

Bureau of Land Management Canyons of the Ancients National Monument

Planning Newsletter #5 July 2009

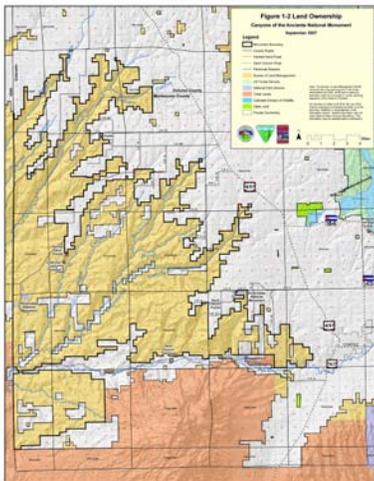
Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement Available

In July 2009, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will release the Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument as part of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The release will be followed by a 30-day protest period. Upon resolution of all protests, the BLM will issue an Approved RMP and Record of Decision (ROD).

The Proposed RMP and Final EIS include modifications made by BLM staff after consideration of public comments received on the Draft RMP and Draft EIS. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS includes a summary of changes made between the Draft and Proposed plans, predictable impacts of proposed management directions, a summary of public comments, and BLM responses to comments.

The Proposed RMP will provide a framework for future management direction and appropriate uses of the Monument. 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 of the Monument, in addition to the guidance offered in the Presidential Proclamation and existing laws and regulations.

The Planning Area



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument was created by Presidential Proclamation in June 2000 to protect cultural and natural resources on a landscape scale, including 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 Monument covers almost 166,000 acres of high desert in southwest 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.



Public Comment on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS

The Draft RMP and Draft EIS were released for public review and comment on October 26, 2007. Written comments were accepted for 90 days, with the comment period ending on January 30, 2008. Comments received during this time were fully analyzed and considered in the development of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

The public was able to access draft planning documents via hard copy, CD, the Monument website, local libraries and other public offices. A newsletter and public notices in the newspaper were also published announcing availability. Open houses were held in Durango, Cortez and Denver with resource specialists and the Monument Manager available to answer questions and provide information. About 150 people attended the open houses. In addition, briefings were presented to:

Formal Meetings During the 90-Day Comment Period	
October 2007	November 2007
Native American Tribal Consultation	Montezuma County Commissioners
Crow Canyon Archaeological Center	Durango Open House
Southwest Resource Advisory Council	Cortez Open House
Anasazi Heritage Center staff	Denver Open House
Dolores Public Lands Center staff	Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
National Park Service, Hovenweep National Monument	Dolores County Commissioners
Colorado Division of Wildlife	
National Trust for Historic Preservation	
Colorado Preservation Inc.	
The Wilderness Society	

Comments received:

- 574 unique comments
- 14,210 form letters

Letters containing unique substance/specific comments included:

- 45 received from local residents/organizations
- 30 received from entities in the Four Corners Region
- 30 received from other areas in Colorado
- 155 received from other parts of the country (Almost all form letters were from out of the region/local area.)



Comments received focused on the following issues:

- 22 on grazing management
- 160 on fluid minerals development
- 56 on cultural resource management
- 180 on recreation and transportation management
- 156 on other issues, including process, general preservation, budget, etc.

Changes between the Draft and Proposed RMP/Final EIS

Public comments received by the BLM on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS showed a need for clarification on several topics. Greater detail was added to the Cumulative Effects Analysis for each resource, and more information was incorporated from the oil and gas Reasonable Foreseeable Development analysis. The term “cultural communities” was substituted by “settlement clusters”, with additional details provided to explain how cultural resources would be managed at the landscape scale. The word “road” was changed to “route”. The BLM defines a route as a road, trail, or primitive road (excluding non-designated routes) included in the BLM transportation system. All designated routes within the Monument are identified on a Transportation Management Map included in the Proposed Plan. Cross-country travel off designated routes is considered “off-road.” No motorized or mechanized off-road travel would be allowed in the Monument.

Several appendices were added that provide greater detail on specific analyses, including management of Wild and Scenic Rivers, visual resources, transportation, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, National Landscape Conservation System, and cultural resource evaluation. Appendices also provide information on the history and intent of the Proclamation and establishment of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Management Strategy

The Final EIS analyzes six alternatives, of which one is the Proposed RMP. The analysis addresses the changing needs of the planning area, with the goal of selecting a management strategy that best achieves an effective combination of management actions, including:

- establishing goals and objectives (desired outcomes) for managing resources and resource values according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, while adhering to the Proclamation mandate to protect the objects of the Monument;
- employing a community-based planning approach that complies with applicable local, State, Federal, and Native American tribal laws, standards, policies, and implementation plans, as well as with all BLM policies and regulations;
- recognizing valid existing rights while complying with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and all other applicable laws, regulations, policies, and guidance;
- coordinating with Native American tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage;
- identifying land use planning decisions that will serve to guide future land management actions and site-specific implementation decisions in the Monument;
- considering current scientific information, research, new technologies, and the results of relevant resource assessments, monitoring, and coordination;
- considering current and potential future uses of public lands in the Monument through the development of reasonable foreseeable future development and activity scenarios based on historical, existing, and projected levels of use; and
- retaining flexibility so that the Monument can adapt to new and emerging issues and opportunities and provide for adjustments to decisions over time, based on new information and monitoring.

The Proposed Resource Management Plan

The Proposed Plan emphasizes protection of cultural resources on a landscape scale while, at the same time, providing for resource use and development. This management strategy would provide for the retrieval of information from individual sites, artifacts, and their interconnectedness (i.e., how they relate to each other) for scientific, traditional, conservation, experimental and public uses.

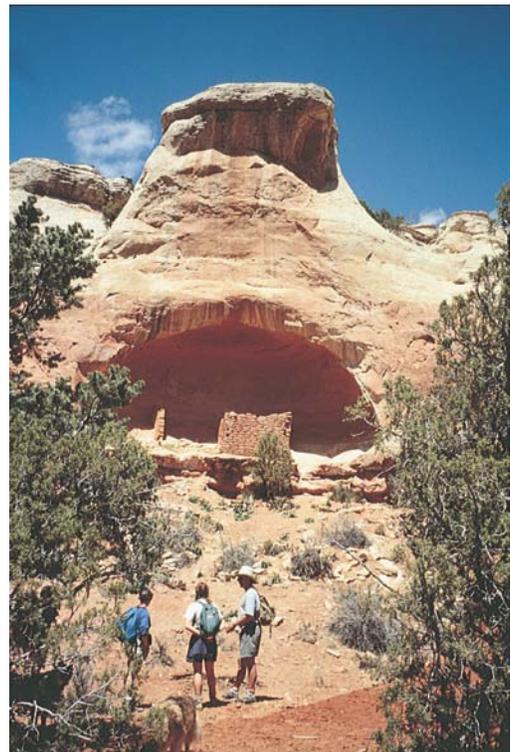
Only 13 to 25 cultural sites would be formally developed for visitation, with interpretive signs, brochures, trails, parking areas, etc. The rest of the Monument would be managed through the Outdoor Museum philosophy, which would emphasize a self-discovery experience of cultural resources in their natural setting. All recreational opportunities would be provided in a manner that ensures compatibility with other uses, while protecting cultural and natural resources.

The Monument Proclamation honors valid existing rights for energy development, and the Proposed RMP calls for fluid minerals to be managed in a manner that ensures protection of cultural and natural resources. Up to 880 acres would be available for new oil and gas leases to protect against drainage (to allow the government to recover fluid minerals, and associated revenue, in areas where it would otherwise drain to neighboring leases). This acreage would be in addition to 127,895 acres of existing leases. Operators would be required to develop Geographic Area Development Plans allowing for greater protection of Monument objects through upfront planning at a landscape level.

Grazing is a historical use and would be managed in a manner that ensures healthy and economically sustainable ecological communities, while protecting the cultural resources of the Monument. Grazing administration would be managed to reduce conflicts between livestock grazing and recreation, protect cultural resources, and meet Public Land Health Standards. Five livestock grazing allotments (four of which are vacant) would be closed, and the total Monument allocation would be calculated at 6,437 active Animal Unit Months. Common reserve allotments would be established for use by existing permit holders, as approved by the BLM, when their allotments are not able to sustain use (for example, as a result of fire or drought).

Transportation within the Monument would be provided within a defined travel-management network that allows reasonable access for the public, private landowners, and authorized users, while protecting the objects identified in the Proclamation. The Plan provides access to private property within and/or adjacent to Monument boundaries.

The transportation system would formalize 172 miles of designated routes and close other existing user-created routes. Mountain-bike use would remain on the Sand Canyon, East Rock, and Rock Creek routes. No motorized or mechanized off-road travel would be allowed in the Monument.



How to Access the Proposed RMP/Final EIS

The planning documents will be posted on our website: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nm/canm.html>. CD copies will be made 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

How to File a Protest on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS

Pursuant to BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest, which is or may be adversely affected by the planning decisions, may protest approval of the planning decisions within 30 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. BLM regulations, included in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, specify the required elements of protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents or available planning records.

E-mailed and faxed protests will only be accepted as valid if the protesting party also provides the original letter by mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the e-mailed or faxed protest as an advance copy and will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please send to the attention of Brenda Hudgens-Williams, BLM Protest Coordinator, by calling 202-452-5112, or emailing: Brenda_Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov.

All protests must be in writing and mailed to the following address:

Regular Mail:

Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams
P.O. Box 66538
Washington, D.C. 20035

Overnight Mail:

Director (210)
Attention: Brenda Williams
1620 L Street, N.W., Suite 1075
Washington, D.C. 20036

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your protest, please be advised that your entire protest – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can request in your protest that your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each protest. Written decisions will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

Upon resolution of all protests, the BLM will issue an Approved RMP and Record of Decision (ROD). The Approved RMP and ROD will be mailed or made available electronically to all who participated in the planning process and will be available to all parties through the "Planning" page of the BLM national website (<http://www.blm.gov/planning>).

Unlike land-use planning decisions, implementation decisions are not subject to protest under the BLM planning regulations, but are subject to an administrative review process, through appeals to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Land Appeals. Implementation decisions generally constitute the BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. Where implementation decisions are made as part of the land-use planning process, they are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations once the BLM resolves the protests and issues an Approved RMP and ROD. The Approved RMP and ROD will therefore identify the implementation decisions made in the plan that may be appealed to the Office of Hearing and Appeals.

Estimated Timeline for Completing the RMP/EIS

EVENT	DATE
Proposed RMP/Final EIS Available	July 31, 2009
30-Day Protest Period	Begins when Notice of Availability is published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register
Governor's (60 day) Consistency Review	July 31 – September 28, 2009
Record of Decision (ROD)	Winter 2009 - 2010

BLM
 Canyons of the Ancients
 National Monument
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 Dolores, CO 81323

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