

Bureau of Land Management Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Planning Newsletter #6 June 2010

Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan Completed!

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will release the Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (the Monument) on June 25, 2010. "It's been a long and complex process", says Monument Manager LouAnn Jacobson, "but we are pleased with the direction the Plan takes the Monument."

Throughout the analysis, the focus was on five primary issues: cultural resources, grazing management, fluid minerals, recreation, and transportation. After minor adjustments to acres and miles in the transportation system, required because of recent land acquisitions, BLM approved the Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (Alternative VI) as the Approved RMP for the Monument. The Approved RMP provides an optimal balance for the protection of sensitive cultural and natural resource values and authorized resource uses.

The ROD/RMP provides a framework for management direction and appropriate uses. It emphasizes cultural-resource values and protection, as well as natural resource protection and enhancement, while providing for resource use and development. Its land-use planning and implementation decisions will guide multiple-use management, in addition to the guidance offered in the Presidential Proclamation and existing laws and regulations.

How to Access the ROD/RMP

The ROD/RMP, along with other primary planning documents, will be posted on our website: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nm/canm.html>. CD copies will be available to the public for personal use. In order to conserve natural resources, paper copies of the document are not being printed in bulk. Paper copies will be available for viewing during regular business hours at the following locations:

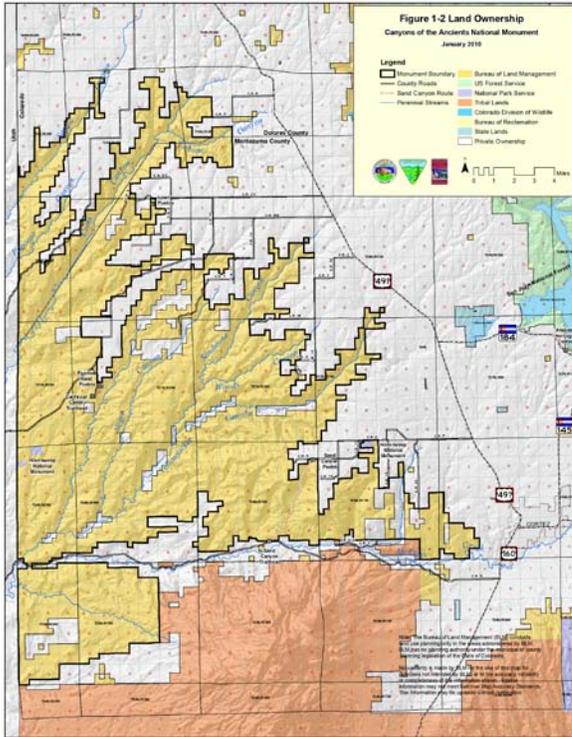


- Anasazi Heritage Center, 27501 Highway 184, Dolores
- Dolores Public Lands Center, 29211 Highway 184, Dolores
- San Juan Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court, Durango
- Dolores Public Library, 420 Railroad Ave., Dolores
- Cortez Public Library, 202 N. Park, Cortez
- Mancos Public Library, 211 W. Main, Mancos
- Durango Public Library, 1900 E. 3rd, Durango
- Dolores County Extension Office, 409 N. Main, Dove Creek



The Planning Area

The Monument covers almost 171,000 acres of high desert in southwestern Colorado. It is 50 miles west of Durango, 10 miles west of Cortez, and 12 miles west of Mesa Verde National Park in Dolores and Montezuma counties. The Monument planning area consists of BLM lands inside the original Monument boundary, inholdings and edgeholdings acquired by the Federal government since the Monument was established, and the Anasazi Heritage Center (AHC).



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument: A Treasured Landscape



The Monument is part of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), which contains some of the West's most spectacular landscapes. The NLCS includes more than 886 federally recognized areas with approximately 27 million acres in National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Conservation Lands of the California Desert, and National Scenic and Historic Trails.

The mission of the NLCS is to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes with outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations. Sharing this mission, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument was created by Presidential Proclamation on June 9, 2000, to protect cultural and natural resources on a landscape scale. The Canyons of the Ancients landscape includes the highest known density of archaeological sites in the nation, well-preserved remnants of Native American culture, spectacular landforms, a wide variety of wildlife species, and unique recreational opportunities. The Approved RMP for the Monument emphasizes the protection of Monument objects as directed by Presidential Proclamation.

National Landscape Conservation System and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Celebrate 10th Anniversary

This year is the 10th anniversary of the administrative establishment of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The BLM is celebrating national and local accomplishments and setting the vision for the next 10 years. The national website provides an interactive map and calendar of events for states with NLCS areas. For more information go to:

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS/NLCS_10th_anniversary.html.

Established in 2000, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is the first and only BLM National Monument in Colorado. Following are a few of our accomplishments from the last 10 years:



Volunteers – Every year an army of more than 200 volunteers contributes 10,000 to 15,000 hours as Site Stewards, Trail Information Specialists, and Wilderness Study Area Monitors. They assist with visitor information services, education for school groups, collections management, library services, museum shop services, maintenance and National Public Lands Day and other service projects.

Partners - The San Juan Mountains Association, Canyonlands Natural History Association, Colorado State Historical Fund, Elderhostel, McElmo Canyon Research Institute, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, The Conservation Fund, the Anasazi Historical Society, and many others support our volunteer programs, service projects, acquisitions, research, interpretation, and education programs and projects.

Cultural Resources – Preservation activities, including stabilization and detailed site documentation, have been completed at several sites. New cultural resource inventories have been completed on 14,000 acres, and 1,200 new sites have been recorded. The total area inventoried in the Monument now totals about 44,200 acres, with a total of 6,350 sites recorded. This updated information will help us monitor changing site conditions and the impacts of multiple use and vandalism.

Fluid Minerals - 13 Applications to Drill and 20 Sundry Notices for well recompletions have been approved. Working with operators, Best Management Practices have been implemented at many existing locations, and 13 wells no longer in production have been plugged and reclaimed. Tribal representatives have been included in pre-approval discussions, leading to the resolution of tribal and cultural concerns associated with new development.

Range - Rangeland health assessments were completed on all allotments and provided the foundation for grazing permit renewals. Adjustments in grazing management have been made to help improve rangeland health and to comply with grazing regulations and the Colorado Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines.

Fire and Hazardous Fuels – Several fires have burned, varying in size from one or two trees to 1,000 acres. Depending on conditions, restoration efforts have included erosion control and reseeded. Hazardous fuels-reduction projects were completed adjacent to urban development and in areas with vulnerable cultural sites.



Interpretation - The AHC installed exhibits about the Monument, Lowry Pueblo, and the Trail of the Ancients Backcountry Byway and redesigned the Main Gallery. Brochures about the Monument, Lowry and Painted Hand Pueblo are available. The award-winning video, "Visit with Respect", offers a personal Native American perspective on the importance of cultural sites.

Acquisitions - Working with willing sellers, more than 6,000 acres have been added through land exchanges, purchases and interagency transfers. These acquisitions enhance protection of significant cultural and natural resources and the Monument's landscape.

Law Enforcement - Two law enforcement officers watch over Monument resources. Unfortunately, looting of sites, trafficking of artifacts, and vandalism are increasingly prevalent. With the help of a special agent now located in the area, law enforcement actions have resulted in arrests and successful prosecutions for several illegal actions.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act - Funding was awarded for eradication of tamarisk and other invasive species, riparian restoration and restoration of areas impacted by unauthorized user-created routes, and improving energy efficiency at the AHC. Several projects are employing and training local youth.

As we look toward implementing the RMP and the next 10 years of managing a treasured landscape, the BLM is committed to continuing the proactive efforts already underway.