie dog, fringed myotis, spotted bat and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Sensitive Aquatic Species

The roundtail chub and bluehead sucker are confined to the White River. Flannelmouth and mountain sucker also inhabit the White River but these fish are consistently found in its larger tributary streams as well (e.g., Piceance Creek, Yellow Creek, Black Sulphur Creek). Similarly, the northern leopard frog appears to be patchily distributed along the White River and virtually all lower elevation riparian and wetland habitats in the WRFO.

The White – Colorado River divide and the East Douglas drainage are encompassed by the East Douglas Creek ACEC. This ACEC circumscribes the watershed contributing to most of the BLM-administered native cutthroat trout habitat in the WRFO (lineage Colorado River). This ACEC was established through the 1997 RMP with the intent of highlighting these fishery values and as the basis to coordinate all land uses in a manner compatible with or complementary to stream habitat recovery. Occupied stream reaches include Bear Park, Lake Creek, and Soldier Creek. Colorado River cutthroat trout are also present in BLM administered portions of Black Sulphur Creek (outside the ACEC).

Sensitive Bats

Although the distribution of bats in the WRFO is not completely understood, recent acoustic surveys in the Piceance Basin and along the lower White River have documented the localized

presence of Townsend's big-eared and big free-tailed bats along larger perennial waterways. These bats typically use caves, mines, bridges, and unoccupied buildings for night, nursery, and hibernation roosts, but in western Colorado, single or small groups of bats use rock crevices and tree cavities. Although rock outcrops and mature conifers that could serve as temporary daytime roosts for small numbers of bats are widely available in the project area, and relatively extensive riparian communities are available along the White River, Deep Channel Creek, Piceance Creek, and East Douglas Creek and its tributaries, there are no underground mines or known caves, and unoccupied buildings are extremely limited in the Resource Area. Birthing and rearing of young for these bats occur in May and June, and young are capable of flight by the end of July. The big free-tailed bat is not known to breed in Colorado.

Sensitive Raptors

Based on BLM's experience, goshawks nest at low densities throughout the WRFO in mature pinyon-juniper woodlands above 6,500 ft and Douglas-fir and aspen stands. These habitats are well distributed in higher elevation woodlands and forests in East Douglas Creek and its tributaries and near the White-Colorado River divide. Goshawks establish breeding territories as early as March and begin nesting by the end of April. Nestlings are normally fledged and independent of the nest stand by mid-August.

The White River corridor is the hub for seasonal bald eagle use of the White River valley. Particularly during the late fall and winter months, several dozen bald eagles make regular foraging use of open upland communities along the river and its larger tributaries. These foraging forays from nocturnal roosts along the White River are dispersed and opportunistic. Concentrated diurnal use and nocturnal roosting functions during the winter, and summer use attributable to nest sites are situated along the river corridor's cottonwood stands.

Sensitive Reptiles and Amphibians

Northwest Colorado lies on the eastern margin of Great Basin spadefoot toad distribution. Spadefoot toads are known recently from western Rio Blanco County, including Cottonwood Creek to neighboring Uintah County, Utah, and appear to be associated with ephemeral stock ponds in valley and basin terrain. There are scattered historical records of spadefoot from Powell Park (White River valley near Meeker, 1997) and a single record from Piceance Creek near Black Sulphur Creek (1973). Although seemingly rare and sporadically distributed in the WRFO, it remains possible that toads occupy shrublands and woodlands in close association with stock ponds distributed throughout the project area that retain water over the minimum five week reproductive and larval development period.

The midget faded rattlesnake is the smallest member of the western rattlesnake species complex. This subspecies is thought to be generally confined to the Green River geologic formation in southeast Wyoming, eastern Utah and western Colorado, and appears to have very narrow preference for bedded sandstone outcrops with fallen mid-slope slabs on south to southeast exposures below 7,000 feet in elevation. Midget faded rattlesnakes occur in small discrete groups and exhibit classic metapopulation distribution. These snakes display strong fidelity to and remain closely associated with hibernacula for overwintering and reproductive activities. Narrowly adapted to specialized habitat, this snake was documented in scattered locations across the WRFO during the summer of 2012, and is likely the only rattlesnake south of the White

River. The snakes' distribution north of the White River is complex, with inclusions of the more common prairie rattlesnake associated with prairie dog colonies in the Wolf Creek basin and Deep Channel Creek. Population trends are not known.

White-tailed prairie dog and associated species

White-tailed prairie dogs and their burrow systems provide habitat for several species including burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk and the endangered black-footed ferret. Reproduction occurs in late February with young born in late April to early May with the juveniles emerging above ground around the beginning of June. Prairie dog habitat (i.e., past or recent evidence of occupation) is largely confined to the Wolf Creek Management Area and the Highway 40 corridor between Elk Springs and the Utah border, and Coal Oil Basin (Rangely Oil Field), with smaller colonies scattered throughout Indian Valley.

Burrowing owls are uncommon summer residents associated with white-tailed prairie dog colonies. Nesting birds have been documented in the Wolf Creek Management Area, Coal Oil Basin, and areas south of Dinosaur, CO.

The ferruginous hawk is an uncommon breeding species in the WRFO. This species occurs from Elk Springs west to Dinosaur and south to Rangely. Their distribution coincides closely with that of white-tailed prairie dogs which, along with cottontail rabbits, form the bulk of the birds' prey base. Typically returning in late-February, these birds begin nesting in earnest by mid-April with young generally fledged by late-July.

Greater sage-grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse

Greater sage-grouse

Greater sage-grouse were once distributed widely throughout the WRFO, but have since contracted in range such that birds are strongly confined to higher elevations along the Roan Plateau and Cathedral Bluffs (comprising the bulk of the Parachute-Piceance-Roan (PPR) population area) and Blue Mountain (a subgroup of the Northwest Colorado (NWCO) population area).

A single lek remains in the lower Wolf Creek basin south Highway 40 and is central to the small number of birds that reside in these lower elevation saltbush and sagebrush ranges. Mesic sites that offer a source of succulent forage important for late season brood habitat are extremely limited on these arid ranges and are typically confined to the deeply incised channels of Wolf and Divide Creek. Remnant populations along the lower White River, including Dripping Rock, Boise Creek, Red Wash, Hall Draw, and Smizer Gulch may be locally extirpated.

Based on recent (2012) Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) mapping efforts, sage-grouse habitat has been classified into two types: 1) preliminary priority habitat (PPH) and 2) preliminary general habitat (PGH). Preliminary priority habitat represents areas having the highest conservation value in maintaining sustainable sage-grouse populations, including breeding, later brood-rearing, and winter concentration areas. Preliminary general habitat represents occupied or recently occupied habitats that are outside priority habitat. These two habitat categories conform well to former mapping that emphasized suitable habitat within 4 miles of current or recently active leks.

Greater sage-grouse populations generally require large expanses of intact sagebrush habitat (Connelly et al. 2004). The height and structure of herbaceous vegetation is an important component in nesting habitat and can influence sage-grouse nest site selection, nest success, and chick survival. Sage-grouse begin nesting from mid-April through mid-May with chicks appearing from mid-May through mid-July; peaking from mid to late June.

Columbian sharp-tailed grouse

Historically, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse occurred locally across the east half of the WRFO Planning Area, but currently have a more restricted distribution, mostly on private lands and land-locked BLM parcels in Axial Basin and between SH 13 north of Meeker and the White River National Forest. They have been recorded in aspen, mountain shrub, and sagebrush habitats in these areas. In April 2012, Colorado Parks and Wildlife documented the first known Columbian sharp-tailed grouse lek in the WRRRA. Another lek was verified in 2014 near the Thornburgh Battle site. In general these birds tend to remain within a 1.2 mi (2 km) radius of the lek site throughout the spring and summer months. Winter use typically ranges from 1 to 4 mi (1.6 – 6.4 km) but movements can be in excess of 30 km depending on abundance of winter food resources (Hoffman 2001).

Brewer's sparrow

Brewer's sparrows are common and widely distributed in virtually all big sagebrush, greasewood, saltbush, and mixed brush communities throughout the planning area. These birds are typically one of the most common members of these avian communities and breeding densities generally range between 10-40 pairs per 100 acres. Although most abundant in extensive stands of sagebrush, the birds appear regularly in small (one to two acre) sagebrush parks scattered among area woodlands. Typical of most migratory passerines in this area, nesting activities normally take place between mid-May and mid-July.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to special status species would be difficult to address programmatically as the degree and nature of the impacts would depend on the location, type, intensity and duration of the recreational activity and would vary by species. In general, impacts to special status species would be similar to those discussed below in the Terrestrial Wildlife and Migratory Bird sections. Recreational activities have the potential to displace wildlife, disrupt reproductive activities, and contribute to physiological effects. Certain activities may degrade or remove habitat that provide cover and forage resources. Individual special status species will be discussed in further detail below.

Endangered Colorado River fishes/bald eagle/sensitive aquatic wildlife:

Recreational activities that occur within or in close proximity of the 100-year floodplain or perennial waters have the potential to alter/degrade or remove riparian vegetation. Vegetation along stream banks provides cover and shading for fish, bank stability and a source of food and nutrient supply. Disturbance in or near water bodies may also lead to increased sedimentation, which can influence the behavior, spawning and physiological functions of many aquatic species. Vehicle use in and around aquatic areas could pose an increased risk to aquatic biota due to the increased potential for accidental spills or leaks of toxic substances. Impacts from accidental spills could include physical stress and habitat avoidance to direct mortality.

Impacts to bald eagle would be similar to those discussed for other raptors in the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

White-tailed prairie dog and associates including black-footed ferret:

Both direct and indirect impacts to these species would be similar to those discussed below in the Terrestrial Wildlife and Migratory Bird sections and would depend greatly on the type of activity, duration and intensity. Recreational activities that take place during the breeding season (typically April 15 – July 15) can alter reproductive outcomes and therefore should be avoided during these critical time frames.

Midget faded rattlesnake:

Impacts to rattlesnakes would be similar to those discussed below in the Terrestrial Wildlife section (see discussion on direct and indirect impacts to wildlife). In general, activities that take place in or around MFR denning/hibernacula sites should be avoided during the reproductive period (generally April 15 – August 1). Surveys may be required if the proposed recreational activity occurs in suitable breeding habitat.

Greater sage-grouse:

Both direct and indirect impacts to sage-grouse would be similar to those discussed below in the Migratory Bird and Terrestrial Wildlife sections. Because approximately 80 percent of nesting and brood-rearing takes place within four miles of leks (Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Steering Committee 2008), activities or disturbances (activity, noise, vehicle traffic etc.) that have the potential to disrupt reproductive activities should be avoided. Herbaceous ground cover provides concealment and protection from predators. Activities that may result in the removal or alteration of habitat, particularly if greater than three acres or if use is reoccurring, may influence survival of chicks and hens. Recreational activities that occur in PPH or PGH should be avoided during the lekking and breeding season (March 1 – July 15).

Columbian sharp-tailed grouse:

Impacts to this species would be similar to those discussed in the Migratory Bird, Terrestrial Wildlife and greater sage-grouse sections.

Sensitive Bats

Impacts to bats would be similar to those discussed in the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to special status species would be difficult to address without knowing the exact location and type of activity being analyzed. Other activities that commonly occur within the Resource Area include but are not limited to: oil and gas development (including access roads, pipelines etc.) - with the heaviest development occurring in Piceance Basin and Coal Oil Basin - and livestock grazing, which are common throughout the Resource Area. Proposed recreational activities may result in the displacement of wildlife, disruption of reproductive activities, and potential loss or modification of habitat. Cumulatively speaking, impacts special status species would vary depending on the location and nature of the proposed activity as well as by species.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to special status animal species would be similar to those discussed above under the Proposed Action. The greatest difference would be that each application would be evaluated independently and would likely require a stand-alone environmental assessment for each individual activity.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts special status animal species would be similar to those discussed in the Proposed Action.

Mitigation:

Aquatic Habitats:

1. Recreational activities that would result in surface disturbance or occupation in the mapped 100-year floodplain or areas within 500 feet from streams, springs, and wetland/riparian areas would not be permitted.

Greater sage-grouse:

2. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.6 mile of an active sage-grouse lek from March 1 – May 15.
3. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied from April 15 – July 7 within four miles of an active lek. Any management constraints will be consistent with the most current land use decision (e.g., Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse EIS).
4. Consultation with CPW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will be required for those proposed activities involving sage-grouse habitat (PPH and PGH).

Midget faded rattlesnake:

5. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied from April 15 – August 1 within 200 meters of denning habitat/hibernacula.

Bald eagle:

6. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.5 miles of bald eagle roost or concentration areas from November 15 – April 15.
7. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.5 miles of bald eagle nest sites from December 15 – July 15.

Ferruginous hawk:

8. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within one mile of ferruginous hawk nest sites from February 1 – August 15.

Burrowing owl:

9. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.5 miles of burrowing owl nest sites from February 1 – August 15.

White-tailed prairie dog and associates:

10. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within occupied prairie dog colonies from April 15 – July 15.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #4 for Special Status Species: At a landscape level the health standards for special status species are being met within the Resource Area. There are inclusions that currently are not considered to be meeting the land health standards, due mainly to a prevalence of annual, invasive species such as cheatgrass. Neither the Proposed nor No Action Alternative is expected to detract from the continued meeting of standard #4.

SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES

Affected Environment: Within the White River Field Office (WRFO) there are two federally listed plant species, two proposed threatened species, and their associated critical habitat. There is one additional threatened species, Ute Lady's tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), which is known to occur within BLM Field Offices surrounding the WRFO. However, despite ongoing surveys, occupied habitat has not been found within the WRFO.

The two federally threatened plant species that are considered endemic to the WRFO are Dudley Bluffs bladderpod (*Physaria congesta*) and Dudley Bluffs twinpod (*Physaria obcordata*). These two wild mustards are found exclusively in the Piceance Basin of Rio Blanco County, Colorado. Because their habitats occur only in a very restricted range, on specific geologic substrates, this greatly limits the ability of the species' to expand their range, or withstand stochastic events. Little is known about whether the species are able to occupy or re-occupy habitats in disturbed or reclaimed suitable and occupied habitats.

The two proposed threatened species, White River beardtongue (*Penstemon scariosus* var. *albifluvis*), and Graham's beardtongue (*Penstemon grahamii*), occur on white shale habitats on the western portion of the WRFO resource area and are concentrated primarily within the Raven Ridge ACEC and along the Utah border. Both species have associated proposed critical habitat that covers 8,963 acres within the field office.

In addition to the federally threatened species within the WRFO, there are eleven BLM sensitive plant species. These eleven plant species occur in a variety of different ecosystems throughout WRFO. A list of all species and their habitats is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Special Status Plant Species within the White River Field Office.

Name	Species	Status	Habitat
Dudley Bluffs bladderpod	<i>Physaria congesta</i>	Threatened	Barren, white shale outcrops of the Green River and Uinta Formations (6,000-6,700 ft)
Dudley Bluffs Twinpod	<i>Physaria obcordata</i>	Threatened	Barren, white outcrops and steep slopes of the Parachute Creek Member of the Green River Formation (5,900-7,500 ft)
Ute lady's tresses orchid	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Threatened	Sub-irrigated alluvial soils along streams and in open meadows in flood plains (4,500-6,800 ft)
White River beardtongue	<i>Penstemon scariosus</i> var. <i>albifluvis</i>	Proposed	Sparsely vegetated shale slopes of the Green River Formation Desert in shrub and pinyon/juniper communities (5,000-7,200 ft)
Graham's beardtongue	<i>Penstemon grahamii</i>	Proposed	Talus slopes and knolls of the Green River Formation in sparsely vegetated desert scrub and pinyon/juniper (5,800-6,000 ft)
Debris milkvetch	<i>Astragalus detritalis</i>	Sensitive	Pinyon/juniper and mixed desert shrub, often on rocky soils ranging from sandy clays to sandy loams. Also alluvial terraces with cobbles (5,400-7,200 ft)
Duchesne milkvetch	<i>Astragalus duchesnensis</i>	Sensitive	Pinyon/juniper woodland and desert shrub, around sandstone or shale outcrops (4,600-6,400 ft)
Ligulate feverfew	<i>Bolophyta ligulata</i> (<i>Parthenium ligulatum</i>)	Sensitive	Barren shale knolls (5,400-6,500 ft)
Tufted cryptantha	<i>Cryptantha caespitosa</i> (<i>Oreocarya caespitosa</i>)	Sensitive	Sparsely vegetation shale knolls, with pinyon/juniper or sagebrush; usually with other cushion plants (5,500-8,100 ft)
Rollins cryptantha	<i>Cryptantha rollinsii</i> (<i>Oreocarya rollinsii</i>)	Sensitive	White shale slopes of the Green River Formation, in pinyon/juniper or cold desert shrub communities (5,300-5,800 ft)
Ephedra buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum ephedroides</i>	Sensitive	Shale and clay flats of slopes in saltbush, sage and pinyon/juniper habitats (4,900-6,900 ft)
Cathedral Bluff dwarf gentian	<i>Gentianella tortuosa</i>	Sensitive	Barren shale knolls and slopes of the Green River Formation (8,500-10,800 ft)

Narrow-stem gilia	<i>Aliciella stenothyrsa</i> (<i>Gilia stenothyrsa</i>)	Sensitive	Grassland, sagebrush, mountain mahogany or pinyon/juniper; silty to gravelly loam soils of the Green River formation (6,200 -8,600 ft)
Piceance bladderpod	<i>Lesquerella parviflora</i>	Sensitive	Shale outcrops of the Green River Formation, on ledges and slopes of canyons in open areas (6,200-8,600 ft)
Flaming Gorge evening primrose	<i>Oenothera acutissima</i>	Sensitive	Seasonally wet areas in meadows, depressions or along arroyos I mixed conifer forest to sagebrush, on sandy gravelly, or rocky soils (5,300-8,500 ft)
Cathedral Bluff Meadow- rue	<i>Thalictrum heliophilum</i>	Sensitive	Sparsely vegetated, steep shale talus slopes of the Green River Formation (6,300-8,800 ft)

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Competitive, commercial, and organized recreational SRPs all have individual activities that could have the potential to impact Special Status Plant Species (SSPS). Impacts to SSPS are difficult to address programmatically because impacts would depend on the timing, location, nature, and intensity of the recreational activity. Per the 1997 White River RMP prior to approving surface disturbing or potentially impacting activities within known or potential habitat for a listed, proposed or candidate plant species, a plant inventory must be conducted by a qualified botanist. Based on plant survey results, Section 7 consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) may need to be initiated. For federally listed, proposed or candidate plant species, formal consultation with FWS will be required if populations are within 100 meters of recreational activities, whereas informal consultation will be required if impacts are within 100-300 meters. Areas where BLM sensitive plants have potential to occur, or have occupied habitat nearby, will also require a plant survey prior to any surface disturbance or permit issuance. Recreational activities near BLM sensitive plant species must be 100 meters away to avoid direct impacts to those species.

Any recreational activity that causes surface disturbance within plant buffers may potentially remove plant habitat causing direct harm to SSPS. In addition, if SSPS were to colonize any suitable habitat near potential recreation activity sites, the fragmentation from surface disturbance to the surrounding vegetative communities may impact new populations. Indirect effects related to recreational activities include the potential removal of pollinator habitat and nesting sites. Fugitive dust from events and or activities may directly affect plants and indirectly impact the pollinator species by negatively affecting plant reproduction through stigma competition.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to special status plant species would be difficult to address without knowing the exact location and type of activity being analyzed. However, within the field office populations of SSPS are affected by factors such as oil and gas development, mineral extraction, off-highway vehicle use, herbivory from livestock and wildlife, climactic fluctuations, and changes in hydrologic conditions. Surface disturbance close to SSPS can result in loss of not only habitat, but individual plants or populations. With ground and

vegetation disturbance, there is the potential for an increase of non-native or exotic plant species to invade areas where they had not been before.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to SSPS would be similar to those discussed above under the Proposed Action. The greatest difference would be that each application would be evaluated independently and would likely require a stand-alone environmental assessment for each individual activity.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects are the same as for the Proposed Action.

Mitigation: Special status plant surveys may be required within potential, suitable, and occupied habitat for BLM sensitive plants as well as listed, proposed, and candidate species. If surveys are required they must be completed according to the WRFO SSPS protocol prior to authorization of any recreational activities. If T&E plants are found during surveys, consultation with FWS may be required or additional mitigations may be applied to avoid impacting species. If BLM sensitives are found, additional mitigations may be applied to avoid impacting species.

Additional mitigation may include:

1. Relocation of operations by more than 660 feet;
2. Delaying activities by more than 60 days so that they occur outside of the blooming season;
3. Minimizing the area of disturbance;
4. Control of fugitive dust;
5. Using signs, fencing, and other deterrents to reduce possible human disturbance;
6. Consideration of off-site mitigation such as conservation easements, or mitigation banking to offset impacts to occupied plant populations, adequate funding of research, or habitat protection/improvement projects.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #4 for Special Status Species: The Proposed and No Action alternatives should have no influence on SSPS populations or habitats, contingent on mitigation measures, associated with the Endangered Species Act or BLM sensitive species and, as such, would have no influence on the status of applicable land health standards.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The White River Resource Area spans a wide range of elevations and vegetation types which provide nesting habitat for a variety of migratory bird species during the breeding season (mid-May through mid-July). Elevation ranges from about 5000' to roughly 9000'. Vegetation communities range from low elevation salt desert shrub to higher elevation spruce/fir aspen communities.

Birds recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as having higher conservation interest that may be present in the permit area include: Brewer's sparrow (sagebrush communities),

juniper titmouse, and pinyon jay (pinyon-juniper woodlands), Cassin's finch (spruce-fir forests) and flammulated owl (aspen communities). In general, all species associated with these habitats are well represented in the Resource Area. There are no specialized or narrowly endemic species known to inhabit or make important use of the allotment. For a more detailed discussion on migratory bird species within the Resource Area refer to Chapter 3, section 3.3.2.1 Wildlife (pages 3-56 through 3-59) of the WRFO Oil and Gas Development Draft RMPA/EIS.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to migratory birds would be difficult to address programmatically as the degree and nature of the impacts would depend on the location, type, intensity and duration of the recreational activity. In general, impacts to migratory birds would be similar to those discussed below in the Terrestrial Wildlife section. Recreational activities have the potential to alter behavior and displace nesting birds and, depending on the species involved, duration, intensity, and season of use, can result in complete nest abandonment and possible mortality of nestlings. Recreational activities that coincide with the migratory bird breeding period (typically May 15 – July 15) would have greater potential to disrupt reproductive activities, but again would depend on the intensity, duration and amount/type of habitat involved. Events that are short term in nature (lasting a few hours), such as bike and foot races, would be expected to temporarily displace birds but in most cases, would not substantially influence nesting activities. Activities that last several days (or weeks), or involve larger acreages may have a greater influence on migratory birds, resulting in nest failure or mortality. Those activities that involve off-road or cross-country travel would likely have a greater negative influence on habitat(s) that support migratory birds than those confined to areas of existing disturbance. Overall, human intrusion, both motorized and non-motorized, has the potential to behaviorally influence song birds and also reduce avian richness and abundance, particularly during the breeding season (Riffell et al.1996, Luckenbach 1979).

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to migratory birds would be similar to those discussed below in the Terrestrial Wildlife section. Impacts would vary depending on location of the activity in relation to other previous and ongoing disturbances but would also depend on the species, type of activity (motorized or non-motorized), time of year, area (size) of disturbance, and type/condition of habitat involved.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to migratory birds would be similar to those discussed above under the Proposed Action. The greatest difference would be that each application would be evaluated independently and would likely require a stand-alone environmental assessment for each individual activity.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to migratory birds would be similar to those discussed in the Proposed Action.

Mitigation:

1. Depending on the type, intensity, and duration of the proposed activities, a timing restriction may be applied during the migratory bird nesting season of May 15 – July 15.

An exception may be granted if through analysis it is determined that the proposed activity can be conditioned so as not to interfere with habitat function or compromise migratory bird nesting functions.

2. Motor vehicle activities would be confined to existing roads/trails to avoid/minimize alteration or direct removal of habitat. Any motor vehicle activity involving off-road or cross-country travel will be reviewed by a staff biologist to determine impacts of the proposed activity to migratory bird breeding functions and associated habitats. Exceptions would be granted if they meet the criteria outlined on page 2-45 of the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.

TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: Wildlife resources within the WRRRA include big game (elk, mule deer, and pronghorn), upland game, waterfowl, raptors, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Greater sage-grouse (and other special status species) and migratory birds are discussed above in the Special Status Animal Species and Migratory Bird sections. For a more detailed discussion on terrestrial wildlife species refer to Chapter 3, section 3.3.2.1 Wildlife (pages 3-48 through 3-59) of the WRFO Oil and Gas Development Draft RMPA/EIS.

Mammals

Three populations of elk and three general herds of mule deer occur throughout the WRRRA. Pronghorn are confined to the northwest portion of the Resource Area. Important ranges for these species include: elk production areas, severe winter range, winter concentration areas and summer range. Other key mammal species include: black bear, mountain lion, and white-tailed prairie dog (discussed further in the Special Status Animal Species section above).

Birds

Upland game birds include: dusky grouse, greater sage-grouse, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Dusky grouse are relatively common and widely distributed in mixed and mountain shrub, aspen, and coniferous habitats within the Resource Area. Greater sage-grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are discussed further in the Special Status Animal Species section.

A broad array of raptors including eagles, falcons, owls and hawks occur within the Resource Area. These species nest or winter in a wide range of habitats (salt desert shrub, aspen, cliffs and coniferous forests/woodlands) and elevations.

Nongame Species

The distribution and abundance of small mammal populations are poorly documented within the Resource Area. Recent trapping efforts undertaken throughout Piceance Basin indicate a high tendency in both sagebrush and pinyon-juniper communities for more generalized species such as deer mouse and least chipmunk and it is suspected that these species would be relatively abundant in the project area. There are no small mammal species that are narrowly endemic or highly specialized species known to inhabit the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to terrestrial wildlife species would be difficult to address programmatically as the degree and nature of the impacts would depend on the location, type, intensity and duration of the recreational activity. In general impacts could include trampling of vegetation, the direct loss or modification of habitat, and direct mortality (collisions with or crushing by vehicles) of species. Indirect impacts may include displacement of wildlife, changes in movement patterns, physiological impacts, and avoidance of otherwise functional habitats. Impacts would vary depending on the intensity, duration and the amount of area involved. Impacts to wildlife would be expected to be greater for those activities that involve larger concentrations of people or motorized events than those that are less intrusive (bike/running race) or smaller in scale.

Recreational activities that tend to be short-term in nature (lasting 1 -3 days such as bike or foot races, shooting events etc.) would not be expected to result in a substantial amount of habitat loss or modification. Noise and human presence associated with these types of activities would likely result in the temporary displacement of wildlife, however most wildlife would be expected to return once the event has ended. Some activities, such as OHV races/rock crawling events may result in more pronounced alteration or loss of habitat and greater indirect effects. For example, short term loud noise (such as from vehicles) has been documented to cause physiological effects in many wildlife species including increased heart rate, increased energy expenditure altered metabolism and a change in hormone balance (Radle 2007). In most cases, the involvement of habitat would be fairly short-term, concentrated, and likely small in scale. Adhering to existing roads/trails in these types of events would minimize or eliminate habitat loss or modification and may reduce indirect impacts to local wildlife species.

In general, hunting tends to be more dispersed and would not be expected to have a substantial impact on vegetative condition (as a forage or cover resource for wildlife) nor would it result in adverse behavioral impacts to wildlife. Extended use of drop camps (i.e., greater than 14 days) would be expected to have a greater negative impact on vegetation (trampling, reduction in cover); however these impacts would likely be localized. Impacts to wildlife would be greatly reduced if vehicle use was confined to existing routes. Off-road vehicle use would likely result in the establishment of unauthorized roads, vegetation damage, establishment of undesirable plant species and possible injury or mortality to some (slow-moving) wildlife species.

Extended activities (lasting 14 days or more) or those activities that are more expansive (involving three or more acres) would be expected to have a greater influence on wildlife (e.g., displace local wildlife or avoidance in and around the area of use) compared to those events that are more short-term or smaller in scale. Again, impacts to wildlife would vary depending on the level, type, duration and timing of the activity. Activities that take place during critical timeframes (big game calving and critical wintering periods, raptor nesting etc.) would be expected to have a greater negative influence on wildlife species. For example, activities near raptor nests have the potential to result in nest abandonment, and potential nestling mortality from overheating, chilling, and dehydration if young are left unattended for an extended period of time (Gutzwiller et al. 1998). Habitat loss or modification would be expected to be greater if an area is used for an extended period of time.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to terrestrial wildlife would be difficult to address without knowing the exact location and type of activity being analyzed. Other activities that commonly occur within the Resource Area include but are not limited to: oil and gas development (including access roads, pipelines etc.) - with the heaviest development occurring in Piceance Basin and Coal Oil Basin - and livestock grazing, which are common throughout the Resource Area. Proposed recreational activities may result in the displacement of wildlife and potential loss or modification of habitat. Cumulatively speaking, impacts to terrestrial wildlife would vary depending on the location and nature of the proposed activity and the species involved.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to terrestrial wildlife would be similar to those discussed above under the Proposed Action. The greatest difference would be that each application would need to be evaluated independently and would likely require a stand-alone environmental assessment for each individual activity.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be identical to those discussed under the Proposed Action.

Mitigation:

Raptors

1. Raptor surveys may be required prior to authorization of an activity if habitat that supports raptor breeding activities occur within the vicinity of the proposed activity. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.25 miles of identified nests.

Big game

2. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in elk production areas from May 15 – June 30.
3. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in mule deer severe winter range from December 1 – April 30.
4. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in big game summer range from May 15 – August 15.
5. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in pronghorn production areas from May 1 – June 30.

An exception may be granted to these timing limitations if it is determined that the proposed activity could be conditioned so as not to influence breeding activities, compromise animal condition or influence the utility and suitability of the identified ranges (summer, winter etc.).

6. Motorized vehicle activities would be confined to existing roads/trails to avoid/minimize alteration or direct removal of habitat. Any motorized vehicle

activity involving off-road or cross-country travel will be reviewed by a staff biologist to determine impacts to wildlife species and associated habitats. Exceptions may be granted if they meet the criteria outlined on page 2-45 of the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #3 for Plant and Animal Communities: Vegetative communities within the WRRRA are generally meeting the public land health standard for animal communities. In areas not achieving the standard or making progress toward achieving the standard, historic grazing practices and weed invasion are attributed to the declines. At a smaller scale, a proposed activity may result in the incremental loss or modification of habitat, however on a landscape scale, the Proposed and No Action alternatives would not be expected to detract from the continued meeting of the land health standard.

WILD HORSES

Affected Environment: The WRFO manages the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (HMA) but also has two Herd Areas (HAs), North Piceance and West Douglas. The Piceance-East Douglas HMA is becoming more and more popular with wild horse enthusiasts. The WRFO currently manages no SRP for viewing tours of the wild horse herds within the above HMA or HAs.

The Piceance-East Douglas (HMA) is located 20 miles west of Meeker, Colorado, generally in the Piceance Basin. The HMA encompasses 190,130 total acres of public, private and state lands. The HMA has an elevation change from approximately 6,500 feet at the north end to near 9,000 feet at the south end. The interior of the HMA consists of gently rolling to moderately steep slopes cut by numerous small drainages leading into Yellow Creek drainage which is where the eastern portion of the HMA drains while the western portion drains into Cathedral and Douglas Creeks.

The Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the HMA has been set at 135 to 235 wild horses. Wild horse numbers are kept within this management range usually through periodic wild horse gather operations. The last wild horse gather operation for this area was conducted in 2011.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are becoming more prevalent as more people pay for the opportunity to participate in activities on public lands. Big game hunting is the primary recreation activity currently taking place within the Piceance-East Douglas HMA. There is potential for human activity to increase within the HMA, especially those activities which may focus on the wild horses, such as photography and viewing. As for the wild horses, increased human activity makes them more accustomed to human presence and are beginning to lose their wild and free-roaming behavior. At this time, it has been the increased oil/gas and associated activities that have increased the number of people to the area which in turn has wild horses getting increasingly close to humans, however, there have been no documented instances of a wild horse charging, striking, or kicking a human. The buffer zone needed between wild horses and humans before stress levels are reached has not been studied

therefore it is undetermined. This becomes important during the foaling season when mares feel the need to protect their newborn foals.

By regulating specific recreation activities that involve wild horses in the HMA through the SRP process with terms and/or conditions the WRFO would regulate or prevent unnecessary stresses or reduce the potential interactions between humans and wild horses that could lead to a change in their wildness behavior or increase the risks of humans being charged, struck or kicked by wild horses.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable impacts to wild horses includes but is not limited to: livestock grazing, wildlife and wild horse viewing, general recreation, big game hunting, oil and gas activities including seismic projects, wild horse gathers, and other aerial activities.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The BLM would not issue SRP permits in special areas or for activities that span 14 consecutive days and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres. SRPs could still be considered individually through a stand-alone NEPA analysis (i.e., most likely an environmental assessment).

Cumulative Effects: The previously listed past, present, and reasonably foreseeable impacts to wild horses would continue even without SRPs specific to special areas or for activities that span 14 consecutive days and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres within the HMA.

Mitigation:

1. The permittee/guide shall inform all staff and clients that wild horses are protected by Federal law and will prevent harassment of wild horses from permitted activities. Prohibited acts include but are not limited to: maliciously injuring or harassing a wild horse or burro; removing or attempting to remove a wild horse or burro from public lands; destroying a wild horse or burro; selling or attempting to sell a wild horse or burro; and, commercially exploiting a wild horse or burro. Crimes are punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. Examples of violations might include harassment by ATV, injury or death by a bullet or arrow, and illegal capture.
 - a. All guides shall possess a map indicating boundary of the HMA as well as the HAs.
 - b. The permittee will discourage the discharge of firearms within HMAs during the foaling season (March 1 – June 15) that is not directly associated with the permitted commercial activity. For example, discourage target shooting or sighting in of firearms in these areas during this time when permitted for commercial mountain lion hunting.
 - c. Stay at least 100 feet away from wild horses.
 - d. Do not feed or try to attract any wild horse towards you.
 - e. Keep dogs under control so they do not disturb or chase wild horses.
 - f. Report sick, injured animals, or other violations against wild horses to the BLM.

- g. Do not bring sick or diseased animals into the HMA. Wild horses on the range are not vaccinated against diseases.
- h. Camps, within the HMA, shall be at least ¼ mile away from wild horse water sources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: It is generally accepted that northwest Colorado, including the WRFO has been occupied by humans for 12,000 to 13,000 years. Evidence of human occupation can be as limited as a few scattered artifacts left over from tool manufacture and maintenance, the tools themselves, limited activity areas with a small hearth/fire pit, to much more extensive and expansive manifestations such as open camp sites, sites with standing architecture, rock art sites (cf Reed and Metcalf 1999), historic homesteads, prehistoric and historic roads and trails, brush fences, horse corrals and traps and other signs of human use of the area. The artifacts and features can be as old as the oldest known use of the area to the most recent historic homesteading or resource extraction evidence such as prospecting pits for minerals or sand and gravel (cf Church et al 2007). While this list is extensive it is not all inclusive and other types of cultural resources are also present on the land.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The direct and/or indirect effects on cultural resources can be as variable and diverse as the resources out on the land and the type of recreational activity that occurs on the land. The most severe impacts would be those that seriously compromise or destroy the resources. Examples of the most severe impacts might be removing portions of standing Native American brush houses (often referred to as wickiups) or brush fences or horse traps for fire wood for the camp. Rock art can be damaged if it is used as a target or if visitors carve their names and dates of birth or visit to the site.

Trails and roads could be seriously damaged during some events if the event was so vigorous as to cause excessive rutting or accelerated erosion of the surface features. Motorized competitive events could possibly cause the most severe impacts due to the concentrated nature of the events. Equestrian events have the potential to cause serious disruption to the resource depending on the number of participants and the duration of the activity. Trampling can potentially accelerate erosion and loss of prehistoric or historic trail and road features.

While a proposed campsite may be inventoried for any manifestations of prehistoric or historic activity on the proposed new camp site it is not technological possible at this time to detect any buried cultural resources that might be in the area. Excavations into the soil for fire pits or latrine pits have the potential, though not quantifiable, to impact those subsurface remains. These impacts are severe and permanent as are some of the previously mentioned potential impacts from recreational use of the land.

Some events such as personal or perhaps group endurance events likely have a less disruptive impact on cultural resources as there are a limited number of event participants and their impacts are limited. Exceptions might be technical rock climbing types or survivalist types of events.

However with proper planning it might be possible to prevent impacts that degrade cultural resources.

Increased human activity in an area also generally presents the hazard of unlawful collection of artifacts or other cultural materials. The loss of the artifacts and materials from their context is considered to be an unacceptable and permanent loss of important scientific data regarding human use of the land through time.

Cumulative Effects: Regardless of the type of cultural resource involved or the activity that occurs on or near the cultural resource if there is a loss of integrity, content, or if the site setting and appearance is damaged or compromised it represents a loss of scientific data from the regional database. The loss of isolated bits of stone left over from stone tool manufacture or maintenance may not be as important, as defined by the various historic preservation regulations, as would be the loss of a rock art site or some other resource that meets the criteria listed in the regulations for site importance but all such losses represent a long term, permanent, irreversible and irretrievable loss of data from the regional archaeological and historical database.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Action Alternative SRPs would continue to be issued. There would continue to be a need to have cultural resource inventories of all proposed camp and drop camp sites in compliance with appropriate laws. In general direct and indirect impacts to cultural resources would be substantially similar to those discussed under the Proposed Action above.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to cultural resources would likely be the same as those described for the Proposed Action above.

Mitigation:

1. Camp sites shall be located at least 330 feet (100 meters) away from architectural features such as bush fences, wickiups or cabins to prevent or reduce removal of wood for camp fires.
2. Camp sites shall be located at least 330 feet (100 meters) away from rock art sites.
3. Before commencing operations the operator must inform all employees and any subcontractors that disturbance to, defacement of, or removal of archaeological, historical, or remains of traditional cultural properties and fossils will not be permitted. Violation of the laws that protect these resources will be treated as law enforcement/administrative issues. The operator will be held accountable for the conduct of employees and subcontractors in this regard.
4. Disclosure of information regarding the nature and location of any archaeological, historic and traditional cultural property without written approval by the BLM is prohibited under Section 9 "Confidentiality" of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA; 16 U.S.C. 470hh), Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16

U.S.C. 470w-3) and the cultural resource use permit conditions.

5. The permittee is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
6. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The permittee will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The permittee, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
7. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the permittee must notify the AO, by telephone and 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), the permittee must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Approximately 80 percent of the WRFO has surface or near surface exposures of Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 5 formations. These formations include but are not necessarily limited to the Uintah, Morrison, Iles, Williams Fork, and elements of the Green River Formations. These formations are known to be highly fossiliferous, producing a variety of scientifically noteworthy fossils. These fossils are often vertebrates but particularly noteworthy plants, marine fossils and insects are also found.

Fossils may be found eroding out of the formations on the surface, as float at the base of steep inclines or visible in vertical to near vertical rock exposures. Fossils may also be encountered any time during excavations that continue down to or into the underlying sedimentary rock formations.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Low impact recreational activities, such as hunting, big game or mountain lion, may have limited effects of fossil resources depending on whether blinds are constructed for hunting or if mechanized equipment is used to track or retrieve downed game. Crushing and displacement of fossils are most likely to occur if fossils are exposed at the surface at blind sites or along travel routes.

Camps sites located on or very near rock outcrop/exposures could result in extensive crushing and displacement of fossil due to foot traffic or the presence of pack and saddle stock at the camp location. The longer the camp is in place and used, concurrent with the number of people and animals involved can have a determining value in the severity and extent of damage to fossil resources should any be present.

Individual competitive events such as endurance trials, unless they involve rock climbing of any type or the need to excavate locations for temporary shelter or other reason are likely to have very minimal impacts to fossil resources due to the short time an individual, or small group of individuals, is likely to be in a sensitive location.

Large events such as motorized races, hill climbs, motocross events, or target shoots with large staging/vending areas have the potential to seriously and adversely impact fossil resource, depending on the location and the depth of the soil at the location. Crushing and displacement of fossil would be likely for all events with the concentrated motorized events potentially posing the largest and most extensive threat to fossil resources.

Under any form of recreational activity the increased human presence and activity in the area could potentially increase the incidence of unlawful collection of vertebrate or other scientifically noteworthy fossil resources.

The Blacks Gulch, Raven Ridge, and Coal Draw ACECs have a no surface occupancy stipulation to protect scientifically noteworthy fossil resources. Camp sites, staging areas or vending areas are not compatible with preservation of scientifically noteworthy and particularly fragile fossils found in these ACECs. Motorized activity or concentrated equestrian activity in these areas would likely represent an unacceptable impact to fossil resources in these areas. Generalized hunting or hiking would not represent an unacceptable impact unless collecting were to occur while in the area.

Cumulative Effects: Regardless of the recreational activity involved any impacts to fossil resources that results in the crushing, displacement, or unlawful removal of scientifically noteworthy vertebrate, plant or invertebrate fossils represents a long term, permanent, irreversible and irretrievable loss of scientific data from the regional paleontological database.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The impacts to fossil resources under the No Action Alternative would be similar to or the same as those described under the Proposed Action since SRPs would continue to be issued on a case by case basis.

Cumulative Effects: Same as those described for the Proposed Action above.

Mitigation:

1. Before commencing operations the operator must inform all employees and any subcontractors that disturbance to, defacement of, or removal of fossils will not be

permitted. Violation of the laws that protect these resources will be treated as law enforcement/administrative issues. The operator will be held accountable for the conduct of employees and subcontractors in this regard.

2. Disclosure of information regarding the nature and location of any archaeological, historic and traditional cultural property without written approval by the BLM is prohibited under "Confidentiality" of the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA; PI 111-011, Subtitle D, Section 6309 and 16 USC 470aaa et seq.) and the SRP conditions.
3. The permittee is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the recreational activity operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the permittee must immediately contact the appropriate BLM representative.
4. Camp sites, staging areas and vending areas are not compatible with the NSO stipulations in Blacks Gulch, Raven Ridge, and Coal Draw ACECs due to potential trampling, crushing, and potential unlawful collecting impacts to fossils.

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

Affected Environment: Consultation with Native American groups during the last few years and on specific large projects has not resulted in the identification of any specific locations that are of specific interest, particularly in terms of great religious significance. However, in general terms rock art sites and older habitations locations are of concern. Tribes have expressed concern about intrusions that result in a disruption of the visual setting and feeling around those locations. Actions that might result in defacement of rock art or destruction of wickiups or other features are of particular concern to the native groups.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Long term or permanent intrusions into the setting and feeling of cultural resources such as rock art sites or habitation sites, including rock shelters cause a degeneration or destruction of the setting and/or feeling associated with such locations held by Native American groups.

Cumulative Effects: Any long term loss or destruction of resources that alters the feeling or setting valued by native American groups represents a potential for long term, permanent, irreversible and irretrievable loss of values to the Native American groups. The loss is most severe when it results in the loss, alteration or defacement of rock art sites.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The direct and indirect impacts to Native American concerns would be similar to those described above since SRP permits would continue to be issued on a case by case basis under the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impact to Native American concerns would be the same as those described for the Proposed Action under the No Action Alternative since SRPs would continue to be issued on a case by case basis.

Mitigation:

1. Camp sites shall be located at least 330 feet (100 meters) away from architectural features such as bush fences, wickiups or cabins to prevent or reduce removal of wood for camp fires.
2. Camp sites shall be located at least 330 feet (100 meters) away from rock art sites.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: Approximately 1.4 million acres of public lands within the WRFO are currently permitted for livestock grazing. These 1.4 million acres is divided up into 155 grazing allotments plus the White River Trail used for trailing livestock. The livestock that graze within the WRFO use is mainly cattle, sheep, and domestic horses. The majority of cattle grazing occur between the months of April and October with the majority of sheep grazing occurring during the winter months on the western portion of the resource area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to livestock grazing will be variable based on the type of activity being approved. The most common impact will primarily revolve around livestock distribution. Large numbers of people congregated in an area for an extended time may result in livestock being displaced from an area for the duration of the event. There is also the potential for direct conflict with vehicles if livestock are hit or injured by vehicles associated with the SRP. Range improvements used to manage and water livestock also have potential to be impacted based on the type of event taking place. In general impacts to livestock will be minimal based on the design feature in the proposed action to coordinate with the grazing permittees prior to any events being approved.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts to livestock grazing are challenging to fully address without knowing the exact SRPs that may be approved. Other activities that occur within WRFO include but are not limited to oil and gas development and mining activities (coal and sodium bicarbonate). Cumulative impacts from other land uses do have the potential to impact authorized grazing and would be analyzed and addressed during grazing permit renewals.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: There would be no impacts to livestock grazing from the issuance of SRPs.

Cumulative Effects: There would be no additional cumulative impacts to livestock grazing from the No Action Alternative in addition to land uses that are already occurring within the WRFO.

Mitigation:

1. Any range improvement impacted from SRP activities will be restored to prior working condition when activities are completed.

RECREATION

Affected Environment: The planning area for public recreational use includes all public lands within the WRFO. These public lands provide a broad spectrum of recreation opportunities and beneficial outcomes, affording visitors an array of settings for primitive and dispersed recreation, as well as developed and OHV-based recreation. Recreational opportunities are available to the public on all BLM-administered lands where legal access exists. Recreational activities are typically dispersed and unstructured, and include hunting, fishing, OHV riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, sledding, mountain biking, camping, hiking, geocaching, horseback riding, picnicking, and target shooting.

Recreational settings range from backcountry (e.g, the Willow Creek WSA area) to rural (e.g. Towns of Rangely and Meeker). As outlined in the 1997 White River ROD/RMP, recreation on BLM land in the WRFO Planning Area is managed as the White River Extensive Recreation Management Area. Recreation management of the White River ERMA has been primarily custodial, enabling visitor's opportunities for dispersed recreation settings and OHV-based recreation experiences. This type of setting is typical of an area that is largely undeveloped and where nature-based recreation predominates.

In the future recreational use of public lands overall is likely to increase, especially motorized-based recreation. This could increase the frequency of visitation to other recreation pursuits, such as interpretive recreation at cultural sites. Concentrated camping use is increasing across the WRFO Planning Area during the fall hunting seasons, and in the spring and summer, when OHV use is most common. Past recreation trends have predominately favored hunting and fishing. However, OHV use in the WRFO has been gaining in popularity in the last ten years as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) become safer and more affordable. These trends are expected to continue to increase as the population of the surrounding areas continues to expand.

WRFO Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program currently consists of the issuance, renewal, monitoring, and administration of 52 SRPs in fiscal year 2014. The majority of these permits are for commercial big game hunting outfitting and guiding (33 of 52 permits). Typical SRPs for big game outfitting and guiding authorize commercial use and operations to take place from the beginning of the first big game season (late August) through the end of the last season (end of December). The next largest type of permit is for commercial mountain lion hunting outfitting and guiding (13 of 52 permits). Typical SRPs for mountain lion outfitting and guiding authorize commercial use and operations to take place from mid-November through April of each year. Therefore, all existing big game and mountain lion hunting permittees have been authorized to

operate on BLM lands for periods greater than 14 consecutive days. Nearly all WSAs and ACECs have at least one or more big game outfitting and guiding SRP issued within in boundaries. Twelve of 13 commercial mountain lion outfitting and guiding SRPs are issued for all BLM lands in the WRFO including all Special Areas. "Special areas" (43 CFR 2932.5) include areas "for which BLM determines that the resources require special management and control measures for their protection" and in the WRFO include Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and the Canyon Pintado National Historic District (NHD). There are currently five drop camps authorized in conjunction with four big game outfitting and guiding permits. These camps are typically set up for the entire big game season (late August through November), occupy less than 3 staging area acres, and provide primitive temporary camping facilities to support the big game hunters and guides. Other types of permits the WRFO has administered in the past five years include: commercial horse rental operations, commercial canoeing guided trips, a competitive trail run race, rock crawling events, at-risk youth organized camping trips, and college outdoor adventure trips. It is expected that commercial or competitive OHV events will continue to be proposed in the Rangely Rock Crawling Park in the future. SPRs have typically been issued to new permittees as annual permits for the first two years. After two years of successful performance permittees are eligible to apply for a multi-year permit. Multi-year permits have typically been issued for five years.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Issuing SRPs on public lands administered by BLM WRFO for competitive, commercial, and organized group events that may occur within special areas, span more than 14 consecutive days, and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres may provide a means to deliver recreational opportunities and experiences to the public that would otherwise not be able to be realized. The Proposed Action would also help manage visitor use, protect natural and cultural resources, and achieve the goals and objectives of the SRP program under the appropriate terms and conditions. The Proposed Action would allow the WRFO to meet the public need and demand for those wanting to be commercially guided or outfitted for big game and mountain lion hunting. This would also provide recreational opportunities and experiences to the public in "Special Areas" that would otherwise not be able to be realized. The Proposed Action also provides for commercial drop camp recreational opportunities such as hunting camps and backpacking camps that are proposed for use greater than 14 consecutive days. The Proposed Action would also provide for larger OHV events in the Rangely Rock Crawling Park and potentially other areas that may require greater than 3 staging area acres in order to accommodate the event. Overall, the Proposed Action provides additional recreation opportunities and experiences that would otherwise not be available or would require additional costs and effort by both the BLM and the applicant to authorize such SRPs.

SRPs issued for more than 14 consecutive days

It is anticipated that typical SRPs issued for greater than 14 days would include, but are not limited to, commercial big game and mountain lion outfitting and guiding, drop camps, and filming. There is potential for these types of activities to impact non-commercial or general public use of public lands. Valid conflicts that could impact the general public would include overlapping use, reducing the quality of desired recreational experiences, or occupying the same camp locations. However, the Application Evaluation criteria in the WRFO SRP Policy for new SRP proposals states that "Permits will not be issued in areas where conflicts currently exist

between existing permittees, other agencies, and/or the public or landowners.” This evaluation criteria, if applied appropriately, would prevent those types of conflict from occurring. Drop camps authorized for greater than 14 consecutive days could displace the general public from occupying this site during the proposed time period. To reduce this potential impact to the general public it is recommended that if the general public has been known to occupy the proposed camp location during the time proposed, the applicant may be asked to relocate the proposed camp to a location that would not displace the general public. Other impacts to resources or other recreationalists from drop camps would be mitigated through the BLM Colorado Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations (Attachment 1). It is unlikely that competitive events would exceed 14 days of consecutive use. Filming proposals have the potential to exceed consecutive 14 days. The duration of a filming proposal may affect recreational opportunities if there is known recreational use of the same area and time the proposal. To prevent this impact to the general public, it is recommended that filming proposals modify the location or timing of filming if there is potential conflict with known recreational uses of the areas during the proposed filming time.

SRPs issued in Special Areas

It is likely that future SRP proposals in Special Areas will include commercial big game and mountain lion outfitting and guiding. Other potential SRP proposals in Special Areas include, but are not limited to cultural resource tours in Canyon Pintado NHD and other areas, drop camps, and competitive events. Issuing these types of SRPs in these areas provides additional recreational opportunities that otherwise would be unavailable or only available at a much greater cost of effort, time, and funds for both the BLM and the applicant. None of the Special Areas in the WRFO have recreation resource allocations set and all areas currently receive a low to moderate amount of dispersed recreational use throughout the year. Therefore issuing these types of permits in Special Areas under the standards stipulations, terms, and conditions and considering the applicant evaluation criteria, there should be no impacts to the general public recreational opportunities or experiences in these areas.

SRPs issued for more than 3 staging area acres

Issuing SRPs for competitive events that require more than 3 staging area acres provides the general public opportunities to participate in or watch large recreational events on public lands. Issuing these types of SRPs provides additional recreational opportunities that otherwise would be unavailable or only available at a much greater cost of effort, time, and funds for both the BLM and the applicant. Over the past several years one to two SRPs per year have been issued for commercial and competitive use of the Rangely Rock Crawling Park. These events are subject to the Colorado BLM Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Vehicle Events (Attachment 3). The staging areas occupied for these past events have been slightly less than three acres in size. There is potential for proposals for large events to require staging areas larger than three acres in size in the future. These proposals would provide recreational opportunities and experiences for the general public that otherwise would not be available.

Cumulative Effects: The activities in the Proposed Action when authorized under the appropriate terms and conditions and combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable

actions, provide additional recreational opportunities and experiences that otherwise would be not be available or would only be available at a greater cost or time and resources to the public, the SRP applicant, and BLM.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Because the BLM would not issue SRP permits in special areas or for activities that span 14 consecutive days and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres, SRPs would be considered individually through a stand-alone NEPA analysis (i.e., most likely an environmental assessment). This would likely result in applications being delayed or even denied if the SRP application could not be processed under CX 516 DM 11.9, H1. Overall this process would result in less recreational opportunity and reduced recreational experiences available. This process would also result in a greater cost in time and resources for the public, the SRP applicant, and the BLM.

Cumulative Effects: Issuing SRPs under the process identified above combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions provide less recreational opportunities and fewer recreational experiences than the Proposed Action alternative.

Mitigation:

1. If the general public has been known to occupy the proposed camp location during the time proposed, the SRP applicant may be asked to relocate the proposed camp to a location that would not displace the general public.
2. Filming proposals may need to modify the location or timing of filming if there is potential conflict with known recreational use of the area during the proposed filming time.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment: A network of federal, state, and county roads provides access to the WRFO Planning Area. State Highway 13 provides access to the WRFO Planning Area from I-70 and serves as the major north/south route for the eastern portion of the Planning Area. State Highway 64 is a west-east highway and provides the route between the towns of Meeker and Rangely. Finally, SH 139 and U.S. 40 provide access to the western portion of the WRFO Planning Area. U.S. 40 is part of the National Highway System and a designated truck route. It carries a higher functional class than SH 13, SH 64, and SH 139 and supports interregional, intra-regional, and intercity travel. Collectively, the state system provides important regional access linking the I-70 corridor to northwestern Colorado and regional centers within northeastern Utah. State Highway 139, also known as the Dinosaur Diamond National Scenic Byway, is part of a major scenic byway loop that travels through the Canyon Pintado NHD. In addition to these paved highways, there are a number of BLM roads and private routes that provide access to BLM-administered public lands. Many roads that were once rarely used have seen increased use in recent years due to oil and gas exploration and development.

The objective of the travel management area designations from the 1997 White River ROD/RMP is to manage motorized vehicle travel on public lands to provide for public need and demand, protect natural resources, provide for safety of public land users, and the minimize conflicts among various users of public lands. The 1997 White River ROD/RMP manages OHV use areas in four ways: as limited to existing routes, limited to designated routes, closed, and limited seasonally (See Figure 1). Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Moosehead Mountain area, and BLM lands within Oak Ridge State Wildlife Area are closed to motor vehicles. The Cow Creek and Timber Gulch/Hay Gulch areas are seasonally closed to motor vehicles from August 15 to November 30. ACECs, the Indian Valley area, and Canyon Pintado NHD motor vehicles are limited to designated roads, ways, and trails. A variety of areas limit motor vehicles to existing roads and trails year round. In all other areas in the WRFO motor vehicles are limited to existing roads and trail from October 1 through April 30 of each year. Exceptions to this limitation are as follows: 1) Vehicles may be allowed to travel up to 300 feet from an existing road, way, or trail to park, camp, gather firewood, etc. as long as no damage is caused to resources; 2) Hunters may use motorized vehicles to retrieve downed big game as long as damage to resources does not occur; 3) Physically challenged individuals (having a CPW permit) may be allowed to continue travel off existing roads and trails during the limited months; 4) Emergencies involving threats to life and property. All SRPs issued for OHV events must adhere to Colorado BLM Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Vehicle Events (Attachment 3). All SRPs are required to provide the WRFO a current list of all vehicles and license numbers used in operations.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: In order to meet the intent of the above 1997 White River ROD/RMP travel management objective and not create resource damage, all SRP holders must be informed about how motorized vehicles are managed in the WRFO and abide by these rules. It is therefore recommended that Figure 1 and pages 2-44, 2-45 and 2-46 of the 1997 White River ROD/RMP which describe motor vehicle travel be added to the WRFO SRP Policy as an attachment. This is planned to serve as a consistent process to inform SRP holders about motor vehicle travel in the WRFO. If exceptions to these designations were made for SRP holders or special motor vehicle authorizations were made for SRP holders in certain areas, there could be a variety of impacts to resources and the general public. These impacts could include, but are not limited to: soils impacts, vegetation damage, wildlife impacts, recreational experience impacts and exclusive motorized access to some public lands. To mitigate these potential impacts to the public and resources it is recommended that special authorizations or exceptions for motorized vehicle travel not be made for SRP holders.

There is also potential for competitive or commercial OHV events to damage the transportation system if motorized travel occurs when soils are saturated. The concentrated use of motor vehicles over the same route when it is saturated could create considerable degradation of that route during the event. This would cause impacts to future users of this route and potentially impacts other resources as well. In order to prevent degradation of the transportation system by competitive or commercial OHV events, it is recommended that all associated activity cease and the event be delayed or canceled until conditions improve when soils or routes surfaces become saturated to a depth of three inches unless approved by the Authorized Officer.

Cumulative Effects: The activities in the Proposed Action when authorized under the appropriate terms and conditions and combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, would provide for appropriate use of transportation system. Any new SRPs authorized as a result of the Proposed Action could result in an overall incremental increase depending how many existing SRP expire during this time.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Because the BLM would not issue SRP permits in special areas or for activities that span 14 consecutive days and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres, SRPs of these type/s would be considered individually through a stand-alone NEPA analysis (i.e., most likely an environmental assessment). This would likely result in applications being delayed or even denied if the SRP application could not be processed under CX 516 DM 11.9, H1. Therefore this alternative would have less impact on the existing transportation system than the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects: None identified as a result of this alternative.

Mitigation:

1. For all associated activity for commercial or competitive OHV events, SRP permittees must have a contingency plan for canceling the event or changing the venue due to incimate weather for operations that would create damage to soils and create rutting. This plan will be implemented when soils are saturated to a depth of three inches unless the activity is approved by the Authorized Officer. Damage to soil due to erosion caused as a result of an event that is beyond what could be expected during normal use will be identified by the permittee or BLM, and if needed, BLM will be notified in order to formulate a plan to stabilize the site and reduce the potential for future impacts.
2. No administrative authorizations for motorized vehicle use will be made for SRP holders unless specifically authorized in writing by the Authorized Officer.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: The WRFO has a total of seventeen Areas of Critical and Environmental Concerns (ACECs), encompassing approximately 99,120 acres. These ACECs were designated to protect areas that contain important historical, cultural, scenic and natural values. Table 5 provides a list of designated ACECs and reason for designation.

Table 5. Designated ACECs and reason for designation.

ACEC Name	Concern/Designation
Blacks Gulch	Paleontological values
Coal Draw	Paleontological values

Coal Oil Rim	Small aspen clones and other biologically diverse plant communities & riparian habitats
Deer Gulch	Sensitive plants & remnant vegetation associations (RVAs)
Duck Creek	Threatened and Endangered (T/E) plants & cultural resources
Dudley Bluffs	T/E plants, sensitive plants & remnant veg associations (RVAs)
East Douglas Creek	Biologically diverse plant communities, riparian habitat & Colorado River Cutthroat trout habitat
Lower Greasewood Creek	Sensitive plants & remnant vegetation associations (RVAs)
Oil Spring Mountain	Spruce-fir and important biologically diverse plant communities
Moosehead Mountain	Biologically diverse plant communities, riparian habitat & Cultural Resources
Raven Ridge	Proposed Threatened T/E plants, sensitive plants & RVAs, Paleontological values
Ryan Gulch	T/E plants
South Cathedral Bluffs	Sensitive plants & RVAs
Upper Greasewood Creek	T/E plants, sensitive plants & remnant veg association (RVAs)
White River Riparian	Biologically diverse plant communities, bald eagle roosts, Colorado River Squawfish
Yanks Gulch	T/E plants, sensitive plants & remnant vegetation associations (RVAs)
Trapper Creek/Northwater Creek	Trout fisheries, sensitive plants & remnant vegetation associations (RVAs)

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The White River Field Office's objective is to allow for multiple uses of ACECs within the context of maintaining and preventing degradation to the special values in the particular ACEC. Impacts to ACECs would depend on the timing, location, nature, and intensity of the recreational activity. Any SRPs (competitive, commercial or organized) that would include activities where possible surface disturbance (involving three or more acres) or assembled human presence in a specific area, especially for more than 14 days, have the greatest potential to harm ACEC special values because of increased human presence.

With increased human presence within an ACEC it increases the chances of habitat damage for vegetation and wildlife as well as potential damage to cultural and paleontological resources. Usually surface disturbance or occupancy is not allowed within the boundaries of Dudley Bluffs, Yanks Gulch, Lower Greasewood, Raven Ridge, South Cathedral Bluffs, Deer Gulch, Ryan Gulch, Blacks Gulch, Coal Draw, Moosehead or Duck Creek. However, exceptions can be granted after proper surveys have been completed to ensure important natural values are not being affected.

Direct effects to ACECs include habitat fragmentation for wildlife and SSPS. An increased chance of nonnative invasive plant species establishing and spreading greatly rises compared to what would naturally occur in an area over time. Cultural and Paleontological sites within ACECs might be visited and potentially accidentally utilized more by people and over time the integrity of the site may diminish.

Cumulative Effects: Over time with additional traffic in ACECs the impacts from recreational use will begin to have greater effects on the natural values for which the ACECs were designated. Cumulative impacts may be seen in the forms of long term habitat fragmentation and establishment/spread of nonnative invasive weed species. Habitat fragmentation could potentially impact SSPS as well as the surrounding pollinator habitat. Fragmentation could reduce the potential for special status plant species to increase their habitat and may increase the required flight distance for pollinator species in order to pollinate SSPS. An increased flight distance could mean that some SSPS do not receive pollination thus not set seed. Habitat fragmentation might not only affect the vegetation, but can also affect wildlife species by displacing them.

Weedy plant species may out-compete biologically diverse plant communities or establish in suitable and potential SSPS habitat which could decrease native plant population sizes or prevent native colonization by slowing or ceasing seral progression. Weedy species, soil erosion and water pollution have the possibility of decreasing habitat quality for native fish found in the waterways of ACECs.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to ACECs would be similar to those discussed above under the Proposed Action. The greatest difference would be that each application would be evaluated independently and would likely require a stand-alone EA for each individual activity.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be the same as the Proposed Action.

Mitigation: See special status plant species section, cultural, paleontological, and wildlife sections.

WILDERNESS

Affected Environment: The BLM WRFO manages six designated Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) totaling over 79,000 acres. These WSAs include Black Mountain WSA (9,932 acres), Bull Canyon WSA (12,297 acres), Oil Spring Mountain WSA (17,740 acres), Skull Creek WSA (13,740 acres), Willow Creek WSA (13,368 acres), and Windy Gulch WSA (12,274 acres). There are currently eight valid SRPs for commercial big game outfitting and guiding and 12 valid SRPs for commercial mountain lion outfitting and guiding in these WSAs.

BLM Manual 6330 (Management of Wilderness Study Areas) provides direction for the management of these areas. The BLM's WSA overall management policy is, with a few

exceptions, to continue resource uses on lands designated as WSAs in a manner that maintains the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness. The BLM's WSA policy will protect the wilderness characteristics of all WSAs in the same or better condition than they were on October 21, 1976 (or for Section 202 WSAs not reported to Congress, the date the WSA was designated), until Congress determines whether or not they should be designated as wilderness. "Special areas" (43 CFR 2932.5) include areas "for which BLM determines that the resources require special management and control measures for their protection" and include WSAs. For managing SRPs in WSAs BLM Manual 6330 states, "Activities that require authorization under a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) will be allowed only if the use and related facilities satisfy the non-impairment criteria (and therefore do not involve a use of the WSA that would be incompatible with wilderness designation). Examples of uses that may be authorized include river trip outfitters, hunting or fishing guides, group backpack trips, and providers of pack animals and saddle horses." To identify what would be incompatible with wilderness designation BLM Manual 6340 (Management of Designated Wilderness) can be referenced. This manual states that "Activities that are not wilderness-dependent may be prohibited without degrading opportunities for unconfined recreation. Non-wilderness-dependent activities may also impair aspects of wilderness character and, when this is the case, should be prohibited. Such activities may include: A. Contests, such as physical or mental endurance of a person or animal, foot races, canoe or boat races, competitive trail rides or other forms of competition, and survival contests; Competitive events are not wilderness dependent and can be conducted elsewhere on BLM lands."

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Issuing SRPs in WSAs may provide additional recreational opportunities and experiences to the public that would otherwise not be able to be realized. Big game and mountain lion outfitting and guiding and drop camps are examples of past and existing SRPs that have been authorized in WRFO WSAs for more than 14 consecutive days. Based on monitoring these SRPs, wilderness characteristics in the WSAs have not been impaired or impacted as a result of this use. It is therefore likely that under the appropriate terms and conditions, future big game and mountain lion outfitting and guiding and drop camps in general would not impair wilderness characteristics. There are some types of SRPs that may be considered impairing to wilderness characteristics. Such activities may include contests, competitive events, or races. These types of activities have the potential to impact the wilderness characteristics of naturalness and solitude. If an SRP proposal is deemed to be a competitive event inside a WSA, then a specific NEPA analysis may need to be conducted for this proposal or the proposal may need to be modified to move the location of the competitive event outside of WSA boundaries.

Cumulative Effects: The activities in the Proposed Action when authorized under the appropriate terms and conditions and combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, provide additional recreational opportunities and experiences that otherwise would be not be available or would only be available at a greater cost or time and resources to the public, the SRP applicant, and BLM. SRPs proposed in WSAs must meet the non-impairment standard in order to be authorized.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Because the BLM would not issue SRP permits in special areas or for activities that span 14 consecutive days and/or impact more than 3 staging area acres, SRPs of these type/s would be considered individually through a stand-alone NEPA analysis (i.e., most likely an environmental assessment). This would likely result in applications for WSA-related SRPs being delayed or even denied if the SRP application could not be processed under CX 516 DM 11.9, H1.

Cumulative Effects: None identified as a result of this alternative.

Mitigation: If an SRP proposal is determined to be a competitive event and is proposed to be located inside a WSA, then a specific NEPA analysis may need to be conducted to determine if the proposal meets the non-impairment standard or the proposal may need to be modified to move the location of the competitive event outside of WSA boundaries.

REFERENCES CITED:

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Gutzwiller, K. J., H. A. Marcum, H. B. Harvey, J. D. Roth, and S. H. Anderson. 1998. Bired tolerance to human intrusion in Wyoming montane forests. Condor 100: 519-527.

Hoffman, R. W. 2001. Northwest Colorado Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Conservation Plan. Northwest Colorado Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Work Group and Colorado Division of Wildlife, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Luckenbach, R. A. 1979. An analysis of off-road vehicle use on desert avifaunas. Forty-third North American Wildlife Conference: 157-162.

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http://interact.uoregon.edu?MediaLit/wfae/library/articles/radle_effect_noise_wildlife.pdf.

Reed, Alan D., and Michael D. Metcalf. 1999. Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin. Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists, Denver, Colorado.

Riffell, S. K., K. J. Gutzwiller, and S. H. Anderson. 1996. Does repeated human intrusion cause cumulative declines in avian richness and abundance? *Ecological Applications* 6(2): 492-505.

TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED: None.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality; Surface and Ground Water Quality; Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights; Soils	5/6/2014
Heather Woodruff	Ecologist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; Special Status Plant Species; Forest Management	5/7/2014
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources; Native American Religious Concerns; Paleontological Resources	5/23/2014
Matthew Dupire	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species; Vegetation; Rangeland Management	5/1/2014
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds; Special Status Animal Species; Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife; Wetlands and Riparian Zones	5/9/2014
Aaron Grimes	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness; Visual Resources; Access and Transportation; Recreation, Hazardous or Solid Wastes	4/22/2014
Kyle Frary	Fire Management Specialist	Fire Management	4/29/2014
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	4/22/2014
Stacey Burke	Realty Specialist	Realty	4/25/2014
Melissa Kendall	Range Technician	Wild Horse Management	4/14/2014
Aaron Grimes	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Project Lead – Document Preparer	5/12/2014
Heather Sauls	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Compliance	6/16/2014

ATTACHMENTS:

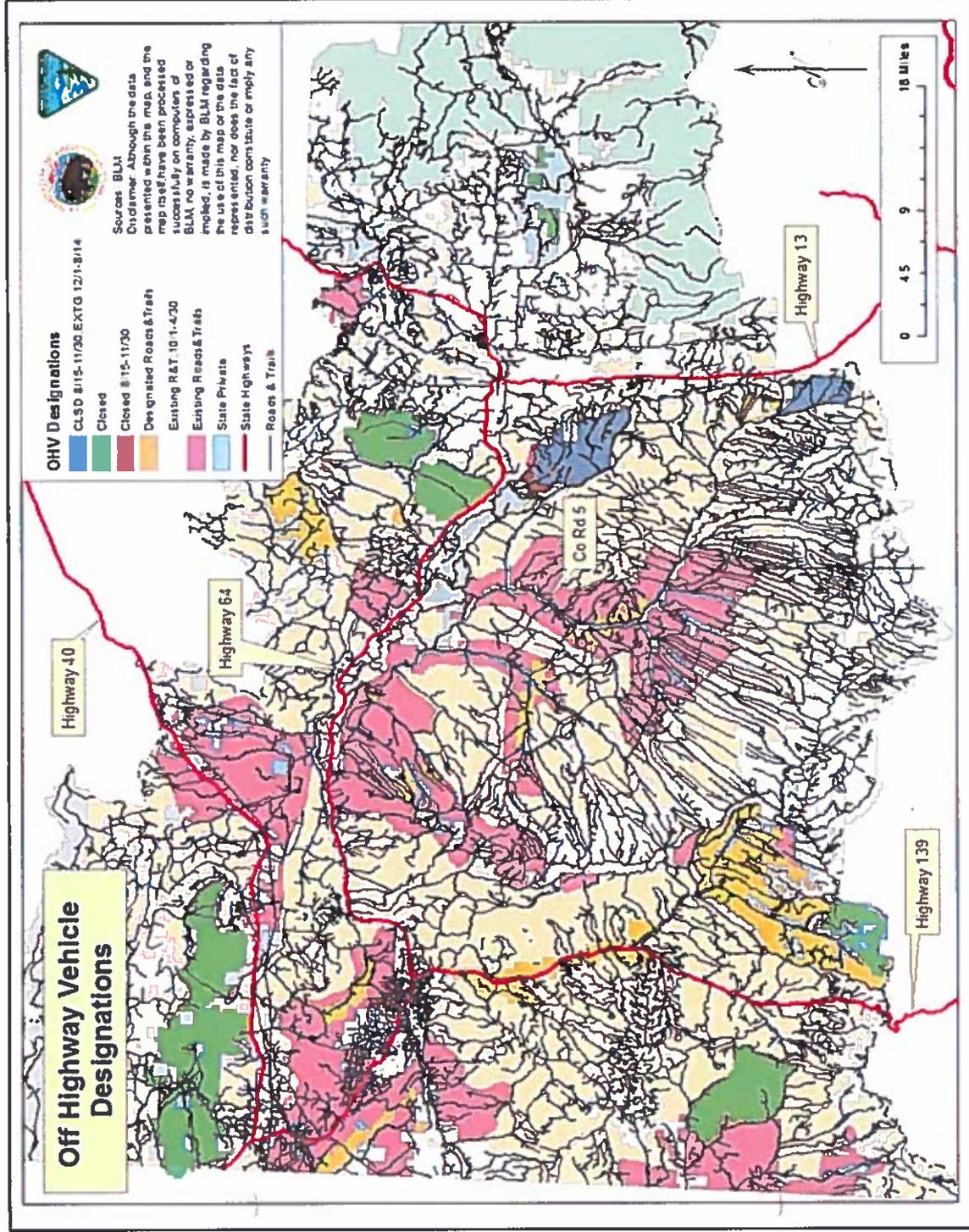
Figure 1: ROD/RMP Motorized Vehicle Designations

Attachment 1: BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (2014 version)

Attachment 2: White River Field Office (WRFO) Special Recreation Permit Policy

Attachment 3: Colorado BLM Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Vehicle Events

Figure 1: ROD/RMP Motorized Vehicle Designations



Attachment 1: BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (2014 version)

**SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT TERMS, CONDITIONS AND STIPULATIONS
FOR ALL PERMITTED ACTIVITIES**

Stipulations: The following standard stipulations are automatically included and apply to all permits (some additional stipulations are specific to only certain activities). Failure to comply with these stipulations may result in remedial actions listed below under Performance Evaluation, Section XVIII. B. Per 2932.40, violations of permit terms or stipulations may be subject to fines and imprisonment, in addition to administrative penalties.

I. RISKS, HAZARDS AND SAFETY

- A. Adequate first aid and safety equipment shall be provided while performing the permitted activities.
- B. All guides and employees responsible for clients in the field shall be trained in First Aid and hold a valid certification of training from the American Red Cross or its equivalent.
- C. In case of human death, or wildfire, involving the permitted operation, the County Sheriff shall be notified immediately, and the BLM shall be notified immediately after the Sheriff is notified.

II. INDEMNIFICATION

- A. The permittee shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the United States and/or its agencies and representatives from any and all demands, claims, or liabilities of every nature whatsoever, including, but not limited to damages to property, injuries to or death of persons, arising directly or indirectly from, or in any way connected with the authorized use and occupancy of the lands authorized for use under this permit.
- B. Insurance: Coverage shall be obtained for the permitted operations in the minimum liability coverage amounts of:

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS		
SRP Event or Activity	Per Occurrence	Per Annual Aggregate
Low Risk: general non-competitive and non-commercial activities such as group camping, group activities, mounted orienteering, backpacking, or dog trials.	\$300,000	\$600,000
Moderate Risk: whitewater boating, horse endurance rides, OHV events, mountain bike races, rock climbing (with ropes), ultra-light outings, rodeos	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
High Risk: bungee jumping, speed record events, unaided rock climbing, heli-skiing, or aviation assisted activities	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000 - \$10,000,000

C. An insurance certificate shall be submitted, stating the limits of coverage, identifying the “Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management” as additional insured, that includes the minimum shown above, expiration date, and a list of the activities that are permitted and insured.

D. The permittee will ensure the BLM will be notified 30 days in advance of termination or modification of the policy, or modification of such insurance.

E. The insured on the insurance certificate must match the permitted name of business or organization on the permit form.

IV. LIMITATIONS

A. This permit authorizes only temporary use in connection with the operations, during the period(s) and in the area(s) identified in the permit and authorized by an Annual Operating Authorization.

B. If an existing commercial permittee wishes to sell or otherwise terminate his or her business and desires that permit privileges be transferred to a new owner, the permittee must notify the authorized officer in advance, in writing, and receive advance written approval for the permit transfer from the authorized officer.

C. Use of Non-Public lands: This permit does not authorize use of non-BLM land (i.e. private, city, county, state, or other federal land).

D. The applicant shall provide upon request the name(s) and address(s) of private landowners whose property is used in connection with the permitted operations, and evidence of permission to use such land.

E. Access to Public Lands: The BLM does not guarantee legal access to public lands unless legal access for the general public is available. Where legal public access is not available, the permittee is responsible for obtaining permission from the landowner(s) to travel through or use private lands.

F. Multi-Year Permits: A multi-year permit is not valid unless accompanied by a current Annual Operating Authorization.

G. Joint Permit Requirement: Code of Federal Regulation citations for both the BLM and Forest Service are valid and will be enforced for joint permits on associated public lands.

H. If a lion outfitter does not own their own dogs, the permittee must furnish copies of all lease or rental arrangements for the dogs and/or dog handler(s) that they plan on using upon request. Dog handlers must be listed as guides.

V. ASSIGNMENT AND SUBLETTING OF PERMIT PRIVILEGES

The permittee may not assign permit privileges to a third party, including booking agents. The permittee or permittee's representative may not assign, contract, or sublease any portion of the permit authorization or interest therein, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily. However, contracting of equipment or services may be approved by the authorized officer in advance, if necessary to supplement a permittee's operations. Such contracting should not constitute more than half the required equipment or services for any one trip or activity and the permittee must retain operational control of the permitted activity. If equipment or services are contracted, the permittee shall continue to be responsible for compliance with all stipulations and conditions of the permit.

The following is required:

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A. A third party advertisement used to book a trip must clearly indicate that the trip will be operated by the company holding the permit;

B. Guides and employees must fall under federal and state employment regulations and be listed in the operating plan prior to each operating season. (i.e. IRS Form-1099, independent contractor form).

C. If you are proposing to employ guides or employees who are licensed and/or permitted outfitters elsewhere that must be disclosed at the time you submit their name and information on your guide list.

D. Written notice must be given to the BLM to use equipment with outfitter markings (company names, logos, etc.) other than those of the permit holder prior to the time of use (hunt, launch, tour, etc.).

VI. NON-EXCLUSIVE USE

A. Roads, trails and trailheads, or campsites commonly in public use shall not be blocked or enclosed by the permittee.

B. Public lands will generally remain available on a first-come, first served basis to other commercial and private recreational users.

VII. CONDUCT AND MANNERS

A. The permittee is at all times responsible for the actions of himself, his employees, clients and guests in connection with the authorized operations, and shall not cause a public disturbance or engage in activities which create a hazard or nuisance.

B. The permittee shall practice the TREAD LIGHTLY and LEAVE NO TRACE land ethics and inform their clients about these practices and ensure that they follow them.

C. An outfitter shall maintain accurate and up to date records.

D. An outfitter shall maintain a regular place of business at which mail and phone calls can be received and provide address and physical location of such business to the BLM. Any change of mailing address, place of residence, or telephone number shall be reported to the BLM within thirty (30) days of such change.

VIII. MODIFICATION OR AMENDMENT

A. If needed, the permittee shall request amendment or modification of the permit prior to issuance of the annual operating authorization for changes in: use areas or sites, season of use, services provided, fee structure, or any other changes in operations.

B. Check with individual field offices for permit amendment deadlines.

IX. PAYMENTS

A. Use Fee Payments: Permit fees are due and payable in advance based on estimated use gross receipts. Payments shall be made to the Field Office by check, credit card, money order or cashier's check, payable to the "Bureau of Land Management".

B. Periodic Payments: At the Field Manager's discretion, when the estimated use fee is greater than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), a schedule for periodic payments may be arranged.

C. End of Season Payment: The post-use reports and/or trip logs are due 30 days after the last day of use or as specified on SRP. The actual use fee shall be calculated from the reports by the field office and billed accordingly.

D. Refunds:

1. All overpayments will be credited for use for the following operating season.

2. Refunds may be issued in the case of permit transfers, permit cancellations, and expired non-renewing permits. Refunds must be requested in writing.

E. Late Payments Late payment of fees may result in additional fee penalties, permit probation, suspension, and/or cancellation, and interest and administrative handling charges.

F. Deductions: Allowable deductions in permit fees shall be agreed upon in advance, and may include costs related to the permitted operations incurred by the permittee for long distance off-site transportation, and off-site lodging, per Handbook H-2930-1.

G. Discounts for Non-Public Lands use (For Upland Use Only) must be requested and approved prior to use. No discounts are allowed for river related permits.

X. USE REPORTS

A. Commercial Trip Logs: The permittee shall submit trip logs within 30 days of the authorized use season or as specified on the permit, on a form provided by the BLM, or an approved equivalent.

B. Event Post Use Report: A Post Use Report shall be submitted as specified or within 30 days of the last day of use authorized or as specified on permit, on a form provided by the BLM, or an approved equivalent.

C. Trip log and post use reports shall indicate accurately the dates of use, location, type of use, the total number of clients served during the term of the permit, total staff, total receipts and total deductions claimed, discounts for time off public lands, and describe any accidents or injuries occurred, and management problems or concerns.

D. Late Use Reports: Late submission of use reports may be cause for action against the permittee, including probation, suspension, and/or cancellation, and criminal penalties.

E. Non-Use: Zero use must be requested in writing. Minimum fees still apply. The authorized officer may cancel a permit after two consecutive seasons of non-use. In certain areas covered by Special Recreation Management Plans, travel management plans, or other site-specific plans, special provisions regarding non-use of permits may apply.

XI. INSPECTION OF RECORDS AND PREMISES

A. The BLM and its cooperators, including the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and USDA Forest Service, shall at all times have the right to enter the premises located on public land on official business. The permittee shall acquire reasonable access to private lands owned or utilized in the permitted operation for purposes related to administration of the permit.

B. The authorized officer, or other duly authorized representative of the BLM, may examine any of the records or other documents related to the permit, the permittee, the permittee's operator, employee, or agent for up to three years after expiration of the permit.

XII. SIGNING AND ADVERTISING

A. Signs or advertising devices on public land require advance approval on the location, design, size, shape or color, and message.

B. All advertising shall be accurate and not misrepresent in any way the services or accommodations provided, or the area authorized for use. Brochures, web pages and other advertising materials shall include the following disclosure: "All or part of this operation is conducted on Public Lands under special permit from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management".

C. Official BLM agency symbols may not be used in advertising.

XIII. CAMPSITES

A. Camps may be set up for no longer than necessary, and no earlier than 5 days prior to the first day of use authorized and must be removed within five days after the authorized use period. No year-round, permanent camps may be established on BLM lands; only temporary facilities are permitted.

B. Camps shall be located to avoid conflict with public road and trail traffic, and stream or lake access, and to the extent possible shall be located out of sight of major trails.

C. All campsites and temporary improvements shall be as described in the approved operating plan.

D. All campsite facilities including but not limited to tents, latrines, livestock control facilities, shall be located at least 200 feet from the nearest spring, stream, lake, pond or reservoir unless specifically authorized otherwise.

E. All campsites must be approved prior to use. Clearances may be required, such as inventories for cultural resources and/or for threatened or endangered species.

XIV. CAMPFIRES

A. Unless permanent fire rings are designated, open campfires shall be built only in areas free of hazardous fuels. Fire rings or pits shall be set on bare mineral soil. After use, fire rings or pits shall be obliterated and the site rehabilitated. Open fires may be prohibited in certain areas or during periods of extremely high fire hazard by order of the BLM, the applicable county or the State of Colorado.

B. Campfires shall be completely extinguished when left unattended. The permittee is responsible for all fires started by him/herself, employees, or clients, and may be held responsible for fire suppression costs resulting from wildfire caused by his/her operations.

C. An axe, shovel, water bucket or extinguisher for fire control shall be available at each campfire.

D. Wildfire caused by the permitted operation shall be reported immediately to the nearest BLM office. The permittee is responsible for informing employees, clients, and participants of the current fire danger and required restrictions or precautions that may be in effect.

XV. LIVESTOCK USE

A. Authorized pasture use of livestock is temporary and limited to transportation purposes, and will not establish a priority for future use of the range. Rangeland grazing may be restricted and feed may be required to be packed, all feed supplied as part of permitted operations must be certified weed free. The permittee shall prevent localized over grazing and damage to vegetation by permitted livestock.

B. Construction of permanent fences or corrals is not permitted. Temporary livestock control structures may be erected with advanced approval, including corrals and hitching racks, provided they are dismantled after the use season.

C. The permittee may be required to pay additional fees for forage consumed by livestock during the permitted operations. This fee will be at the current rate for grazing use.

D. Livestock shall not be tied to trees for other than short term, temporary stops. Hobbles, pickets, high lines or corrals shall be used to control livestock.

E. Livestock control structures (corrals, hitching racks, pickets, high lines) must be at least 200 feet from springs, streams, lakes, reservoirs or other water sources. Whatever method of livestock control is used, it will not result in removal or death of the under story vegetation.

F. Pack stock may be grazed if permitted by the SRP. If electric fences are used, they will be moved every 3 days to a new area. If picket ropes are used, they will be moved every other day to a new area. If high lines are used, their location must be approved in advance.

XVI. EQUIPMENT CACHES

Food and/or equipment caches require advance authorization. When authorized, caches shall be neatly stored out of sight of roads and trails. Food caches must be "wildlife proof."

XVII. RESOURCE PROTECTION

A. Aesthetics: Permittee shall protect the scenic and aesthetic values of the public lands used in the operations, and maintain premises on permitted areas to acceptable standards of repair, orderliness, and cleanliness.

B. Rehabilitation: After camps and other temporary facilities are dismantled, insofar as practical, the area shall be left in a natural state. Reseeding with BLM approved seed mix may be required of any areas disturbed by campsites.

C. Sanitation: Self-contained or pit type toilets/privies, with or without tent coverings, shall be used at all campsites on public land. The permittee will be responsible for establishing a latrine for all permitted camps and for final rehab when the camp is removed. Waste from self-contained toilets must be disposed of at a State approved sewage disposal facility. When abandoned, toilet pits shall be covered with a minimum of 12 inches of topsoil and back filled to pre-existing grade. While in use, human waste in pits shall be covered with a layer of topsoil or lime after each individual use.

D. Trash Disposal: Camps and other permitted areas shall be regularly cleaned and no trash or litter shall be allowed to accumulate. Combustible trash may be burned when campfires are authorized. All non-combustible trash, including but not limited to tin cans, spent brass, glass bottles, foil, and wire shall be packed out. Trash shall not be buried on public land.

E. Dead animals and their remains shall be disposed of at least 200 feet away from springs, streams, lakes, ponds, campsites, roads/trails.

F. Waste or by-products of any kind shall not be discharged into any stream, reservoir, lake or pond.

G. Soils: Permittee shall conduct the permitted operations in a manner which prevents rutting, or soil erosion.

H. **Vegetation Damage/Removal:** All operations shall be conducted in a manner which prevents damage to or loss of vegetation cover. Poles may be cut for temporary facilities if these are authorized by permit on public land. Cutting, clearing or defacing of standing trees, alive or dead, or clearing and cutting of shrub/groundcover for any other reason shall require specific advance authorization. When tree cutting is authorized, stumps shall be left no higher than 6 inches above ground level and slash shall be lopped and scattered. A separate permit is required for removal and transportation of woodland/tree products from public land.

I. **Firewood Cutting:** Firewood may be cut on public land only for campsite use while on public land, and may not be transported off the public lands without a separate firewood cutting permit. Only dead and down trees shall be cut for firewood, with stumps left no higher than 6 inches above ground level, and the slash shall be lopped and scattered.

J. **Protection of Public Property:** Signs, equipment, markers, fences, livestock watering facilities or any other property found on public land shall not be damaged, destroyed, defaced, removed, or disturbed.

K. **Cultural Resources:** All persons associated with operations under this permit must be informed that any objects or sites of cultural, paleontological, and scientific interest, such as historic or prehistoric resources, graves or grave markers, human remains, ruins, cabins, rock art, fossils, or artifacts shall not be damaged, destroyed, removed or disturbed. If in connection with operations under this permit any of the above resources are discovered, the permittee shall immediately stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect such resources, and notify the BLM authorized officer of the discovery. The immediate area of the discovery must be protected until the operator is notified in writing to proceed by the authorized officer.

L. **Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSA):** Use of electric generators, all motorized and mechanized equipment including chainsaws and vehicles is prohibited within a Wilderness and most WSAs. Check with your local office to see if there are exceptions. If supplemental livestock feed is used, cubed, pelletized, or processed feed or certified weed free hay shall be used.

M. Permittee is responsible for knowing where Public Land, Wilderness, and WSA boundaries are and the restrictions that may apply to an area of operation within these boundaries. Maps and information concerning restrictions are available at the local Field Office.

XVIII. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A. The BLM shall conduct periodic inspections and performance evaluations of the permittee's operations and compliance with the terms, conditions and stipulations of the Permit.

Evaluation Ratings are as follows:

Acceptable means that the permittee has generally operated in accordance with the terms and conditions established for the permit

Probationary means that the permittee has not operated in full accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. Corrective action by the holder is mandatory and continued operation at this level of performance is unacceptable. If this performance level is received 2 years in a row, the authorized officer may suspend or terminate the permit and/or deny future permit applications.

Unacceptable means that the permittee has not operated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit and cannot be allowed to continue. This performance level will result in suspension or termination of permit privileges as appropriate to the circumstances.

B. Violations and Penalties: Any violation of the permit terms, conditions and stipulations may be subject to penalties prescribed in 43 CFR 2932.40, which may include fines up to \$1,000 and/or imprisonment up to 12 months. Additionally, any such violation may result in permit cancelation, suspension, or probation. Violations may also be cause for the BLM to deny approval of a Special Recreation Permit or Operating Authorization for subsequent years. If a permit is terminated, permit applications will not be approved for any person connected to or affiliated with the operation under a cancelled or suspended permit.

XVIII. CERTIFICATION

I have read the terms, conditions, and stipulations of the Special Recreation Permit Information Colorado handbook and understand that I must abide by them while performing activities in connection with the permitted operations.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Company Name _____

Date _____

Revised: January 2014

Attachment 2: White River Field Office (WRFO) Special Recreation Permit Policy

White River Field Office (WRFO) Special Recreation Permit Policy

This policy ensures that all Bureau of Land Management Special Recreation Permits (SRPs or permits) are administered consistently by the BLM, White River Field Office.

All activities requiring a SRP on BLM Public Lands within the White River Field Office will comply with this policy, the Colorado BLM State policy, and policy identified in BLM H-2930-1 with authorities from 43 CFR 2930. Additional information is provided as a courtesy to facilitate applicants in the process.

Section I: Applying for/Renewal of a SRP

Uses Requiring a SRP

1. A **Commercial Permit** is required when anyone intends to use public lands and related waterways, on a recreational basis, for business or financial gain. If any of the following conditions are met, a commercial permit is required.
 - When any person, group or organization makes or attempts to make a profit, receive money, amortize equipment or obtain goods or services as compensation from participants in recreational activities occurring on public lands, the use is considered commercial.
 - An activity, service or use is commercial if anyone collects a fee or receives other compensation that is not strictly a sharing of, or is in excess of, actual expenses incurred for the purposes of the activity, service or use.
 - Commercial use may also be characterized by public advertising for participants or situations where a duty of care or expectations of safety is owed participants by service providers as a result of compensation.
 - Use by scientific, education, and therapeutic institutions or non-profit organizations is considered commercial when the above criteria are met and subject to a permit when the above conditions exist. Non-profit status of any group or organization does not, in itself, determine whether an event or activity arranged by such a group or organization is non-commercial. Profit-making organizations are automatically classified as commercial, even if that part of their activity covered by the permit is not profit making (BLM Handbook H-2930-1).
 - Non-profit organizations engaged in fundraising activities are commercial in nature. Fundraising events require a permit and will be subject to fees.

- Advertising and product promotion are inherent to business activities and when conducted on BLM public lands, require a permit and will be subject to fees (e.g., demonstration of recreation equipment; mountain bikes, 4-wheel drive vehicles, GPS receivers, etc.).

2. A **Competitive Permit** means any organized, sanctioned or structured use, event or activity on public land in which two or more contestants compete and any of the following elements apply:

- Participants register, enter or complete an application for the event; or
- A predetermined course or area is designated; or
- One or more individuals are contesting an established record such as speed or endurance.

3. **Vending:** Vending permits are temporary, short-term, non-exclusive, revocable authorizations to sell goods or services on public lands in conjunction with a recreation activity. Vending permits can be added to a commercial or competitive event if the applicant assumes responsibility for both operations.

4. **Special Area Use:** Permits may be required for individual (private, non-commercial) recreation use in Special Areas. Special Areas are areas officially designated by statute or Secretarial order including: components of the National Trails System, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the National Wilderness System, National Conservation Areas and Monuments or National Recreation Areas or any area where the authorized officer determines that the resources require special management or control measurements for their protection (i.e., Special Recreation Management Areas).

5. **Organized Group Activity and Event Use:** Organized group/event permits are for group outdoor recreation activities or events which are neither commercial nor competitive activities. The authorized officer, in accordance with this policy, determines when a permit is required based on planning decisions, resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, and/or the need for monitoring.

BLM SRP Policy

All commercial, competitive, special area use and organized group activity, as well as event use on BLM Public Lands, meeting the above criteria, must be authorized by a SRP before any activity occurs. SRPs are issued at the discretion of the Authorized Officer who may, at any time and without prior notice, choose not to issue permits for certain activities or use areas. Such decisions could be based on a variety of factors such as planning decisions, potential resource impacts, existing outfitters in the same area, overcrowding, past poor performance, climatic conditions, and others.

When Permit Requirements May Be Waived

The authorized officer may waive the requirement for a permit if:

1. BLM sponsors or co-sponsors the event or use;
2. The use or event begins and ends on non-public lands, does not cross more than 1 mile of BLM land or related waters, and poses no threat of significant resource damage;
3. The use is competitive but is not commercial, is not publicly advertised, does not award cash prizes, requires no additional monitoring, and does not pose an appreciable risk to public lands; or
4. The use is an organized group activity that is not commercial, is not publicly advertised, poses no appreciable risk to public lands, and requires no specific management or monitoring.

If you believe your event may fall under one of the above conditions, do not automatically assume that you do not need a permit. Please consult with the WRFO Outdoor Recreation Planner and *request a waiver in writing from the authorized officer.*

While BLM may exempt you from permit requirements, you may still be required to obtain licenses or permits from other Federal or state regulatory agencies.

SRP Application Fees

- New SRP - \$100
- SRP Renewal (re-issuance of expired permits) - \$50
- SRP Transfer from one person to another - \$100

No fees are charged for annual operating authorizations.

Obtaining Application Materials

All WRFO SRP applications, forms, and materials are available online. Visit the WRFO SRP web page at:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo/WRFO_Rec/special_recreation.html

This link contains all policies, forms, and other materials that can be downloaded and printed for your use. BLM WRFO will no longer be mailing out SPR packets each year to permittees or new applicants, unless specifically requested in writing.

Permit Process

Pre- Application Consultation

A pre-application consultation would be utilized to determine if a SRP is required and allowed, and if so, what type of permit is required. Among other factors, proposals will be evaluated to determine whether the proposal is consistent with recreation objectives; whether the opportunity is already available under an existing permit; whether there is adequate market competition; and whether the proposal would create conflict with the public and/or existing permitted activities. Additionally, during the pre-application consultation, permit proposals will be classified using the Classification criteria below. Once a class determination is made and type of permit (competitive, organized or commercial) is established the following guidelines and administration practices will apply.

1. **Commercial Administration:** If a proposal conforms to land use planning decisions and other appropriate regulations and is within the deadlines described below, the applicant will then be asked to fill out all the required SRP application package requirements and pay applicable fees.
2. **Competitive Event Administration:** If a proposal conforms to land use planning decisions and other appropriate regulations and there is a minimum of 180 days prior to the proposed use, the applicant will then be asked to fill out all the required SRP application package requirements and pay applicable fees.
3. **Vending:** If a proposal conforms to land use planning decisions and other appropriate regulations and is in conjunction with a competitive events and organized group and there is a minimum of 180 days prior to the proposed use, the applicant will then be asked to fill out the required paperwork and pay applicable fees.
4. **Organized Group Permit Administration:** An organized group/event permits are for group outdoor recreation activities or events which are neither commercial nor competitive. The authorized officer determines when a permit is required based on planning decisions, resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, the need for monitoring. This decision making process is displayed in the below Matrix for Determining Need for an Organized Group SRP, but may also include other factors if applicable.

Matrix for Determining Need for an Organized Group SRP

Criteria	Permit Not Required	Permit Required	Deny as proposed
Is the activity recreational in nature?	If the use is not recreational, may require "lands" permit or no permit.		
Is the use appropriate to the site? Is there a management concern for	Yes, site very conducive to the proposed use,	Site is appropriate for group size and activity, not	No, site is not appropriate for use as proposed. Does not conform with

cultural or natural resources, or facilities on public land?	provided for in planning	specifically provided for in plan.	recreation planning goals, violates ROS Class or experience prescriptions
Does the activity further recreation program goals and objectives?	Yes	Yes	No
Is monitoring needed?	Nothing beyond one simple site visit.	Monitoring beyond a one-time site visit required.	Long term monitoring of one or more resources required
Health and Safety Concerns?	None	Concerns for event participants or other public land users.	Unmitigated, high risk to human health and safety. Unreasonable risk especially to non-participants.
Bonding desirable to cover reclamation, damage to government property or resources	No	Bonding desirable or required	
Insurance desirable to protect the U.S. Government from claims by group participants or third parties?	No, liability exposure is negligible.	Insurance is desirable due to possible claims for personal injury or property damage.	
Special services required such as Law Enforcement, fire protection, exclusive use of public lands, reserved sites etc.	No	Yes	

Timeline for Commercial SRP Application Processing

NEW SRP APPLICANTS:

All new SRP applicants must attend a pre-application conference with WRFO staff before submitting any new SRP application materials.

All new SRP applicants for fall/winter use (big game, lion, etc.) must submit their initial application package by **March 1st**.

All new SRP applicants for spring/summer/year round use must submit their initial application package by **August 31st**.

All new SRP applicants for commercial events must submit their complete application package at least 180 days prior to their intended use (43 CFR 2932.22).

CURRENT & PREVIOUS SRP PERMITEES:

All current and previous holders of WRFO Big Game Commercial SRP's must submit their complete application and renewal information by *May 31st*.

All current and previous holders of WRFO Lion Commercial SRP's must submit their complete application and renewal information by *August 31st*.

Failure to provide all required information by the above dates could result in no permit for the season, probationary status, or suspension of your permit.

The following page contains a list of requirements annual documents:

BLM White River Field Office
Annual Special Recreation Permit Requirements

-Must be submitted by **May 31th** of each year, except mountain lion hunting which is due by **August 31st** of each year. Please identify your operation with one of the icon categories below. The column below your icon identifies requirements.

-  - I am applying for my first single year (annual) permit. (1st year permittee)
-  - I have a single-year (annual) expired permit and am applying for another single-year (annual) permit. (2nd year permittee)
-  - I have a second single-year (annual) expired permit and am applying for my first multi-year permit. (3rd year permittee)
-  - I have a valid multi-year permit.
-  - I have an expired multi-year permit and am applying for another multi-year permit.

					X = required. * = read directions.
X	X	X	X	X	A completed and signed application.
X	*	*	*	*	Operating Plan. *If no changes to plan on file, don't submit a new one, but please state this in writing.
X					A marked-up map showing sufficient detail all areas proposed for guiding and outfitting operations, and base and spike camp locations.
X	X	X	X	X	Copy of current DORA registration.
X	*	*	*	*	Any written permission to cross or use private lands (if applicable). *Only if new to your operation.
X	X	X	X	X	Copy of insurance certificate (see policy for proper amount and listing BLM as additional insured)
X	X	X	X	X	Estimated use fee or minimum annual use fee (\$105 in 2014) and/or drop camp fee (\$210 in 2014).
X					Application fee for a new permit. \$100.00
	X	X		X	Permit renewal fee to re-issue an expired permit. \$50.00
X	*	*	*	*	Current year price list and copies of advertising (including a link to web pages) *If no changes from what is on file, no new list needed but please state this in writing.
X	*	*	*	*	Signed copy of SRP Terms, Conditions and Stipulations (signature page only) *Only needed when this policy is revised or updated. Current version is 2013.
X	*	*	*	*	Signed copy of WRFO SRP Policy (signature page only) * Only needed when this policy is revised or updated. Current version is 2014.

Post Use Reporting - Required 30 days after last use date or by January 31st.

- **Complete** Trip Log, including all itemized charges for customers (e.g., If you charge additional fees for services such as game retrieval, these must be called out. All fees reported **MUST** match those on your current year price sheet).
- **Complete** Commercial Fee Worksheet.
- **Complete** Post Use Summary Report.
- Payment of calculated user fees.
- Deductions and discounts may or may not be approved. They must be requested **IN WRITING** prior to the operating season, and approved **IN WRITING** by the Authorized Officer.

60 Days after last use date (30 days after receipt of Post Use Forms)

- Payment of any additional user fees, as determined by the Post Use Report.
- BLM SRP Annual Evaluation sent to permittee.

Timelines for Competitive, Event, Organized Groups and Vendor SRP Application Processing

Competitive, Events, Organized Groups and Vendor Permits

- 180 days prior to use date, BLM receives permit application and any applicable fees.
- 0-30 days after receipt of the permit application, BLM notifies applicant that application has been received and requests any additional information. BLM begins environmental review if applicable.
- 90 days prior to use date (90 days after the receipt of the permit application), BLM notifies the applicant of permit approval or denial.

1. Competitive, Event, Organized Groups and Vendor SRP Application Requirements

The following Permit application requirements must be submitted 180 days prior to use date

1. A completed and signed application.
2. Complete and current Operating Plan that includes:
 - Course/Area plan (including map)
 - Safety plan
 - Communications plan (if applicable)

3. Copy of any applicable state, county or city licenses, permits or registrations.
 4. Any written permission to cross or use private lands.
 5. A valid, current insurance policy identifying the U.S. Government, DOI-BLM as additionally insured (Insurance minimums are provided as an attachment to this document and are provided in the Colorado State Office SRP Policy).
 6. *If applicable*, Copy of brochure and/or other advertisements that include a **current year** price sheet inclusive of **ALL** fees. Include additional fees not included as part participant/entry fee (e.g. meals, fuel, etc.).
 7. Copy of client contract/participant registration/waivers.
 8. Signed copy of SRP Terms, Conditions and Stipulations signature page.
 9. Signed copy of Additional Standard Stipulations for Competitive and Off-Highway Vehicle Events (if applicable).
 10. Signed Annual Permit Check List.
 11. Signed copy of *WRFO Special Recreation Permit Policy* signature page.
 12. 25% of estimated fees due (unless a different fee payment schedule is approved by the BLM authorized officer) and Processing Fee payment.
 13. Bond (if required).
 14. Guide list (permittee must notify BLM of any updates to this list).
 15. List of vehicles and license numbers used in operations.
2. **Required 30 days after last use date.**
- **Complete** Activity/Trip Log, including all itemized charges for customers (e.g., If you charge additional fees for goods or services such as meals or fuel, these must be called out. All fees reported **MUST** match those on your current year price sheet).
 - **Complete** Commercial Fee Worksheet.
 - **Complete** Post Use Summary Report.
 - Payment of calculated user fees.

3. 60 Days after last use date (30 days after receipt of Post Use Forms)

- Payment of any additional user fees, as determined by the Post Use Report.
- BLM SRP Annual Evaluation sent to permittee.

Application Evaluation

The application will be evaluated using the “Permit Application Review Criteria” listed below. These criteria offer an objective framework for SRP application evaluation. Any or all of the criteria will be evaluated to authorize or deny a permit (subject to potential modifications) by the authorized officer. The issuance or denial of SRP’s will be made in accordance with these criteria.

- 1. Compliance History:** Applicant must be in compliance, and have a history of compliance, with local, state and federal regulations. Applicant or authorized representatives have not been convicted of a federal, state or local violation in connection with the proposed operations or activities within the last three years.
- 2. Safety and Safety History:** Applicant has demonstrated a history of providing an acceptable level of safety for clients and affected publics.
- 3. Consistency with Land Use Planning documents:** Proposals will be evaluated for consistency with current planning documents, including but not limited to the WRFO Resource Management Plans (Revised) and other applicable implementation plans. All proposals in the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) must be consistent with the BLM’s WSA management policy (BLM Manual 6330).
- 4. Conflicts:** Permits will not be issued in areas where conflicts currently exist between existing permittees, other agencies, and/or the public or landowners. Valid conflicts include but are not limited to:
 - Overlapping use areas where the same type of use is currently permitted
 - Limited public land ownership and/or related access
 - Camps; location, number and distance between camps
 - Types of activities permitted
 - Overcrowding and/or use levels during specific time periods, supporting infrastructure at capacity
 - Enforcement/compliance problems exist
 - Improper conduct by permittee or employees
 - Unacceptable resource impacts

5. **Diversity of Services:** Applicants must demonstrate that their proposal enhances the diversity of recreational opportunities available for visitors and the services are needed by the public.
6. **Low Percentage of BLM Public Lands:** Applications may be refused where public lands comprise a low percentage of the total area and recreational management goals are being met.
7. **Adjoining Lands and Joints Permits:** Preference will not be given to applicants who own or lease private land adjacent to BLM public lands. Preference will not be given to permittees that have a joint permit issued by another land management agency office.

These criteria are a means to analyze applications and offset potential problems. Many complex issues are best addressed through an ongoing effort between the permittees and the BLM.

If the proposal meets the application review criteria, the appropriate NEPA document would be completed. Permits may be denied as a result of issues identified during the NEPA process. Any stipulations identified during the NEPA process will be included on approved permits.

Section II: Specific Permit Information

Signing and Advertising

All brochures, web sites, and other advertising materials shall include the following disclosure:

“All or part of this operation is conducted on Public Lands under special permit from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.”

All advertising shall be accurate and not misrepresent in any way the services or accommodations provided, or the area authorized for use.

All signs on public land and advertising must meet State of Colorado regulations regarding upland hunting.

Signs or advertising devices on public land require advance approval on the location, design, size, shape or color, and message.

In addition, a copy of your brochure and/or other advertisements that includes a **current year** price sheet inclusive of **ALL** fees must be included with your application. This includes Multi-Year Permits. Include additional fees not included as part participant/entry fee (e.g. meals, fuel, etc.). This also includes discounted hunts.

Insurance Requirements

An insurance certificate **MUST** be submitted for all permits, including a provision to notify the WRFO, in writing, 30 days before the policy is to be modified or terminated. WRFO reserves the right to require greater coverage than the minimums listed below where a potential for higher claims exist.

The insurance certificate **MUST** list the *U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management* as additionally insured (not co-insured), state the limits of liability, and **state the activities that are covered by the policy.**

Minimum acceptable liability limits are as follows:

- (1) \$ 300,000 for persons, bodily injury or death for any one occurrence;
- (2) \$ 600,000 annual aggregate and;
- (3) \$ 30,000 property damage for any one occurrence.

Cost Recovery Requirements

If more than 50 hours of BLM staff time is required for processing and administering a permit, cost recovery of direct expenses related to the permit will be charged. If the 50-hour cost recovery threshold is exceeded, then cost recovery begins with the first hour of BLM time spent with permit administration. When cost recovery is necessary, the authorized officer shall notify the applicant of potential charges in writing within 30 days of receipt of the application.

Permit Term

New permittees will be issued 1-year probationary permit for a minimum of 2 years. After completing a minimum of 2 years acceptable performance, the White River Field Office may issue permits on a yearly or multi-year term for up to 5 years based on past performance evaluations, resource management plans, and objectives. Multi-year permits must be requested in writing by the applicant after the probationary period.

Maintaining Current Permit Information

Permittees are responsible for informing the BLM WRFO of any changes to their Operating Plan either annually or within 14 days if during the operating season. This includes changes to the guide list, vehicles used for permitted activities, and any other changes to the Operating Plan.

Permitted Operating Areas

Permits will be authorized for the *minimum* amount of public land necessary to practically operate a business. Authorized operating areas will be subject to review based on actual use. Use areas may be modified if permittees do not fully utilize their proposed use area. **Permits with two consecutive years of non-use may be cancelled.** Before a permit would be modified or cancelled, other factors such as economic conditions/fluctuations, availability of hunting

licenses, weather and other natural phenomena which may adversely affect a permittee's operating plan will be considered.

Use of public lands outside the White River Field Office may be authorized as a joint permit if the proposed trip starts on an adjacent field office or ends on an adjacent field office. Joint permits will not be issued simply for the convenience of the permittee. The joint permit will be subject to approval in writing by the adjacent Field Office authorizing officer.

Annual Operating Authorizations

Annual operating authorizations will be granted after the White River Field Office receives pre-season fees; updated proof of insurance; copies of valid licenses, permits and registrations from state, county or city agencies; updated guide lists with copies of current guide information as determined by BLM Colorado handbook; current client contract, and **all other required documentation** as outlined above.

Permits are not valid without a valid Annual Operating Authorization.

Permit Fees

Fees are required for all SRPs.

- Colorado BLM requires payment of a non-refundable **application fee** for all commercial, competitive and organized group SRP applications. This fee is separate from the estimated SRP fee or minimum SRP fee. Application fees are:
 - \$100 for new applications
 - \$50 for renewal of expired permits
- The **commercial permit fee** is based upon 3 percent of the adjusted gross revenue derived from use authorized under the SRP. This fee is owed for the privilege of operating a private commercial business on lands belonging to the public.
- All permit applications must include estimated SRP fees for the current year's use (3% of total projected client charges), or the minimum fee of **\$105, whichever is greater**.
- Competitive permit fees are based upon 3 percent of the gross receipts revenue derived from the use authorized under the SRP, or \$5 per person per day, **whichever is greater**.
- Organized group permit fees are \$5 per person, per day.
- Permit fees due to the Government must be paid in advance of any authorized use to ensure that the Government receives payment.

- Permittees with a commercial permit whose projected use fees exceed \$1,000 may make payments in installments. Any payment plan that includes installments must have annual written approval from the authorized officer.
- Permittees with event permits will pay 25 percent of estimated fees 60 days prior to the use date, and may be required to secure a bond.
- Fees can also be charged for individual use of Special Areas, reservation or assignment of sites, exclusive use, and livestock grazing when associated with recreational use. The assigned site fee of **\$210** is in addition to the recreation fee schedule. Assigning sites for a commercial use does not preclude public use of the site. If exclusive use of an area is deemed necessary by the authorized officer, this fee will be established by the State Director. Grazing fees will be calculated based on the grazing fee formula in effect at the time the SRP is issued.
- All payments exceeding the amount owed the BLM for commercial permits will be credited to the next year. Permittees who have underpaid will be billed for the account balance. Final payments are due within 30 days of the final billing.
- Refunds will be made for overpayment of fees for an event permit.
- Other fees as specified by BLM Colorado may apply.

When May BLM Waive Permit Fees

The authorized officer may waive permit fees on a case-by-case basis for special recreation permits issued for accredited academic, scientific, and research institutions, therapeutic, or administrative uses. Non-profit, educational, or public agency status is not, on its own, a basis for waiving fees.

Post Use Reporting

Completed and signed Post Use Reports, Trip Log summaries and payments are due 30 days after the last day of authorized use or on a date agreed to by the authorized officer.

SRPs will be monitored through Post Use Reports, Trip Log summaries and field checks to determine *actual-use areas, use periods, types of use* and *actual amounts of use* for each permittee. Post Use Reports and Trip Logs will be the primary methods used to determine the actual (not estimated) use levels and the actual (not proposed) use areas. Periodic audits of permittee's records will be used to ensure accurate post use reporting.

Trip Logs must show beginning and ending dates of each trip, location of use area, number of clients and staff, number of pack animals on each trip, number of days use occurred on both BLM and non BLM lands, and total receipts. Total receipts must indicate all revenue generated from clients including those items not typically included in their overall charge (i.e., game

retrieval fees). These charges must be clearly itemized on the trip log (e.g., your total receipts **MUST** match the charges and fees shown on your annually submitted current year price sheet).

The Post Use Report must summarize the total number of client and staff visitor days, total receipts, amount of deductions claimed (if applicable) and discounts from time off of BLM public lands (if applicable). Payments will be made for each use period. **If no use occurs during a use period, a Post Use Report still must be submitted stating non- use for the period.**

Discounts for Time Off BLM Public Lands

The number of days public land was used, relative to the total trip days (which includes exclusive private land use days), will be used to determine any discount. *A BLM Use Day is defined as any calendar day, or portion thereof, for each individual accompanied or serviced by a permittee on BLM public lands or water.*

Discounts for time off BLM lands **must have annual written approval** from the authorized officer prior to use on BLM public lands. Request for discounts must be **submitted in writing** as part of the application.

Deductions

Deductions from gross receipts for a trip will be allowed for actual transportation for the guest, and lodging for the guest that is included in the price of the trip before a guest's arrival at the beginning of the trip, and after departure at the end of a trip.

Deductions **must have annual written approval** by the authorized officer prior to use on BLM public lands. Supporting receipts will be required for any deductions. Request for deductions must be **submitted in writing** as part of the application.

Stipulations

The standard *Terms, Conditions and Stipulations* for commercial permits apply to all SRPs. Additional terms, conditions and stipulations may be assigned to a permit based on land use planning prescriptions, environmental analysis or other factors. Failure to adhere to any standard stipulation, attached stipulation or revised policy will result in remedial action(s). BLM reserves the right to revoke, or alter the terms, conditions and stipulations of SRPs at any time.

Performance Evaluation

- The BLM shall conduct periodic inspections and performance evaluations of the permittee's operations and compliance with the terms, conditions and stipulations of the Permit.
- Violations in Other BLM/USFS Areas: Permit violations in this or any other BLM field office area or Forest Service district may also be cause for the BLM to deny approval of a Permit or Annual Operating Authorization for subsequent years.

- **Denial of Permits for Affiliates:** If a permit is canceled or suspended for any reason, you will not be allowed to circumvent that decision by having affiliates associated with you or your business apply to continue your operation.
- **Violations and Penalties:** Any violation of the permit terms, conditions and stipulations may be subject to penalties prescribed in 43 CFR 2930 which may include fines up to \$1000 and/or imprisonment up to 12 months and/or civil penalties. Restitution may be levied for any damages and additional administrative penalties may be imposed including fines, permit revocation, suspension or probation.
 - **Revocation:** This permit may be canceled or revoked without compensation for failure to comply with the terms, conditions and stipulations hereof, and operations on public land shall immediately cease upon cancellation. After a permit is canceled or revoked, any commercial use of public lands shall be in violation of federal regulations, and the BLM may deny future authorization for use of public lands. If a permit is terminated, permit applications will not be approved for any person connected to or affiliated with the operation under a terminated or suspended permit.
 - **Suspension:** This permit may be temporarily suspended, in whole or in part, without compensation for failure to comply with the terms, conditions and stipulations hereof, and operations on public land shall cease immediately upon suspension. After a permit is suspended, any commercial use of public lands shall be in violation of federal regulations. The BLM may reissue authorization for use of public lands after corrective action is taken by the permittee and the operation is under compliance with the terms, conditions and stipulations.
 - **Probation:** The permit may be placed under special scrutiny for failure to comply with the terms, conditions and stipulations hereof, and operations on public land shall be allowed to continue while under probation.
- **Performance Ratings:** Performance is rated in the following three categories:
 - **Acceptable** means that the permittee has generally operated in accordance with the terms and conditions established for the permit.
 - **Probationary** means that the permittee has not operated in full accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. Corrective action by the holder is mandatory and continued operation at this level of performance is unacceptable. Permittee will only qualify for a 1 year permit. If this performance level is received 2 years in a row, the authorized officer may suspend or terminate the permit and/or deny future permit applications.
 - **Unacceptable** means that the permittee has not operated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit and will not be allowed to continue. This performance level will result in suspension, termination, or revocation of permit privileges as appropriate to the circumstances.

Permit Transfers

Any potential business sales which would involve transferring your SRP must follow this policy in order to be considered for a valid permit transfer. SRPs cannot be sold nor can the permit have any value placed on it as part of a pending business sale.

Failure to follow the established policy may result in transfer denial. It is the authorized existing Special Recreation Permit holder's responsibility to initiate required actions and ensure all policy requirements are met prior to any SRP transfer approval.

Transfer of SRP Policy (Excerpt from BLM National Recreation Permit Administration Handbook, H-2930-1)

If an existing commercial permittee wishes to sell or otherwise terminate his or her business and desires that permit privileges be transferred to a new owner, the permittee must notify the authorized officer in advance, in writing, and receive advance written approval for the permit transfer from the authorized officer. Failure to do so can lead to denial of the requested transfer. The existing permittee must advise the authorized officer in advance of any action that would ultimately result in a change in ownership or controlling business interest. The proposed permittee must apply for the permit following standard application procedures. The approval of a transfer is discretionary with the authorized officer. The authorized officer must consider the following items in determining whether to allow the permit transfer:

- a. Adequate documentation must be provided to the authorized officer that a bona fide business transfer or sale is intended. The transfer or sale must include a substantial portion of the equipment and other tangible assets needed to conduct the business. No value may be attached to a permit. Any attempted transfer or sale of authorized use alone shall not be allowed. BLM will use standard business valuation methods to assess whether the transaction is an actual sale of a business rather than a sale of a permit.*
- b. The current permittee must have operated at an acceptable standard for at least one full year prior to the transfer request. The permit must be in good standing with all fees paid and no unresolved issues or concerns.*
- c. Transfer of permit allocation is limited to no more than the highest historical use over the permit period.*
- d. The proposed permittee must provide a written operating plan to the authorized officer, including any anticipated operational changes from the present permittee.*
- e. A permit that is transferred may contain terms and conditions, and/or allocations which are different from the original permit. BLM can make significant changes to the permit at our discretion.*

Permit Transfer Fee: The transfer fee is set at \$100 per transfer. This fee will be assessed upon confirmation from BLM stating the transfer is approved. Payment can be made by current permittee, or new permittee, or split between both parties. Payment will be required prior to permit transfer.

Permittee Information Policy

A current list of permittees and permitted uses will be posted on the White River Field Office web site as well as at recreation sites, and shared with other BLM and U.S. Forest Service offices.

Personal Appointments with WRFO Staff

The Outdoor Recreation Planner, Authorized Officer, and other BLM WRFO employees manage a diverse workload beyond SRPs that often require them to be out of the office. As such, any permittee, or potential permittee, wishing to discuss their application, post use reporting, or other issues must make an appointment in advance.

Nothing in this policy supersedes that which is included in the BLM Colorado State Office, Special Recreation Permit Information handbook (Revised 2014).

Signature Page

I have read the 2014 White River Field Office Special Recreation Policy and understand that my permit proposal will be evaluated using the guidance of this policy and that my permit will be administered using the guidance of this policy, the Colorado BLM State Handbook and the BLM Handbook H-2930-1.

_____)
Permittee or Applicant

Date: _____)

Revised February 2014

Attachment 3: COLORADO BLM SPECIAL STIPULATIONS for COMPETITIVE, ORGANIZED, AND OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE EVENTS

**COLORADO BLM SPECIAL STIPULATIONS
COMPETITIVE, ORGANIZED, AND OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE EVENTS**

Chapter III - BLM Colorado SRP Handbook

Staffing Requirements:

1. The operating plan will include a section to address event monitoring. The event monitoring section will address how the permittee will accomplish the following: Permittee is in charge of maintaining control of the permitted event area at all times. Permittee will have adequate staff to ensure that all rules are followed. During the event, permittee will provide on-the-ground staff monitoring to ensure that use is confined to areas actually authorized by permit.
2. Permittee is responsible for crowd control, ensuring that the event is orderly, does not endanger bystanders or participants, and is conducted in a peaceable manner to enhance recreation satisfaction and promote the public well being. Road crossings will be identified on the map and flag workers will be used where appropriate.

Operating Plans:

3. Permittee will be responsible for implementing the approved operating plan that includes, a medical plan to address response to and transportation of any injured participants or spectators, emergency response staff, level of training of staff, and type of medical equipment on site (ambulance/air ambulance), and a safety plan that includes advising the local sheriff, fire, and emergency medical service of the event.
4. Permittee agrees to reroute and/or relocate use areas to avoid sensitive areas identified by BLM before or during the event.
5. Permittee will mark approved routes, staging areas, parking areas, etc. with non-defacing markers and signs. Permittee is responsible for the prompt removal of these markers and signs immediately upon completion of event.
6. Permittee will monitor all range fence gates opened for the event to prevent passage by livestock and closed immediately at the end of the event.
7. Permittee is responsible for ensuring the safety of all spectators, entrants, vendors, and/or support personnel, and ensuring that all permit actions are in conformance with local, state, and federal health and safety standards.
8. Permittee is responsible for furnishing self-contained chemical sanitation facilities and trash receptacles at locations as necessary, to keep these serviced neat and clean during the event, and to provide for off-site disposal of all refuse and human waste generated from the event, in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal ordinances, laws, and regulations.

9. Operation and maintenance of all sanitation, food service, water supply systems, and facilities by the permittee or his/her vendors shall comply with the standards of the local department of health and the United States Public Health Service and have the necessary permits to operate on Public Land.

10. Permittee will provide first-aid/EMT services adequate to meet emergency needs arising from the event, including CPR and medi-vac transportation for hospital care.

11. At the conclusion of the event, all trash and evidence of the event will be removed by the permittee and inspected by the Field Manager, or delegated authorized personnel, to meet the specifications established in the environmental document.

12. Pit areas will be open to authorized event participants and pit crews only. Permittee will provide a list of authorized personnel and participants who are permitted within each pit area. Storage areas for pit supplies will be identified on the map.

13. Spectator locations, and distances from track, will be identified by the use of snow fence or ropes, road delineators, setbacks and personnel to monitor said areas. Spectator viewing areas will be identified on attached map. The Event Operation Plan shall clearly identify in detail how spectator's safety will be provided for and what control measures will be utilized. Permittee must establish a safe distance for spectators and set speed limits in pits and other sensitive areas.

14. The permittee shall be responsible for clean-up and remediation in the event of an accident or mechanical failure resulting in the spillage of fuels, lubricants, coolants, hydraulic fluids, or other petroleum-based or synthetic organic compounds. Tarps are required under vehicles in the pit area to aid cleanup in the event of a spill.

15. All pits must have the equivalent of a UL approved two (2) 10-lb. ABC fire extinguisher at all times. Extinguisher(s) must be manned during all pit stops. This capability may be accomplished using fire extinguishers of any combination (minimum 5-lb. extinguisher) that equals 20 lbs. (i.e. two 10 lb., four 5 lb.). If 5 LB extinguishers are to be utilized, then the pit crew must man two fire extinguishers and be at the ready. All pit fire extinguishers must have current (less than one year old) seal in place, and be fully charged.

16. Permittee will provide the BLM with a medical plan to address response to and transportation of any injured participants or spectators. This plan will include number of emergency response staff, level of training of staff, and type of medical equipment on site (ambulance/air ambulance).

17. Welding and use of open flames will be monitored by permittee and confined to areas void of vegetation to prevent the ignition of vegetation in the surrounding areas.

Communication:

18. Permittee will conduct a mandatory participant meeting where all participants will sign in. If a participant is not signed in, they will not participate in the event. This meeting will be documented. Key personnel and procedures will be identified such as medical, safety and incident command individuals. In case of an incident, permittee will be considered the key contact for Law Enforcement, Sheriff, BLM and event organizers. If permittee chooses to designate another individual for this duty the operation plan must be amended and signed to

reflect this change. This contact will have the authority to stop the race if necessary and will be in radio or phone contact with event organizers.

19. Permittee is responsible for ensuring that participants do not drive off designated use areas and/or course routes; participant and spectator use will be restricted from sensitive areas.

20. Permittee will take all reasonable measures to inform other recreationists in the area of the event and associated temporary road restrictions, including publication of notices to this effect in the local news media.

21. Permittee will take all reasonable measures to ensure that entrants, spectators and casual users attracted by the event will not harass wildlife or livestock in the vicinity, including publication of notices discouraging such actions in the local news media.

22. State and local law enforcement will always be advised of upcoming events. Permittees are required to submit communication and safety plans that include advising the local sheriff, fire, and emergency medical service of the event.

23. Permittee will advise all spectators of current fire restrictions and regulations in effect. Special emphasis should be placed on any prohibition of smoking and campfires using solid fuels (wood, charcoal, etc).

Notifications:

24. Permittee is responsible for ensuring that all authorized motorized use conforms to the Conditions of Use set forth in 43 CFR Subpart 8341.1.

25. Nothing in this permit will be construed as a license for the permittee, employees, or clients to use areas of the public lands which are otherwise limited or closed (e.g., limited or closed off-highway vehicle designation areas).

26. State and local laws and ordinances apply to all BLM-administered public land, subject to overriding federal law. This includes, but is not limited to, laws and ordinances governing (a) operation and use of motor vehicles, aircraft, and boats; (b) hunting and fishing; (c) use of firearms; (d) injury to persons or destruction of property; (e) air and water pollution; (f) littering; (g) sanitation; and (h) use of fire. See 43 CFR 8341.1(d)

27. The Field Manager reserves the right to postpone or cancel the event if environmental conditions develop in which the event would subject the land to substantial resource damage or the public to unacceptable risk. These would include factors such as heavy rains, flooding, early thawing, etc.

28. Permittee shall protect the scenic and aesthetic values of the area under permit and the adjacent lands while exercising privileges granted during setup, operation, and maintenance of the permitted operation. When facilities for the event are dismantled, the area should be left in a natural state.

29. Permittee will restore any resource damage from the event as specified by the Field Manager.

30. Permittee assumes responsibility for coordinating the event with all adjacent landowners and securing access needed across privately owned lands, ensuring that trespass does not occur.

31. Proof of insurance shall be provided at least 30 days prior to the event. Insurance shall be consistent with requirements stated in the Colorado BLM Special Recreation Permit information booklet or as amended by the Field Manager.

32. All event officials will receive a copy of applicable stipulations prior to competitive event(s). Permittee will ensure that the "Additional Standard Stipulations for Competitive and Off-Highway Vehicle Events" are posted on the event promoter's website and provided in participant material.

33. Permittee, entrants, and/or spectators will not interfere with other valid uses occurring on the public land such as grazing, mining, and other recreational uses.

34. BLM reserves the right to revoke a permit for reasons such as, but not limited to, noncompliance with stipulations (before and/or during the event), failure to provide services specified in the operating plan, or untimely permit reporting.

35. Permittee agrees to make all relevant books, documents, papers, and records of his/her operation available to BLM upon request (as outlined in 43 CFR Subpart 2932.55) for analysis by qualified representatives of BLM and other agencies authorized to review BLM's permitting activities.

36. Permittee shall post a copy of the authorizing permit in plain view where all clients and BLM and CPW employees have the opportunity to read it.

37. Permittee will notify BLM immediately of any accident resulting in loss of life.

Certification: I have read these terms, conditions and stipulations and understand that I must abide by them while performing activities in connection with the permitted operations.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

Revised: January 2014

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

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2014-0057-EA**

BACKGROUND

All commercial, competitive, and organized group special recreation permit (SRP) proposals are evaluated on a case by case basis, and their approval or disapproval will be at the discretion of the Authorized Officer (AO). At any time and without prior notice, the AO may choose not to issue permits for certain activities or use areas; decisions could be based on a variety of factors such as planning decisions, potential resource impacts, existing outfitters in the same area, overcrowding, and past poor performance. All SRPs are subject to site-specific review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and permits must be in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Application procedures are in accordance with the most current national and state policy as identified in the BLM SRP Handbook H-8372-1. All SRP applicants and permittees are required to read, abide by, and provide signature on the most current version of BLM Colorado SRP Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations for All Permitted Activities (Attachment 1), the White River Field Office SRP Policy and Application Package (Attachment 2), and if applicable, the Colorado BLM Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Vehicle Events (Attachment 3). Additional stipulations may be added to each permit as the AO considers necessary.

A decision to issue an SRP is a Federal action that is subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Categorical exclusions (CXs) are types of actions that the BLM has determined “do not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (individually or cumulatively), and which, therefore neither an EA nor an EIS is required” in order to comply with NEPA (BLM NEPA Handbook, page 17). The BLM NEPA Handbook directs that field offices should use categorical exclusions to comply with the NEPA when appropriate to improve processing times.

As per 516 DM 11.9, H1, the BLM may use a CX for “Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan. This CX cannot be used for commercial boating permits along Wild and Scenic Rivers. This CX cannot be used for the establishment or issuance of Special Recreation Permits for “Special Area” management (43 CFR 2932.5)”. “Special areas” (43 CFR 2932.5) include areas “for which BLM determines that the resources require special management and control measures

for their protection” and in the WRFO include Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and the Canyon Pintado National Historic District (NHD).

The majority of existing SRPs in the WRFO, which are for commercial big game or mountain lion outfitting, do not always meet the criteria for this CX. Typically commercial operations for big game and mountain lion guided hunting span greater than 14 consecutive days and have been permitted in Special Areas. There is also potential for future events to require staging areas larger than 3 acres such as OHV events, concerts, or any other large competitive events or organized group events.

Preparing a programmatic EA for SRPs that do not meet the CX criteria rather than preparing case-by-case NEPA documents would allow the BLM to examine the impacts from these types of events at a landscape-level and respond appropriately. The WRFO did complete a SRP Programmatic EA in 2002 (CO-017-WR-070), however, an updated review is necessary to incorporate new information and be more responsive to new recreation trends. A programmatic EA also sets an expectation for applicants as to the type of standards they must meet to be considered as eligible for an event, thus making the permitting process more efficient for everyone. While site-specific NEPA analyses would be required for each permit, the WRFO would likely tier to the programmatic EA for some of the impacts analysis conducted at the programmatic level, thus reducing the costs and time needed to complete the NEPA process. The BLM would only tier to the programmatic EA if the analysis is detailed enough for the type of action to show that BLM took the requisite hard look as required by the NEPA. It is expected that most future SRP proposals would have impacts similar to those disclosed in this EA, therefore facilitating preparation of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). This business practice is intended to reduce redundant analysis, improve response times for SRP applications, and improve operational efficiency.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity, as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects as described in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (1996). Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described below.

Context

The project is a programmatic action directly involving BLM administered public lands that do not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. Preparing a programmatic EA for SRPs that do not meet the CX criteria rather than preparing case-by-case NEPA documents allows the BLM to examine the impacts from these types of events at a landscape-level and respond appropriately. A programmatic EA also sets an expectation for applicants as to the type of standards they must meet to be considered as eligible for a SRP, thus

making the permitting process more efficient for everyone. While site-specific review would be required for each SRP, the WRFO would likely tier to the programmatic EA for some of the impacts analysis conducted at the programmatic level, thus reducing the costs and time needed to complete the NEPA process. The BLM would only tier to the programmatic EA if the analysis is detailed enough for the type of action to show that BLM took the requisite hard look as required by the NEPA.

It is expected that most future SRP proposals would have impacts similar to those disclosed in this EA, therefore facilitating preparation of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). This business practice is intended to reduce redundant analysis, improve response times for SRP applications, and improve operational efficiency.

Intensity

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this Proposed Action:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

Beneficial and adverse effects of the Proposed Action were described in the EA. Mitigating measures to reduce potential short-term impacts to soils, distribution of invasive non-native species, special status species, cultural resources, and paleontology were incorporated. None of the environmental effects discussed in the EA are considered significant.

2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.

There would be no impact to public health and safety if the safety measures are adhered to that are described in the BLM Colorado Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Events and the BLM Colorado Standard Terms, Stipulations and Conditions, as well as mitigation measures included in this EA.

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

This EA covers all lands within the BLM WRFO which contains a variety of unique characteristics of this geographic area. Some of these unique characteristics are described in the Affected Environment sections in this EA. However, a site specific review would still be required for each SRP application. During the site specific analysis, unique characteristics of the more precise geographic area would be identified and analyzed in detail.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The decision for issuing SRPs involving Special Areas, for more than 14 consecutive days of use, and/or staging areas greater than three acres is not unique. SRP decisions have been made in this area by this field office each year for many years. No comments or concerns have been received regarding possible effects on the quality of the human environment during the scoping efforts.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during analysis of the Proposed Action. The project is not unique or unusual in this area. The BLM has been making decisions on similar actions for many years. No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during analysis of the Proposed Action.

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

The Proposed Action neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Similar proposals for SRPs have been evaluated and approved, so the issuance of SRPs involving Special Areas, for more than 14 consecutive days of use, and/or staging areas greater than three acres is not unique and would not set a precedent for future actions. Also, a site specific review would still be required for each SRP application.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

The Proposed Action was considered in the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

Based on the Proposed Action and incorporated Design Features and additional mitigation, there will be no adverse impacts to any objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or losses or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, by implementing the Proposed Action.. It is expected that most future SRP proposals would have impacts similar to those disclosed in this EA, therefore facilitating preparation of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). Any future SRP proposal that is permitted would be by using a DNA and additional surveys and mitigation may be required

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. Based on the Proposed Action and incorporated Design Features and additional mitigation, there will be no adverse effect to endangered or threatened species or associated habitats, by implementing the Proposed Action. It is expected that most future SRP proposals would have impacts similar to those disclosed in this EA, therefore facilitating preparation of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). Any future SRP proposal that is permitted by using a DNA and additional surveys and mitigation may be required

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Neither the Proposed Action nor impacts associated with it violate any laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

Kurt E. Walter

Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: *07/31/2014*

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

DECISION RECORD

PROJECT NAME: Special Recreation Permits within the WRFO Involving Special Areas, More than 14 Days Consecutive Use, and/or Staging Areas Greater than Three Acres

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2014-0057-EA

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative A), as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2014-0057-EA, authorizing the issuance of Special Recreation Permits within the WRFO involving Special Areas, and/or for more than 14 Days Consecutive Use, and/or for staging areas greater than three acres.

Design Features

Design Features Applicable to Competitive or Vending SRPs:

1. All competitive use of Public Lands will comply with the current version of the BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (Attachment 1).
2. Competitive events are subject to BLM Colorado Special Stipulations for Competitive, Organized, and Off-Highway Events (Attachment 3).
3. Competitive OHV events are not permissible within Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and the Moosehead Mountain Road Closure Area as these areas are closed to motorized vehicles per the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.
4. Competitive OHV events are not permissible from August 15 through November 30 in the Cow Creek and Timber Gulch/Hay Gulch areas (Figure 1) as these areas are closed to motorized vehicles per the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.
5. When working on lands administered by the BLM WRFO, notify Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) in the event of any fire. The reporting party will inform the dispatch center of fire location, size, status, smoke color, aspect, fuel type, and provide their contact information. The reporting party, or a representative of, should remain nearby, in a safe location, in order to make contact with incoming fire resources to expedite actions taken towards an appropriate management response. The applicant will not engage in any fire suppression activities outside the approved project area. Accidental ignitions will be suppressed by the applicant only if safety is not endangered and if the fire can be safely

contained using hand tools and portable hand pumps. If chemical fire extinguishers are used the applicant must notify incoming fire resources on extinguisher type and the location of use. Natural ignitions caused by lightning will be managed by Federal fire personnel. The use of heavy equipment for fire suppression is prohibited, unless authorized by the Field Office Manager.

6. Grazing permittees will be notified by a BLM Rangeland Specialist if competitive events are authorized or proposed in their permitted grazing allotment.

Design Features Applicable to Organized Group Events, Commercial, or Filming SRPs:

1. All commercial use of Public Lands will comply with the current version of the BLM Colorado Special Recreation Permits, Conditions and Stipulations for all permitted activities (Attachment 1).
2. When working on lands administered by the BLM WRFO, notify Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) in the event of any fire. The reporting party will inform the dispatch center of fire location, size, status, smoke color, aspect, fuel type, and provide their contact information. The reporting party, or a representative of, should remain nearby, in a safe location, in order to make contact with incoming fire resources to expedite actions taken towards an appropriate management response. The applicant will not engage in any fire suppression activities outside the approved project area. Accidental ignitions will be suppressed by the applicant only if safety is not endangered and if the fire can be safely contained using hand tools and portable hand pumps. If chemical fire extinguishers are used the applicant must notify incoming fire resources on extinguisher type and the location of use. Natural ignitions caused by lightning will be managed by Federal fire personnel. The use of heavy equipment for fire suppression is prohibited, unless authorized by the Field Office Manager.
3. Grazing permittees will be notified by a BLM Rangeland Specialist if commercial SRPs or filming permits are authorized or proposed in their permitted grazing allotment.

Mitigation Measures

Soils

1. For all associated activity for commercial or competitive OHV events, SRP permittees must have a contingency plan for canceling the event or changing the venue due to inclement weather for operations that would create damage to soils and create rutting. This plan will be implemented when soils are saturated to a depth of three inches unless the activity is approved by the Authorized Officer. Damage to soil due to erosion caused as a result of an event that is beyond what could be expected during normal use will be identified by the permittee or BLM, and if needed, BLM will be notified in order to formulate a plan to stabilize the site and reduce the potential for future impacts.

Water Quality and Wetland/Riparian Areas

2. Perennial stream crossings for competitive events will be evaluated before and after events. If measures such as adding gravel to the crossing bottom would help stabilize the channel, with BLM approval, the permittee will implement appropriate mitigation before the event. If a result of the event, there are impacts to the crossing that reduce the stability of the stream crossing, a BLM approved reclamation plan will be implemented to stabilize the crossing.
3. Staging areas will not be located within 500 feet of perennial water bodies, wetlands, or springs unless specifically authorized.
4. Recreational activities that would result in surface disturbance or occupation in the mapped 100-year floodplain or areas within 500 feet from streams, springs, and wetland/riparian areas would not be permitted.

Noxious Weeds

5. SRP holders should ensure all equipment and animals that may be carrying seeds are free from noxious weeds seeds and propagules before coming onto BLM lands.

Greater sage-grouse:

6. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.6 mile of an active sage-grouse lek from March 1 – May 15.
7. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied from April 15 – July 7 within four miles of an active lek. Any management constraints will be consistent with the most current land use decision (e.g., Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse EIS).
8. Consultation with CPW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will be required for those proposed activities involving sage-grouse habitat (PPH and PGH).

Midget faded rattlesnake:

9. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied from April 15 – August 1 within 200 meters of denning habitat/hibernacula.

Bald eagle:

10. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.5 miles of bald eagle roost or concentration areas from November 15 – April 15.
11. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.5 miles of bald eagle nest sites from December 15 – July 15.

Ferruginous hawk:

12. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within one mile of ferruginous hawk nest sites from February 1 – August 15.

Burrowing owl:

13. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.5 miles of burrowing owl nest sites from February 1 – August 15.

White-tailed Prairie Dog and Associates:

14. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within occupied prairie dog colonies from April 15 – July 15.

Special Status Plant Species

15. Special status plant surveys may be required within potential, suitable, and occupied habitat for BLM sensitive plants as well as listed, proposed, and candidate species. If surveys are required they must be completed according to the SSPS protocol prior to authorization of any recreational activities. If T&E plants are found during surveys, consultation with FWS may be required or additional mitigations may be applied to avoid impacting species. If BLM sensitives are found additional mitigations may be applied to avoid impacting species.

Additional mitigation may include:

- a) Relocation of operations by more than 660 feet;
- b) Delaying activities by more than 60 days so that they occur outside of the blooming season;
- c) Minimizing the area of disturbance;
- d) Control of fugitive dust;
- e) Using signs, fencing, and other deterrents to reduce possible human disturbance;
- f) Consideration of off-site mitigation such as conservation easements, or mitigation banking to offset impacts to occupied plant populations, adequate funding of research, or habitat protection/improvement projects.

Migratory Birds

16. Depending on the type, intensity, and duration of the proposed activities, a timing restriction may be applied during the migratory bird nesting season of May 15 – July 15. An exception may be granted if through analysis it is determined that the proposed activity can be conditioned so as not to interfere with habitat function or compromise migratory bird nesting functions.

Raptors and Big Game

17. Raptor surveys may be required prior to authorization of an activity if habitat that supports raptor breeding activities occur within the vicinity of the proposed activity. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied within 0.25 miles of identified nests.
19. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in elk production areas from May 15 – June 30.
20. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in mule deer severe winter range from December 1 – April 30.
21. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in big game summer range from May 15 – August 15.

22. Depending on type, intensity and duration of the proposed activity, a timing limitation may be applied in pronghorn production areas from May 1 – June 30.
23. An exception may be granted to these timing limitations if it is determined that the proposed activity could be conditioned so as not to influence breeding activities, compromise animal condition or influence the utility and suitability of the identified ranges (summer, winter etc.).
24. Motorized vehicle activities would be confined to existing roads/trails to avoid/minimize alteration or direct removal of habitat. Any motorized vehicle activity involving off-road or cross-country travel will be reviewed by a staff biologist to determine impacts to wildlife species, bird breeding functions, and associated habitats. Exceptions may be granted if they meet the criteria outlined on page 2-45 of the WRRRA ROD/RMP.

Wild Horses

25. The permittee/guide shall inform all staff and clients that wild horses are protected by Federal law and will prevent harassment of wild horses from permitted activities. Prohibited acts include but are not limited to: maliciously injuring or harassing a wild horse or burro; removing or attempting to remove a wild horse or burro from public lands; destroying a wild horse or burro; selling or attempting to sell a wild horse or burro; and, commercially exploiting a wild horse or burro. Crimes are punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. Examples of violations might include harassment by ATV, injury or death by a bullet or arrow, and illegal capture.
 - a) All guides shall possess a map indicating boundary of the HMA as well as the HAs.
 - b) The permittee will discourage the discharge of firearms within HMAs during the foaling season (March 1 – June 15) that is not directly associated with the permitted commercial activity. For example, discourage target shooting or sighting in of firearms in these areas during this time when permitted for commercial mountain lion hunting.
 - c) Stay at least 100 feet away from wild horses.
 - d) Do not feed or try to attract any wild horse towards you.
 - e) Keep dogs under control so they do not disturb or chase wild horses.
 - f) Report sick, injured animals, or other violations against wild horses to the BLM.
 - g) Do not bring sick or diseased animals into the HMA. Wild horses on the range are not vaccinated against diseases.
 - h) Camps, within the HMA, shall be at least ¼ mile away from wild horse water sources.

Cultural Resources & Native American Religious Concerns

26. Camp sites shall be located at least 330 feet (100 meters) away from architectural features such as bush fences, wickiups or cabins to prevent or reduce removal of wood for camp fires.
27. Camp sites shall not be located at least 330 feet (100 meters) away from rock art sites.
28. Before commencing operations the operator must inform all employees and any subcontractors that disturbance to, defacement of, or removal of archaeological, historical, or

remains of traditional cultural properties and fossils will not be permitted. Violation of the laws that protect these resources will be treated as law enforcement/administrative issues. The operator will be held accountable for the conduct of employees and subcontractors in this regard.

29. Disclosure of information regarding the nature and location of any archaeological, historic and traditional cultural property without written approval by the BLM is prohibited under Section 9 "Confidentiality" of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA; 16 U.S.C. 470hh), Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470w-3) and the cultural resource use permit conditions.
30. The permittee is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
31. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM WRFO Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The permittee will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The permittee, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
32. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the permittee must notify the AO, by telephone and 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), the permittee must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
33. Before commencing operations the operator must inform all employees and any subcontractors that disturbance to, defacement of, or removal of fossils will not be permitted. Violation of the laws that protect these resources will be treated as law enforcement/administrative issues. The operator will be held accountable for the conduct of employees and subcontractors in this regard.
34. Disclosure of information regarding the nature and location of any archaeological, historic and traditional cultural property without written approval by the BLM is prohibited under "Confidentiality" of the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA; PI 111-011, Subtitle D, Section 6309 and 16 USC 470aaa et seq.) and the SRP conditions.

Paleontological Resources

35. The permittee is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the recreational activity operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the permittee must immediately contact the appropriate BLM representative.
36. Camp sites, staging areas and vending areas are not compatible with the NSO stipulations in Blacks Gulch, Raven Ridge, and Coal Draw ACECs due to potential trampling, crushing, and potential unlawful collecting impacts to fossils.

Range

37. Any range improvement impacted from SRP activities will be restored to prior working condition when activities are completed.

Recreation

38. If the general public has been known to occupy the proposed camp location during the time proposed, the SRP applicant may be asked to relocate the proposed camp to a location that would not displace the general public.
39. Filming proposals may need to modify the location or timing of filming if there is potential conflict with known recreational use of the area during the proposed filming time.

Wilderness Study Areas

40. If an SRP proposal is determined to be a competitive event and is proposed to be located inside a WSA, then a specific NEPA analysis may need to be conducted to determine if the proposal meets the non-impairment standard or the proposal may need to be modified to move the location of the competitive event outside of WSA boundaries.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS & CONFORMANCE WITH THE LAND USE PLAN

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision/Approved Resource Management Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Proposed Action was analyzed in DOI-BLM-CONO5-2014-0057-EA and it was found to have no significant impacts, thus an EIS is not required.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping was the primary mechanism used by the BLM to initially identify issues. Internal scoping was initiated when the project was presented to the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 02/25/2014. External scoping was conducted by posting this project on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 03/06/2014. A meeting has held with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Meeker Office to discuss this EA. All

recent SRP holders were sent a letter on February 26, 2014 indicating that this EA would be discussed at the annual WRFO SRP meeting on March 18, 2014. Seven SRP holders attended this meeting where this EA was discussed further. No issues or concerns were identified during these meetings.

RATIONALE

Analysis of the Proposed Action has concluded that there are no significant negative impacts and that it meets Colorado Standards for Public Land Health. A programmatic EA for SRPs that do not meet the CX criteria rather than preparing case-by-case NEPA documents allows the BLM to examine the impacts from these types of events at a landscape-level and respond appropriately. A programmatic EA also sets an expectation for applicants as to the type of standards they must meet to be considered as eligible for an event, thus making the permitting process more efficient for everyone. While site-specific NEPA analyses would be required for each permit, the WRFO would likely tier to the programmatic EA for some of the impacts analysis conducted at the programmatic level, thus reducing the costs and time needed to complete the NEPA process. It is expected that most future SRP proposals would have impacts similar to those disclosed in this EA, therefore facilitating preparation of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). This business practice is intended to reduce redundant analysis, improve response times for SRP applications, and improve operational efficiency.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

Process for Appeals

An appeal is an opportunity for a qualified party to obtain a review of a BLM decision by an independent board of Administrative judges within the Department of Interior's Board of Land Appeals (IBLA). The IBLA determines whether the BLM followed applicable laws and regulations, adhered to established policies and procedures, and considered relevant information in reaching a decision.

Individuals, who believe they are adversely affected by a BLM decision to deny, modify or cancel a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) may appeal the decision. Appeals are made to the IBLA under Title 43 C.F.R., Part 4, pursuant to 43 C.F.R. §4.411. A person who wishes to appeal to the IBLA must file in the office of the officer who made the decision a notice that he wishes to appeal. "Information on Taking Appeals to the Board of Land Appeals" is enclosed for your convenience.

Form 1842-1 Information on Taking Appeals to the Interior Board of Lands Appeals is attached.

General

Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a Notice of Appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at White River Field Office, 220 East Market St., Meeker, CO 81641 with copies sent to the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet St., Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215, and to the Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals, 801 North Quincy St., MS300-QC, Arlington, VA, 22203. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals at the above address within 30 days after the Notice of Appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

Kent T. Walter

Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

07/31/2014