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July 15, 2010

BLM in the Spotlight

America's Great Outdoors Listening Session

This past April, at the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors, President Obama signed a memorandum establishing the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to develop a conservation agenda worthy of the 21st century and to reconnect Americans with our great outdoors. The President understands that protecting and restoring the lands and waters that we love and reconnecting people to the outdoors must happen at the local level.

The next event is scheduled in Colorado. Listening Session and Discussion Information:

Grand Junction Location

When: Friday, July 16th, 9 am – Noon
Where: Two Rivers Convention Center, 159 Main St.
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Denver-Metro Location

When: Friday, July 16th, 2 pm – 5 pm
Where: Denver Marriott West, 1717 Denver West Blvd.
Golden, CO 80401

visit <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/> for more information.

Visit offers perspective on geothermal footprint

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By
Vanessa
Delgado,
BLM
Public
Affairs
Specialist



Recently, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and a Gunnison County representative as well as a member from the Southwest Resource Advisory Council visited the geothermal Raft River Energy Plant in Burley, Idaho.

The purpose was to help better understand the dynamics of a geothermal energy plant, which is important considering the BLM and Forest Service are currently undergoing scoping to determine if leasing for geothermal energy is appropriate in the Gunnison Basin.

Public input and participation in natural resource management is key to ensuring the sustainability of public lands in the Basin. The scoping ended June 24; however, the public is always welcome to submit their concerns to the Gunnison Field Office.

The BLM and U.S. Forest Service received a nomination to lease nearly 9,000 acres for geothermal mineral rights on BLM, Forest Service and split-estate lands near Wuanita Hot Springs and Tomichi Dome. Split-estate is where the surface lands are privately owned with federal minerals underneath.

Our role is to ensure key wildlife habitats are protected as well as consider the effects on adjacent landowners, and our partner agencies and stakeholders. We are also mindful of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement developed in 2008 by the BLM and Forest Service in an effort to make geothermal energy resources available.

Scott Nichols from U.S. Geothermal, the company managing the plant, provided a tour of the two-level binary plant, which produces about 11-12 megawatts during the winter and 9.5-11 megawatts of energy during the summer. Each megawatt can heat about 750 - 1,000 homes per year.

According to Nichols, excess water from the plant can be used as irrigation water or for greenhouses. Operators from the plant also plan to build a riparian habitat using that excess water.

If the BLM or Forest Service determines that geothermal energy is appropriate for the Gunnison Basin, and a company is awarded a lease through our quarterly lease sale, the company will then enter the exploratory phase to determine where the best location is to

Employee Spotlight

Gregor Dekleva

Gregor Dekleva has been working with BLM for the past three summers as a fisheries biological technician. He currently does fisheries projects and programs in eight different BLM field offices.

The job duties of fisheries bio-tech include doing stream surveys, fisheries population estimates, marking and monitoring endangered and threatened species or species of concern, collecting genetic samples from cutthroat species, applying Fish-Xing protocols and software to determine if culverts impede fish movement, collecting data to secure in-stream flow water rights, monitoring stream channels and riparian vegetation, and creating and implementing stream and riparian area habitat improvement projects.

Dekleva became a fisheries technician after graduating from Colorado State University with a fisheries biology degree.

"I grew up spending a lot of time in the outdoors and so this seemed like a good career, to spend time outside and work with something that interests me and I enjoy," said Dekleva.

During the winter months, Dekleva stays busy working with the Snowmass Ski Patrol, which includes working with the avalanche rescue dogs.

In addition to his work with BLM, Dekleva has worked as a technician for the Colorado Division of Wildlife Aquatic Conservation, the Colorado State University Larval Fish Lab, and the Colorado State University Fisheries Cooperative Unit. He also spent several summers as a guide for Mild to Wild Rafting and 4x4 Tours.

When Dekleva isn't working, he spends his time outdoors. His favorite activities include hunting, fishing, skiing, cycling, rafting, kayaking, and camping.

develop geothermal energy.

The BLM will then process all the necessary environmental analysis, including additional public scoping, to determine if, and under what circumstances, a plan for a geothermal energy plant may be approved. This process usually takes years to complete, and would remain open to public input throughout every step.

The main messages for the public are: no decision has been made, public input is vital, and leasing does not equal development.

Please visit the Gunnison Field Office to follow this topic online at www.blm.gov/co.

Initiative to put veterans back to work kicks off in southwestern Colorado

Ann Bond, Public Affairs Specialist, San Juan Public Lands Center

The San Juan Public Lands Center is proud to announce recent accomplishments to meet the requirements of a Presidential executive order from 2009 aimed at employing military veterans in the Federal government. The goal is to assist veterans in re-entering civilian life and finding employment.



Under a programmatic agreement with the Southwest Conservation Corporation (SCC), veterans are being hired and trained to work on Bureau of Land Management hazardous fuels reduction projects in Colorado. The San Juan's veteran crew has received wildland firefighting and fuels mitigation training, and is currently conducting hand-thinning operations on BLM lands on Animas City Mountain on the northwestern edge of Durango.

"I realize the sacrifice the veterans have made for our nation and believe it is our responsibility to assist them in re-entering civilian life and finding employment," said Shawna Legarza, BLM Fire Management Officer for the Columbine Field Office. "In return, their work is helping us reduce fire danger on public lands in wildland/urban interface areas."

Ask BLM

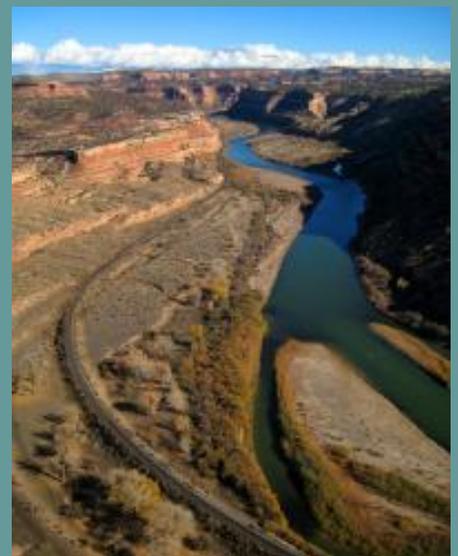
How many National Conservation Areas does BLM Colorado manage? Three.

Gunnison Gorge NCA is located within the Uncompahgre Field Office

McInnis Canyons NCA is located within the Grand Junction Field Office

Dominguez-Escalante NCA is located within both the Uncompahgre and the Grand Junction field offices

If you have something you want to learn about, "Ask BLM" at Colorado_News@blm.gov



In the News

[Speak out for Colorado's Great Outdoors \(7/13/10\)](#) - On Friday, Western Coloradans will have a unique opportunity to influence public lands policy that will help determine what kind of outdoor world our children will inherit. President Barack Obama's Great Outdoors America Initiative will bring its "listening session" to Grand Junction to give ordinary citizens the opportunity to express their vision for the future of our nation's open spaces.

[Rep. Salazar discusses energy in Steamboat \(7/13/10\)](#) -

Steamboat Springs — U.S. Rep. John Salazar expressed his support Monday for natural gas exploration on the Vermillion Basin and asked Moffat County Commissioner Audrey Danner to help with recommendations he can take straight to the top.

['Over the River' impact to be announced \(7/12/10\)](#) - Beginning July 16, the Bureau of Land Management will release its Over the River Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public review. It will be available at blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/rgfo/planning/otr.html.

[BLM Surveyors Navigate Pikes Peak Property \(7/11/10\)](#) - PIKES PEAK, Colo. -- After an hour of finicky excavating, Wayne Hancock pries a granite slab from the tundra below Pikes Peak's lonely South Slope.

[Resources pull together to fight wildfires \(7/09/10\)](#) - With the recent Parkdale Canyon fire, Fremont County residents had a rare front-row glimpse into how an Incident Management Team operates. Local fire departments and law enforcement responded to the fire June 18, just 14 miles west of Cañon City.

Recent Press Releases

- [2010 Take Pride In America National Award Winners Announced \(07-13-10\)](#)
- [BLM to close Coal Canyon Road for maintenance \(07-13-10\)](#)
- [Containment expected Monday evening on the Rough Fire \(07-12-10\)](#)
- [Firefighters and BLM rangers respond to multiple human-caused fires over holiday \(07-07-10\)](#)
- [BLM to Host Open House for Proposed Mountain Island Land Exchange \(07-07-10\)](#)
- [BLM Seeks Input on McClane Canyon Mine Request for Lease Modification and Proposal for Mine Expansion \(07/02/10\)](#)
- [Fire restrictions begin July 2 for BLM Grand Junction, Colorado River Valley Field Offices \(07-01-10\)](#)
- [BLM plan proposes balanced management, responsible oil and gas](#)

Places to Visit

Ruby-Horsethief sections of the Colorado River

Location

This section of the Colorado starts 15 miles west of Grand Junction.

Description

This 25-mile stretch of the Colorado River gets its name from the red-rock canyons that line its shores. Rafters in this scenic section of the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area can camp overnight and take advantage of spectacular side-canyon hikes. Prehistoric rock art sites are nestled in some of these side canyons.

Directions

From Grand Junction, travel west on Interstate 70 about 15 miles to the Loma exit, State Highway 139. Turn left over the Interstate, and then left again to access the Loma boat ramp.

Visitor Activities

Rafting, canoeing, fishing, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, plant viewing, archaeological site, geologic sightseeing, and hiking.

Special Features

On its journey into Utah, the Colorado River cuts through billion-year-old rocks, which have taken on the rusty red color of the iron oxides they contain. Rafters may see bald eagles, peregrine and prairie falcons, and desert bighorn sheep.

Side-canyon hikes, especially the trail near the confluence of McDonald Creek (17.8 river miles from Loma), lead to etched and painted rock art, most likely created by the Ute and Fremont cultures.

Permits, Fees, Limitations

There is currently a voluntary campsite registration system, and a potential fee and permit system is being analyzed. Commercial rafters must have a permit. Portable toilets and fire pans are required for all trips. Check with the Colorado Division of Wildlife for fishing license requirements, (970) 255-6100. Motorized craft may not launch from the Loma put-in.

Camping and Lodging

There is no camping at the Loma site. Camping is available in Rabbit Valley, 15 miles west on

[Leasing in NW Colorado, and protection of Vermillion Basin \(6/29/10\)](#)

Hot Topics

Managing the impact of wildfires on communities

By Lynn Barclay, Fire Mitigation/Education Specialist



BLM Colorado provides financial and technical support to communities and rural fire departments to lessen the impacts from wildland fires.

As the nation's demographics change, developed areas and home locations extend more and more into wildland areas. Community involvement at the homeowner and local fire department level is a critical element in restoring landscapes and reducing fire hazards near homes and communities. The Community Assistance and Rural Fire Assistance programs are targeted to help the state and local communities develop and implement citizen-driven solutions that will reduce risks associated with wildland fires.

The Community Assistance program is available to fire departments, local governments, community service organizations, educational institutions and non-profit organizations that play a role in fire prevention and mitigation. Grants are awarded through an application and review process, and can be used for a variety of fire mitigation measures. A few of those projects include: planning and developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans; risk mapping; identifying hazardous fuel reduction areas; educational and outreach programs such as Firewise; and creating GIS data for county fire planning. **The announcement for these applications is available at www.grants.gov under funding number L10AS00172 and is open until Friday, August 6, 2010. The maximum award per application is \$35,000.**

BLM also supports the Rural Fire Assistance program to provide funding for the following items: Personal Protective Equipment and Basic Gear; New Generation Fire Shelters (Training shelters also allowable); Communications equipment; Basic Tools/Equipment; Basic Wildland Fire Training; and Other equipment. Enhancing firefighter safety and protection is the primary focus of this program. Many rural and volunteer fire departments provide initial attack and wildland fire support to federal and state agencies.

These grants are available to fire departments that serve communities of less than 10,000 people, and the maximum award allowed is \$20,000. The departments apply for RFA funding through an application and review process similar to Community Assistance.

Interstate 70, or at Highline Lake State Park, 7 miles northwest of Loma on State Highway 139. Lodging is available in Fruita (5 miles east) and in Grand Junction.

Additional Information

The Loma boat ramp has an interpretive sign, parking area, and restrooms. No additional takeouts are available until Westwater, Utah. Sudden weather changes can occur along the river. This is a desert area, which is very hot in the summer. Drinking water is not available. Visitors should be prepared for difficult conditions and bring all supplies. Water levels fluctuate seasonally, from less than 4,000 cfs in late summer to over 20,000 cfs during spring runoff, so visitors should check likely conditions before planning a trip.

Contact Information

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2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506
Tel: (970) 244-3000
Fax: (970) 244-3083
www.co.blm.gov/colocanyons/index.htm

This year's RFA funds will soon be distributed to rural and volunteer departments across Colorado.

Both grant programs are administered and managed by BLM Mitigation/Education/Prevention Specialists located at Grand Junction, Craig, Cañon City, Montrose, and Durango.

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