

Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices Resource Management Plan Revisions

Scoping Information Packet for Glenwood Springs Field Office

Welcome to the scoping process for the Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revisions for the Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices.

These scoping meetings are a chance for you to ask questions and learn more about this planning process. We want to hear about the issues and concerns you would like to see addressed through this planning effort.

We conduct scoping before we begin writing the Draft RMP revisions. When the draft is complete, we'll have another series of public meetings and a 90-day comment period. We expect this will be in 2008.

To help you provide comments, this packet of information provides a great deal of background about much of our current management. Don't feel like you have to read all this right now and provide comments tonight. The scoping period runs through May 2, 2007. There's more information on the comment sheet (at the end of this packet) about how and where to comment.

It's also important to note that while the 73,602-acre Roan Plateau lies within the GSFO, the decisions regarding its management have been conducted through the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (with one exception – Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will include the Roan in its Wild and Scenic River Suitability Study for the RMP Revision). BLM currently expects to have a Record of Decision on the Roan RMPA/EIS issued by this summer.

A great deal of additional information on this RMP revision effort is available at <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo>.

Public Scoping Meetings:
April 10, 2007 – Rifle & Granby
April 11, 2007 – Carbondale & Kremmling
April 12, 2007 – Gypsum & Walden



Contents of This Packet:

Acronyms/Glossary ► Page i

Planning Fact Sheet ► Page 1

Maps of the Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices ► Page 2

Overview of RMP and NEPA Processes and Timeline ► Page 4

Preliminary Planning Criteria ► Page 6

Preliminary Planning Issues ► Page 8

Fact Sheets about the Field Office:

Recreation and Visitor Services ► Page 9

Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management ► Page 11

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat ► Page 14

Vegetation Communities ► Page 17

Fluid Minerals Management ► Page 19

Livestock Grazing ► Page 21

Visual Resources ► Page 23

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern ► Page 25

Wilderness Characteristics ► Page 27

Wild and Scenic Rivers ► Page 29

Tear-out Comment Card ► Page 31

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT CONSIDERATIONS: Public comments submitted, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices during regular business hours (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM), Monday through Friday, except holidays. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently in your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

ACEC **area of critical environmental concern**
An area established through the planning process as provided in FLPMA where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values; or to fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes; or to protect life and afford safety from natural hazards.

ATV **all-terrain vehicle**
A motorized vehicle that is less than 50 inches in width and is capable of operating on roads, trails, or designed areas that are not maintained.

AU **animal unit**

AUM **animal unit month**
The amount of forage necessary to sustain one cow or its equivalent for a period of one month.

BLM **US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management**

CDOW **Colorado Division of Wildlife**

CFR **Code of Federal Regulations**

decision area
The geographical area for which resource management plans are developed and maintained. The joint decision area encompasses about 947,000 acres of BLM land within the GSFO and KFO boundaries. The decision area excludes private lands, state lands, Indian Reservations, federal lands not administered by BLM, and lands within the Roan Plateau (managed by the GSFO).

EIS **Environmental Impact Statement**
A formal public document prepared to analyze the impacts on the environment of a proposed project or action and released for comment and review. An EIS must meet the requirements of NEPA, CEQ guidelines, and directives of the agency responsible for the proposed project or action.

ERMA **extensive recreation management area**

FLPMA **Federal Land Policy and Management Act**
Public Law 94-579, signed by the President on October 21, 1976. Establishes public land policy for management of lands administered by the BLM. FLPMA specifies several key directions for the Bureau, notably: (1) management be on the basis of multiple-use and sustained yield; (2) land use plans be prepared to guide management actions; (3) public lands be managed for the protection, development, and enhancement of resources; (4) public lands be retained in federal ownership; and (5) public participation be utilized in reaching management decisions.

FMP **fire management plan**

GSFO **Glenwood Springs Field Office**

KFO **Kremmling Field Office**

LHA **land health assessment**

NEPA **National Environmental Policy Act**

NPS

US Department of the Interior, National Park Service

OHV

off-highway vehicle

A general term referring to any motorized vehicle capable of or designed for operating on unmaintained natural terrain, roads, and/or trails (i.e., capable of operating off maintained roads and trails). These include but are not limited to motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, dune buggies, and four-wheel-drive vehicles.

ORV

off-road vehicle

See OHV.

planning area

The joint planning area boundary encompasses about 6 million acres and includes all lands regardless of land ownership. The GSFO and KFO boundaries define the planning areas assessed in these RMP revisions.

RMP

Resource Management Plan

A land use plan that establishes multiple-use guidelines and management objectives for a given decision area.

RMZ

recreation management zone

ROD

Record of Decision

ROW

right-of-way

SRMA

Special Recreation Management Area

BLM administrative units established to direct recreation program priorities, including the allocation of funding and personnel, to those public lands where a commitment has been made to provide specific recreation activity and experience opportunities on a sustained yield basis. These areas usually require a high level of recreation investment and/or management.

SRP

special recreation permit

Authorizations that allow for recreational uses of public lands and related waters. Issues as a means to control visitor use, protect recreational and natural resources, and provide for the health and safety of visitors. Commercial Special Recreation Permits are also used as a mechanism to provide a fair return for the commercial use of public lands.

USFS

US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

USFWS

US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

USGS

US Geological Survey

VRM

visual resource management

The inventory and planning actions taken to identify visual resource values and to establish objectives for managing those values, and the management actions taken to achieve the visual resource management objectives.

WSA

wilderness study area

WSR

Wild and Scenic River

Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices Resource Management Plan Revisions

What is a Resource Management Plan?

An RMP provides the overall framework for managing BLM-administered lands. These RMPs will guide management of the approximately 567,000 surface acres and 723,000 subsurface (mineral estate) acres administered by the Glenwood Springs Field Office (GSFO) in Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin, Routt, Mesa, and Rio Blanco Counties, and approximately 378,000 surface acres and 651,000 subsurface (mineral estate) acres administered by the Kremmling Field Office (KFO) in Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Larimer, and Summit Counties.

Why is BLM conducting a joint-planning effort between two Field Offices?

The two Field Offices are simultaneously revising their RMPs under one planning effort. The Field Offices share some of the same challenges and opportunities, and the joint effort allows the Field Offices to share resources and reduce costs.

What is the Scoping Process?

Scoping is a collaborative public involvement process in which BLM asks the public and other agencies to identify planning issues to be addressed in the planning process. The scoping process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on March 2, 2007. Scoping comments will be used in drafting the RMP revisions. When the Draft RMP revisions are completed, they will be released for a 90-day public comment period.

What are planning issues and criteria?

Planning issues are disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, special designations (e.g., Special Recreation Management Areas [SRMAs] or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern [ACECs]), and related management practices.

Scoping also involves the introduction of preliminary planning criteria to the public for comment. Planning criteria guide development of the plan by helping to define the decision space or sideboards of the planning process. The planning criteria will help BLM develop a reasonable range of alternatives that are tailored to the issues identified in the scoping process by the public and BLM.

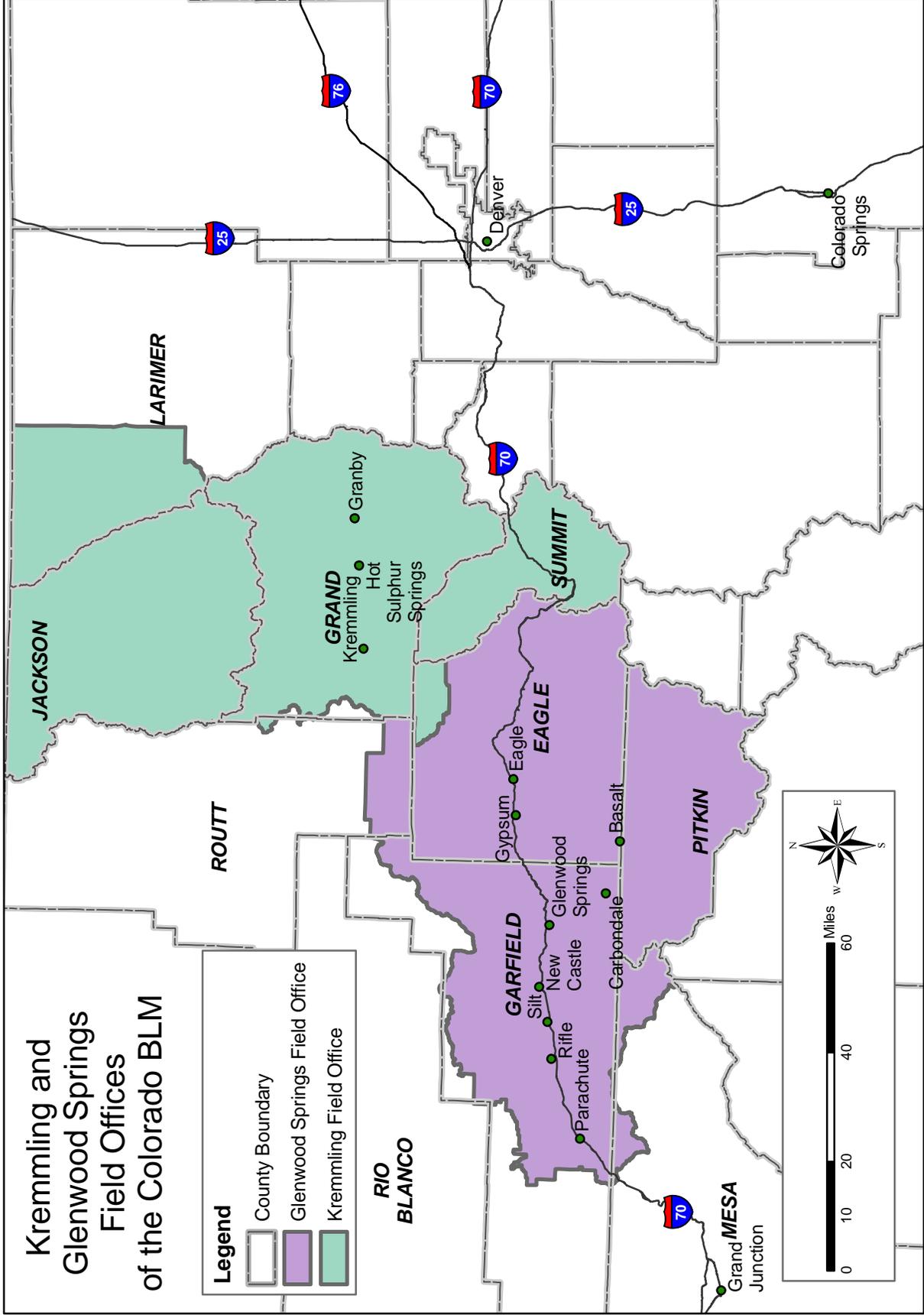
How can I comment?

Scoping comments will be most helpful if BLM receives them by May 2, 2007. For further information or to have your name added to a mailing list, contact Joe Stout, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at (970) 724-3003, or log on to <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo>. The mailing list will be used to notify people about the progress of the planning effort as well as additional opportunities for public involvement and comment. The scoping meetings in Gypsum, Carbondale, and Rifle will primarily focus on issues pertaining to lands managed by the GSFO, while the meetings in Granby, Kremmling, and Walden will focus mostly on issues on the lands managed by the KFO.

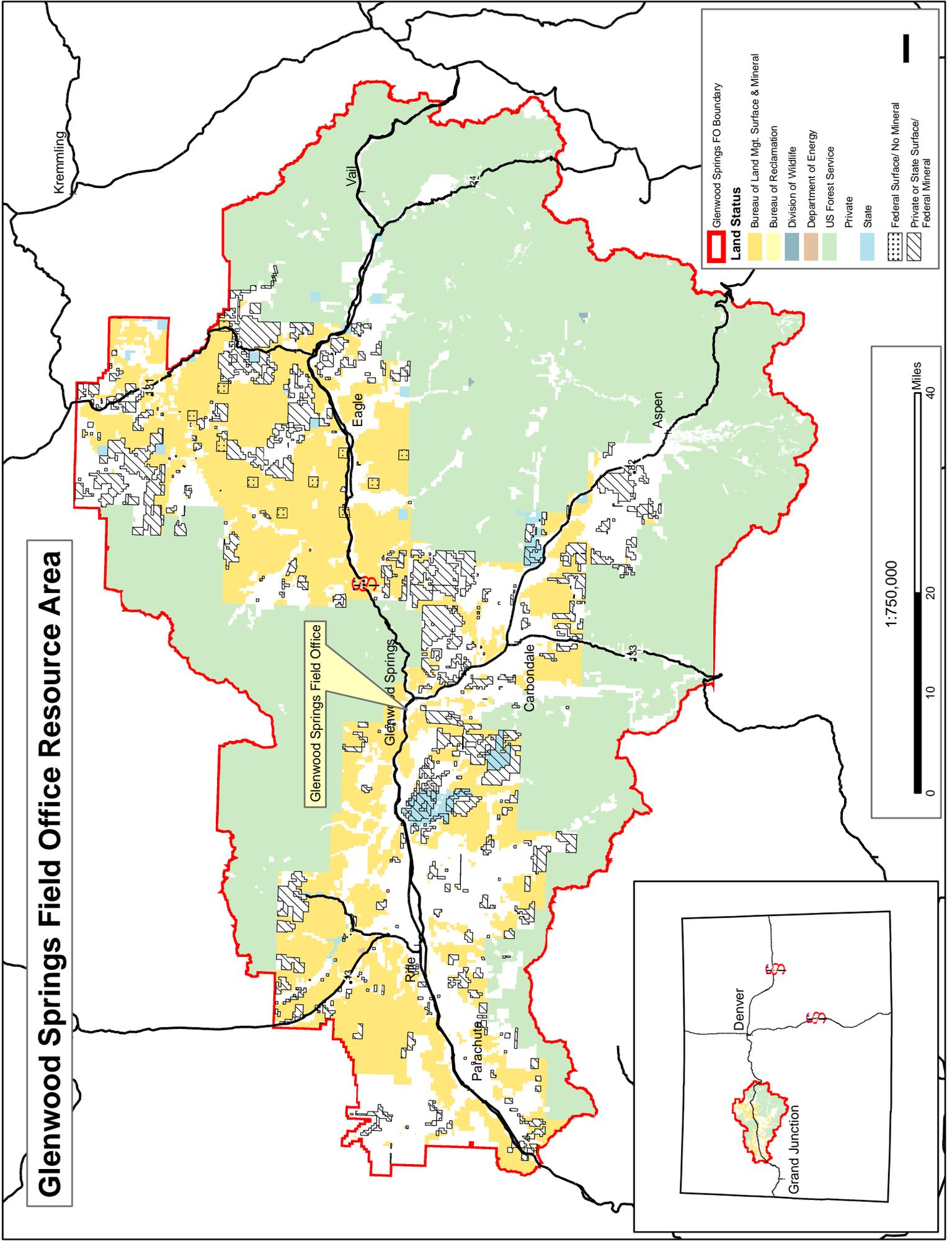
Will my comments be made public?

A scoping report summarizing the comments will be made available in early summer 2007. Comments received will be available for public review at the two Field Offices. Individuals may request confidentiality with respect to their name, address and phone number by clearly stating in the first line of their comments: "CONFIDENTIALITY REQUESTED."





Glenwood Springs Field Office Resource Area

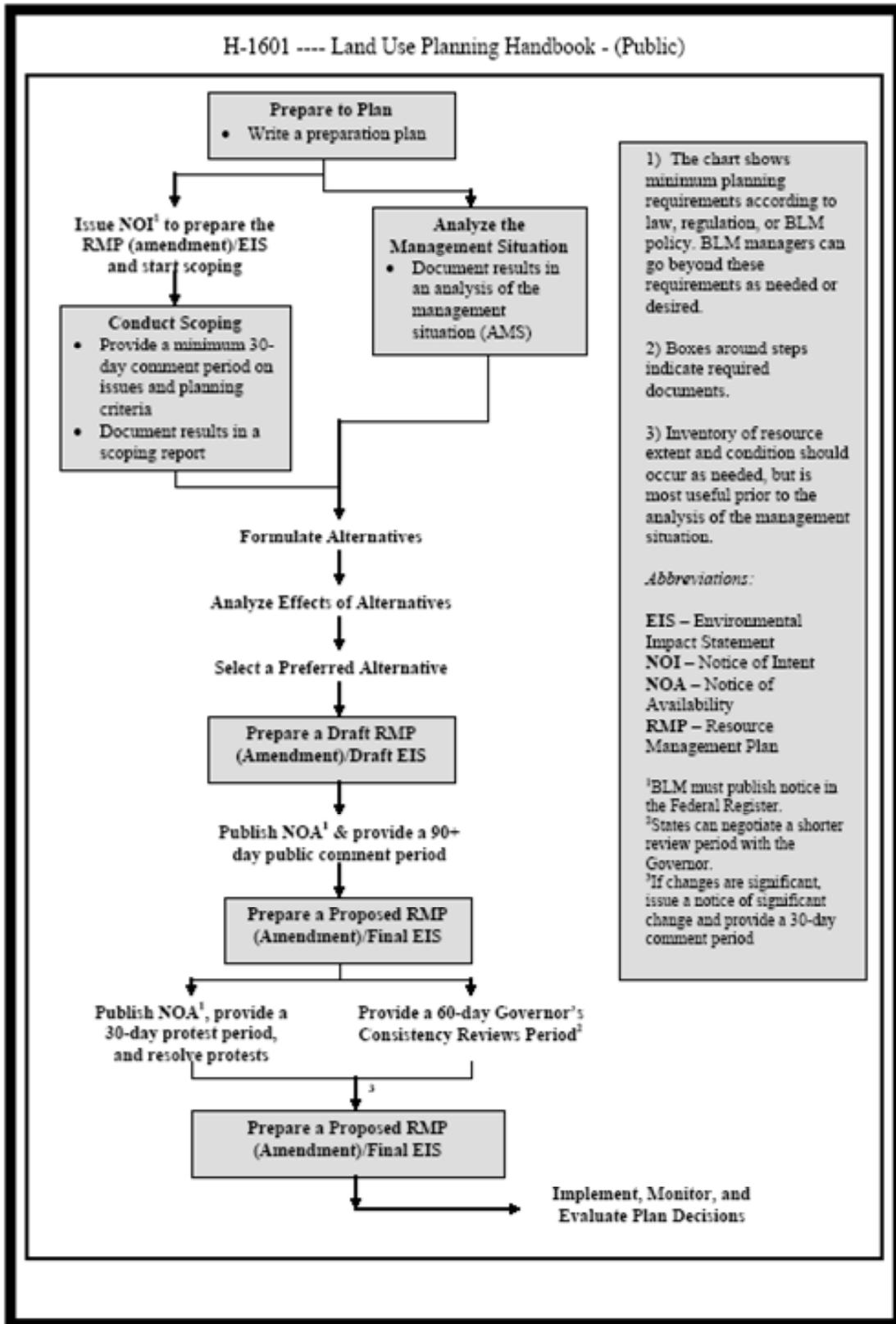




BLM 9-Step Planning Process

- 1** **Planning Issues Identification**
- 2** **Planning Criteria Development**
- 3** **Data and Information Collection**
- 4** **Management Situation Analysis**
- 5** **Alternatives Formulation**
- 6** **Alternatives Assessment**
- 7** **Preferred Alternative Selection**
- 8** **Management Plan Selection**
- 9** **Implementation and Monitoring**

1. **Planning Issues Identification.** Issues and concerns are being identified through a scoping process that includes a focus group, the public, Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments. **Spring 2007**
2. **Planning Criteria Development.** Planning criteria are created to ensure decisions are made to address the issues pertinent to the planning effort. Planning criteria will be derived from a variety of sources including applicable laws and regulations, existing management plans, coordination of other agencies' programs, and the results of scoping. The planning criteria may be updated and changed as planning proceeds. BLM gives the public an opportunity to review and comment on the planning criteria before they are approved. **Spring 2007**
3. **Data and Information Collection.** Data and information for the resources in the planning area are collected based on the planning criteria. **Ongoing**
4. **Management Situation Analysis.** The current management of resources in the planning area is assessed. **Spring 2007**
5. **Alternatives Formulation.** A range of reasonable management alternatives that address issues identified during scoping is developed. **Fall 2007 – Winter 2007/2008**
6. **Alternatives Assessment.** The effects of each alternative are estimated. **Spring 2008**
7. **Preferred Alternative Selection.** The alternative that best resolves planning issues is identified as the preferred alternative. **Spring 2008**
8. **Management Plan Selection.** First, a draft RMP/EIS is issued and is made available to the public for a review period of 90 calendar days. After comments to the draft document have been received and analyzed, it is modified as necessary, and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS is published and made available for public review for 30 calendar days. A record of decision (ROD) is signed to approve the RMP/EIS. **Draft RMP/EIS– Summer 2008; Proposed RMP/Final EIS–Spring 2009; Approved RMP/ROD–Fall/Winter 2009**
9. **Implementation and Monitoring.** The management measures outlined in the approved plan are implemented on the ground, and future monitoring is conducted to test their effectiveness. Changes are made as necessary to achieve desired results. **Ongoing after RMP approval**



Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices Resource Management Plan Revisions

Preliminary Planning Criteria

Planning regulations covering public land managed by the BLM (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1610.4-2) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all RMPs or revisions. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the plan. They ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state, and local agencies and governmental entities, and Native American Indian tribes, analysis of information pertinent to the planning area, and professional judgment.

The following preliminary planning criteria are open to public comment. Please send comments by mail to BLM, Kremmling Field Office, Joe Stout, PO Box 68, Kremmling, CO 80459, or by e-mail to cormpkg@blm.gov. To be most helpful, please submit your comments by May 2, 2007. For your convenience, a comment card has been included at the end of this booklet.

- The plans will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 US Code 1701 et seq.) and the National Environmental Policy Act.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with Federal laws and regulations that direct resource management on the public lands.
- The plan will recognize valid existing rights.
- Recognize the specific niche that federal lands provide both to the nation and to the surrounding community. A successful plan will be one that is responsive to both national needs and community needs.
- Public participation will be encouraged throughout the process. Collaborate and build relationships with tribes, state and local governments, federal agencies, local stakeholders, and others in the community of interest of the plan as normal business. Collaborators are regularly informed and offered timely and meaningful opportunities to participate in the planning process.
- The Energy Policy and Conservation Act inventory results will be integrated into land use planning and energy use authorizations.
- The plan will identify SRMAs, designate off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas, and complete defined travel management networks for each Field Office.
- Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities.
- For all stipulations developed in new land use plans and to further improve consistency and understanding of lease stipulations, State and Field Offices will use the Uniform Format for Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations prepared by the Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinating Committee in March 1989. Lease stipulations will be reviewed for



consistency with neighboring field offices and States, and where there are discrepancies, efforts will be undertaken to try and get consistency.

- The plan will incorporate the Colorado Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines. It will lay out a strategy for ensuring that proper grazing practices are followed. Grazing will be managed to maintain or improve the health of the public lands by incorporating conditions to enhance resource conditions into permitted operations.
- Lands with wilderness characteristics may be managed to protect and/or preserve some or all of those characteristics. This may include protecting certain lands in their natural condition and/or providing opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
- Identify existing and potential utility corridors (potential corridors include existing right-of-way (ROW) routes that can be considered for additional facilities and thus be considered a corridor if not already so designated);
- Identify existing and potential ROW development sites such as energy development areas (e.g., wind energy sites) and communication sites.
- Reevaluate lands selected for disposal and acquisition based on current information.

Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices Resource Management Plan Revisions

Preliminary Planning Issues

Some potential planning issues have already been identified via BLM internal RMP evaluations, BLM personnel, meetings with BLM and other agencies, individuals and user groups by way of phone calls, e-mails, letters, and past meetings concerning proposed management of public lands. They represent BLM's expectations to date as to what challenges exist with current management.

A planning issue is a matter of opportunity or controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land use that is well defined or topically discrete and entails alternatives between which to choose. This definition suggests that one entity or more is interested in a resource on federal land, that each entity may have different values for the resource, and that there are different ways (alternatives) in which to resolve the competition or demand. Some of the preliminary planning issues and questions to be addressed are listed below. This list is not a comprehensive list, but includes some of the foremost issues currently facing the Field Offices.

- **Oil and Gas Development**
How much land should be open, closed, or subject to constraints for oil and mineral leasing?
- **Range Health/Upland Management**
How will livestock grazing be managed to also allow for a mix of vegetative types, structural stages, and landscape and riparian functions?
- **Water/Riparian Issues**
How will riparian and wetland systems be managed to improve or maintain habitat quality for fish, wildlife, plants, and invertebrates while also meeting tribal, state, and local water quality requirements/standards/regulations?
- **Recreation Demands and Uses**
How will increasing recreation and OHV use be managed?
- **Comprehensive Travel Management and Transportation**
What are the appropriate travel management areas to meet RMP goals and objectives?
- **Cultural Resources**
What measures will be implemented to proactively manage, protect, and use cultural resources, including traditional cultural properties, while also allowing for the development or use of other resources in the planning area?
- **Maintaining Habitat for Sage Grouse and Sagebrush Obligate Species**
How will the sagebrush steppe ecosystem be managed to balance uses while conserving sage grouse and sagebrush-obligate species?
- **Rapidly Expanding Urban Interface Areas**
How will BLM accommodate foreseeable growth while balancing the wants and needs of the surrounding communities?



RECREATION AND VISITOR SERVICES

Recreation Activities. Public lands within the GSFO offer a variety of outdoor recreation activity opportunities, including land-based, water-based and snow sports activities. Some of the typical recreational activities on public lands include: camping, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, off-road vehicle (ORV) riding/driving and cross-country skiing. Migrating and resident wildlife provide plentiful opportunities for hunting, photography and wildlife observation. Renowned local rivers (Eagle, Colorado and Roaring Fork), streams and lakes offer boating and cold water fishing activity opportunities. The 2006-2007 visitor survey currently underway in cooperation with Arizona State University will provide more information on public land visitation and the activities, settings and outcomes visitors desire from public lands. Visitor study Information on visitation and recreation use will be available in the Fall of 2007.

Visitation. North-central Colorado is a world-renowned destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. BLM Recreation visitors come from 3 primary sources: 1) local, 2) the Denver metropolitan area and “Front Range” of Colorado, and 3) national and international locations.

Local. Colorado's population has grown significantly in the past 10 years and an increasing number of people are living near or seeking local public lands for a diversity of recreational opportunities characterized by the “mountain resort lifestyle”. The region is truly a year-round place to live and work. As a result, public lands administered by the BLM are absorbing increasing recreational demand and use. The towns of Eagle, Gypsum, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, New Castle, Silt, and Rifle, all have public lands bordering them that are used as “backyard” recreation areas by local residents. Outside of the fall big game hunting seasons when visitation is high everywhere, the greatest amount of public land recreation visitation occurs on a daily basis near communities. This use continues to grow exponentially with the rapid growth in the communities themselves.

Front Range. Visitors from the Denver metropolitan area come to the region because it is an easy to get to weekend getaway with a lot of diversity in outdoor activity offerings and recreation settings.

National & International. Non-Colorado residents to the region come from all over the United States and from international locations. One reason is because the GSFO can be reached via an easy 1½-hour drive from Denver on I-70. Non-resident visitors can also fly directly into major airports including Eagle-Vail, Aspen and Grand Junction.

Use Figures. Recreation has grown to become the predominant use of local public lands and national forests. Most public land use estimates and activity participation estimates depend entirely upon field observations and professional judgment of the recreation staff, and hence, are not scientifically-based and approximate in nature. The 566,000 acres in the GSFO receive roughly 800,000 visits per year.

Recreation Management Areas. BLM land use plans identify areas where recreation is the principle management focus. These areas are identified as SRMAs. SRMAs are areas identified where BLM directs recreation funding and personnel to fulfill commitments made to provide specific “structured” recreation opportunities. The GSFO currently has identified nine SRMAs.

SRMA Name	Location	Acres
Bocco Mountain	Castle Peak area north of Wolcott	1,388
Bull Gulch	North of Dotsero east of Colorado River	10,437
Deep Creek	North of Dotsero west of Colorado River	2,406
Eagle River	Public land parcels between Wolcott & Eagle	639
Gypsum Hills	North of I-70 between Dotsero and Gypsum	16,931
Hack Lake	North of Sweetwater Lake next to the Flat Tops Wilderness	3,337
Red Hill	Immediately north of Carbondale	3,092
Thompson Creek	Southwest of Carbondale next to the White River NF	4,270
Upper Colorado River	Colorado River between State Bridge and Dotsero	21,661

Anything not delineated as an SRMA is an extensive recreation management area (ERMA). ERMAs are public lands where recreation is unstructured and does not require intensive management or significant investments in trails or facilities. This type of custodial or “dispersed” recreation management affords visitors little in the way of visitor services or developed recreational facilities.

ERMA Management	SRMA Management
<i>Unstructured</i> - No identifiable market demand for structured recreation.	<i>Structured</i> - Tied to identified primary market demand for structured recreation (i.e., activities, experiences, and benefits and the maintenance of recreation setting character).
ERMA Objectives	SRMA Objectives
<i>Reactive & Custodial</i> - Directed at taking care of dispersed recreation-tourism activity.	<i>Proactive</i> - Directed at producing specific recreation opportunities/outcomes.

Developed Recreation Facilities. Developed recreation sites and facilities have been constructed to enhance recreation opportunities, protect resources, manage activities or reduce recreation use conflicts. These infrastructure developments range from campground to trailhead with a simple bulletin board. The GSFO manages 19 day use sites, all of which provide river access and 10 of which provide boat launches. The GSFO also manages 17 trailheads.

The GSFO currently manages 7 campgrounds containing a total of 36 campsites. Most of the developed campgrounds have basic infrastructure, few campsites, and receive relatively little use. Most need relatively little maintenance, and experience few problems with vandalism or litter. Two of the campgrounds collect fees, together totaling \$4,000 - \$5,000 and 1000 - 1300 visitor days per year. While the fees collected are used for maintenance, the maintenance costs far exceed the revenue collected.

Cooperative Management. Most developed local trail systems are cooperatively administered with communities/community groups. Each partner shares responsibility for the development, administration and maintenance local trail systems. Through these partnerships (i.e. ECO Trails, Red Hill Council, Town of New Castle) the GSFO has been able to partially meet the local demand for trail-based recreation.

Special Recreation Permits. As authorized by 43 CFR 2932, there are four types of uses for which special recreation permits (SRP) are required: commercial use, competitive events, organized groups, and recreation use in special areas. BLM can issue SRPs for noncommercial use in certain “special areas” including rivers and backcountry and camping areas. Most SRPs issued by the GSFO are related to river and upland hunting outfitting. There are currently 19 SRPs being issued for upland hunting and those permits are issued on an area basis. There are 38 SRPs being issued for river-related recreation. Eleven commercial permits are held for activities such as trail rides, photography, jeep tours, kayak/canoe instruction, hot-air ballooning and paragliding. Annually 5 to 10 different groups are issued SRPs to conduct competitive events or organized group activities.

Recreation Marketing and Tourism. Tourism drives most of the local economies in north-central Colorado. Easy access to the mountain communities is a key factor from tourism standpoint. The GSFO is located in Colorado’s northwestern tourism region. Regional public land marketing has generally focused on hunting and motorized sports on the White River National Forest and other opportunities elsewhere in the region. BLM public lands tend to be marketed indirectly or lumped in with opportunities on the White River National Forest. Outdoor recreation currently provides significant positive economic contributions to the local communities because hunters and snowmobile riders tend to locally purchase: meals, food, fuel, sporting goods, gifts, and lodging. The GSFO has not played an active role in tourism.



BLM wants your ideas on Recreation and Visitor Services.

The BLM is required to identify new SRMAs when recreation demand requires a particular recreation setting to be maintained or where structured recreation opportunities for specific activities and recreation experiences are desired. **So, what areas do you think should be identified and managed as an SRMA, rather than being custodially managed for dispersed recreation as an ERMA?**

COMPREHENSIVE TRAILS AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

Travel and transportation are an integral part of virtually every activity that occurs on BLM-administered public lands. Visitors to public lands within the GSFO utilize roads and trails for a variety of recreational activities involving various modes of travel. Non-mechanized modes of travel include: cross-country skiing, dog sledding, snowshoeing, horseback riding, horseback riding, hiking, boating, hang-gliding, paragliding, and ballooning. Mechanized vehicles predominantly involve mountain bikes and specialized equipment such as Mountain “skate” boards. Motorized travel includes standard passenger vehicles driving on maintained roads and OHVs driving on primitive roads and trails. OHVs include: motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), jeeps, specialized 4x4 trucks, snowmobiles and motor boats.

History of Existing Route System - Many roads within the GSFO were constructed to create access to public land improvements and projects for: timber/vegetation management, gas/mineral development, range management, and various ROWs. Some of these roads are maintained by the permittee in order to maintain the improvement such as a livestock/wildlife pond or fence. Numerous roads were not necessarily intended to be left behind or open for recreational use, but have become popular routes for visitors engaged mechanized/motorized recreation activities. The vast majority of existing mechanized/motorized routes were created or “pioneered” by public land users themselves. “Open” travel designations that permit cross-country mechanized and motorized use, high levels of use and improvements in mechanized/motorized vehicle technology have allowed public land users to gain access to and through more terrain. The repeated passage of vehicles maintains these routes. Not designed but created, these routes are often rutted and eroded.

Motorized Travel Designations - Public lands within the GSFO are designated as: 1) open, 2) limited to existing roads and trails, 3) limited to designated roads and trails, and 4) closed to OHV use. The GSFO has also designated three areas as temporarily closed in order to protect resources. Approximately 71% of the planning area is designated as open to OHV use, 24% is limited to existing or designated roads and trails, and 5% is closed including temporary/seasonal closures.

Travel Overview - Many roads see little use until the fall big game hunting season when hardly any open vehicle route goes unused. The most popular OHV areas are: Hubbard Mesa, Hardscrabble, Red Hill-Gypsum and Bocco Mountain. OHV use occurs nearly year long, and for many users the act of driving/riding is the primary reason for their recreation visit. The towns of Parachute, Rifle, Silt, New Castle, Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, Gypsum and Eagle have all experienced great population growth. Subsequently, the public lands adjacent to them have the highest incidence of non-motorized use. Mountain biking has become very popular on Lookout Mountain, Red Hill Carbondale, The Crown, Main Elk Creek, and East Eagle. Casual hiking has become very popular on Light Hill, Sloane Peak, Red Hill-Carbondale, Fisher Creek, Lookout Mountain, Siloam Springs and within wilderness study areas (WSAs). Horseback riding is popular on King Mountain, Castle Peak and other areas with low motorized/mechanized use.

Current Conditions - The primary issues surrounding travel management within the GSFO are:

- The lack of comprehensive travel management that considers the relationship between various resources, access for authorized permittees, and recreation uses.
- The lack of planning for recreational experiences that preceded the construction of historic routes.
- Unauthorized uses emanating from designated routes causing impacts to other resources.
- Subdivision of private property has created new access points to public lands.
- Many routes that are open to motorized use are only accessible to adjacent landowner.
- Conflicts between recreational users.

OHV Designations - In the current land use plan, more than 70% of the GSFO is currently open to cross-country OHV travel. OHV designations were made solely to limit impacts by protecting resources, preventing recreation conflicts, and protecting public safety. Recent travel management plans for smaller, specific areas have sought to proactively manage travel to provide specific recreation opportunities and meet resource objectives. The table below summarizes acres within the GSFO that have limitations on OHV travel. Areas not included in the table are “open” to cross-country vehicle travel year-round.

General Summary of GSFO Areas with Limitations (Open Areas not included)

Area	Open <i>(seasonal closure)</i>	Limited <i>(existing roads & trails)</i>	Limited <i>(designated roads & trails)</i>	Closed
King Mountain			17,517	
Castle Peak Travel Plan				
Gypsum Hills SRMA			16,930	
Bocco Mtn SRMA			1,388	
Bull Gulch WSA				9,839
Castle Peak WSA				12,237
Castle Peak Area			73,547	
Hack Lake WSA				3,336
Deep Creek WSA				2,406
Siloam Springs			5,529	
East Eagle			1,663	
Tenderfoot Gulch		3,964		
Red Hill Gypsum		14,520		
Fisher Creek				1,028
Red Hill Carbondale				3,104
The Crown	9,200			
Light Hill	3,797			
Sloane Peak				2,487
Thompson Creek				4,270
Glenwood Springs Debris Flow			5,932	
Sunlight Peak		1,707		
Center Mtn		3,617		
Gibson Gulch		8,430		
East Elk Creek Watershed		4,821		
Ward Gulch		4,401		
Roan Plateau			53,471 <i>(pending)</i>	
Flatiron Mesa Watershed		767		
Total	12,997	42,227	175,977	38,707

Travel Routes - Furthermore, even areas with designated routes usually do not have trails that were built with recreation experiences in mind. Most routes either follow historic non-recreation routes (ie: grazing, mining, or administrative access) or were created by OHV users repeatedly driving cross-country. Usually in neither of these cases do the trails provide desirable recreation experiences. These routes—especially the user-created ones—are often unsustainable and cause resource damage. There are almost 2400 miles of routes in the GSFO, for an average density of 2.7 miles of routes per square mile of land. Almost 90% of these routes are open to motorized travel. Table 3-31 summarizes the types of the routes.

Types of Routes *(the routes in each row are also open to all types of vehicles in the rows above)*

Route Open To	Miles
Sedan (maintained roads)	219
High clearance/4wd	1400
ATV	337
Motorcycle	153
Non-mechanized	20
Non-motorized	240
Total	2369

COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

What is Comprehensive Travel Management Planning? Comprehensive travel management is the proactive planning and on-the-ground management of road and trail travel networks. It addresses all resource aspects (recreational, traditional, casual, agricultural, industrial, educational, and cultural, etc.) and accompanying modes and conditions of travel on the public lands, including motorized, mechanized, and muscle-powered uses.

What is Colorado BLM's OHV Policy? Both Executive Order 11644 and the CFR (43 CFR Part 8340) require BLM to designate all public lands as open, closed or limited for OHV use. It is now Colorado BLM policy (CO-IM-2007-20) to restrict all OHV use within limited areas to designated routes. So instead of designating areas as limited to existing routes, the field offices will be tasked with identifying specific route designations along with the accompanying modes of travel as part of the resource management plan (RMP) revisions.

There will be no motorized cross-country travel except in areas designated as "open". Open areas will be limited to a size that can be realistically managed and geographically identifiable but large enough in size to offer a high quality motorized riding/driving opportunity for participants.

For areas in the Limited and Open categories, managers may also impose different kinds of limitations including: vehicle numbers, types, use times or seasons, permitted use, existing routes, designated routes, and other limitations necessary to meet management objectives.

How will comprehensive travel planning be completed in conjunction with the RMP revisions?

Travel route designations for motorized, mechanized and muscle-powered uses will accompany each RMP planning alternative in the EIS. The BLM will: 1) develop appropriate travel route proposals to meet the goals and objectives of each alternative and 2) analyze the impacts of designating these travel systems. To get ready for alternative development (Fall 2007) and the following analysis the BLM will be holding separate travel planning workshops in May/June 2007 - following the April scoping meetings.

What will be the goal of the travel planning workshops? At the travel planning workshops, interested stakeholders will have the opportunity to review BLM's inventory of existing motorized, mechanized and muscle-powered travel routes for accuracy and completeness. General comments on travel routes/networks will also be accepted.

What will the BLM do with the public input and comments? The BLM will use the remainder of the summer to ground truth any travel route inconsistencies that arise from the workshops or public comment period following the workshops. By September the BLM will hopefully have a comprehensive and updated travel data because of suggestions made at the travel workshops and the public comments.

When will the public get to comment on the travel system alternatives? The Draft RMP/Draft EIS is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2008. The public will have a 90-day comment period to comment on the Draft RMP/Draft EIS, including the associated travel management alternatives.

WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Background - While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) are directly responsible for the management of fish and wildlife species, BLM is responsible for land management. Therefore, the CDOW is responsible for managing the states fish and wildlife resources, while the BLM works cooperatively with the CDOW to manage wildlife habitats on public lands. Because the CDOW manages several species for sporting values, these species and their habitats have often received management priority.

Current Conditions - The GSFO manages approximately 568,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat. The presence and interspersions of many habitat types support a large number of wildlife species. Elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep, mountain lion, raptors, and many nongame species, including migratory birds, utilize habitats in the area. The diversity and populations of fish and wildlife throughout the GSFO provide considerable recreational opportunity and economic benefit. The species discussed characterize the fish and wildlife resources of the GSFO and emphasize those taxa that are most important to the BLM GSFO in their land management. These include game species, species vulnerable to impacts, or species with high economic or recreational value.

Fish and Wildlife Species of Primary Interest in BLM's Environmental Planning

BIRDS	
Species	Rationale for Key Designation
Golden Eagle	High interest and protected by law
Upland Game Birds	Economic and Recreational Value
Great Blue Heron	Protected by law and utilizes concentrated nesting areas
Migratory Birds	High interest and protected by law
Other Raptors (Prairie Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, Goshawk)	High interest; protected by law, top of food chain
FISH	
Warm & Coldwater gamefish	Recreational Value
MAMMALS	
Bighorn Sheep	High economic and recreational value
Black Bear	High interest, economic and recreational value
Elk	High interest, economic and recreational value
Mule Deer	High economic and recreational value
Mountain Lion	High interest, economic and recreational value
White-tailed Prairie Dog	High interest; association with Federally listed Black-footed ferret

Habitat Types - The GSFO provides year-long and seasonal habitat for an undetermined number of terrestrial wildlife species. The GSFO has six primary habitat types.

- 1) Grasslands comprise slightly less than 6%.
- 2) Broadleaf tree-riparian species covering less than 1%.
- 3) Mountain shrub (oakbrush and serviceberry) covering approximately 29%.
- 4) Semi-desert Shrub (sagebrush, greasewood and saltbrush) covering approximately 15%.
- 5) Conifer Forest (mixed stands of Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir) covering 6%.
- 6) Conifer Woodland (stands of pinyon pine and juniper) covering 37%.

Characterization - Primary indicators of health of terrestrial animals are their population numbers, the condition of the individuals that comprise these populations, the age structure represented within the population and the population's distribution relative to its historic range. These are the types of information that are tracked by CDOW for species of game animals and, increasingly, for key species of non-game animals. BLM, in managing the habitat used by these populations, uses a different set of metrics, such as the condition of shrubs, forbs, and grasses that comprise the habitat used by key animal species. Indicators of

condition include estimates of overall vegetative cover, in absolute terms, or using a relative comparison between portions of the habitat that are available and unavailable to foraging animals. The vigor and production of individual plants, and various plant indicators may also be evaluated. In evaluating plant indicators, species composition is assessed, as is the form of forage plants. These are the sorts of information that are reflected in the discussions of terrestrial habitat condition.

The trends exhibited by wildlife habitat have been noted in the land health assessments (LHAs) that are being completed on BLM land within the GSFO. LHAs have been completed on 7 of the 13 landscapes identified in the GSFO. Portions of each landscape were found to be failing to meet *Standards for Public Land Health - Standard 3* - addressing healthy, productive plant and animal communities (<http://www.co.blm.gov/standguide.htm>). General reasons for failure include the following:

- OHV and other recreation use – Habitat fragmentation, loss of habitat, abandonment of area due to an increase in human activity
- Natural gas development – Habitat fragmentation, loss of habitat, increased human use
- Physical loss of habitats on private lands in the area due to development – thus reducing the continuity and value of habitat located on BLM lands.
- Lack of Fire - Juniper Encroachment, loss of sagebrush habitat
- Ungulate Grazing – livestock grazing in some areas combined with heavy big game winter use resulting in loss of vegetative diversity and productivity
- Drought – poor productivity and vigor of vegetation
- Dominance of vegetation by undesirable/weedy species – most notably cheatgrass

In summary, the condition of wildlife habitat varies across the GSFO. Habitats within portions of the GSFO have been fragmented and degraded by human encroachment and activities. In other areas, wildlife habitat is in good condition, providing productive habitat for several wildlife species. Many sagebrush stands, which also provide important big game critical winter habitat, are in poor conditions. Many stands are even aged, hedged by browsing and show signs of pinyon/juniper encroachment. Less than half of the landscapes within the planning area have been evaluated for Standard 3 (healthy plant and animal communities), and therefore, comments from the LHAs may not reflect habitat conditions throughout the entire planning area.

Big Game Species - The two primary big game species in the GSFO are elk and mule deer. Bighorn sheep occur in more limited numbers. Moose and antelope may occasionally utilize BLM lands, but not to the extent that habitat is extensively managed for these two species. Moose may occur on BLM lands near the US Forest Service (USFS) boundary or may occasionally utilize riparian habitats within the GSFO. Antelope occur in very limited numbers within the extreme northern portions of the GSFO near Toponas, CO.

Mule deer and elk occupy higher elevations, usually forested habitat, during the summer and then migrate to lower elevation sagebrush dominant ridges and south-facing slopes in the winter. BLM administered public lands provide the majority of winter range available to deer and elk in the resource area. Critical winter ranges for elk and mule deer are essential to the survival of these species in the GSFO. In several areas, concentrations of big game species are degrading winter habitats. Browse species in particular, show poor vigor and moderate to severe hedging in areas of the GSFO. Mule deer and elk concentration on winter range and use of browse species can reduce plant vigor and productivity over time. Mule deer typically concentrate in the winter in sagebrush habitats along the Colorado, Eagle and Roaring Fork Rivers. Elk typically concentrate along the Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers and most of the severe winter habitat for elk is located west of Glenwood Springs.

Eight deer data analysis units (D-8, D-12, D-13, D-14, D-41, D-42, D-43 and D-53) are located entirely or partially in the GSFO boundary. With the exception of DAUs 41 and 24, the population of mule deer within the GSFO appears to be healthy and populations are currently above long term objectives. The population of DAU 41 is 21-30% under the long term objective and the population of DAU-42 is 1-10% under the long term objective (CDOW 2006 Draft Objectives: <http://wildlife.state.co.us>). Six elk data analysis units (E-6, E-10, E-12, E-14, E-15 and E-16) are located entirely or partially in the GSFO boundary. The population of elk appears healthy and all of the DAUs located in the RMP planning area are currently above long term objectives.

Bighorn sheep primarily occur on USFS lands bordering the GSFO, however, this species is known to utilize BLM lands in Bull Gulch, Glenwood Canyon, Crystal River and north of New Castle. Habitat supporting bighorn sheep is primarily pinyon/juniper woodlands and adjacent mountain shrub habitat where topography plays the most important role in locations used by this species.

Special Status Wildlife Species - "Special Status" wildlife species are those animal species having populations that have suffered significant declines. These declines may result from habitat loss, habitat modification and from changes in competition, predation, or disease. Such species may or may not be legally protected by federal or state agencies. BLM land management practices are intended to sustain and promote species that are legally protected and prevent species that are not yet legally protected from needing such protection.

BLM is mandated to ensure that special status species are protected, by virtue of the Endangered Species Act and the BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM 2004). This goal is furthered through a Memorandum of Agreement with the USFWS and the USFS.

Special Status Wildlife Species in the Glenwood Springs Field Office

BIRDS			
<i>Species</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Status</i>
Bald Eagle	FT, ST	White-faced Ibis	BLM-S
Mexican Spotted Owl	FT, ST	Northern Goshawk	BLM-S
Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo	BLM-S, C, SC	Barrow's Goldeneye	BLM-S
Gunnison Sage-Grouse	BLM-S, SC	Burrowing Owl	ST
Greater Sage-grouse	BLM-S, SC	Peregrine Falcon	ST
Columbian Sharp-Tailed Grouse	BLM-S, SC	Greater Sandhill Crane	SC
Ferruginous Hawk	BLM-S, SC		
FISH			
Bonytail*	FE, SE	Humpback chub*	FE, ST
Colorado pikeminnow*	FE, ST	Colorado River cutthroat trout	BLM-S, SC
Greenback cutthroat trout	FT, ST		
AMPHIBIANS			
Boreal Toad	SE	Northern leopard Frog	BLM-S, SC
Western spadefoot toad	BLM-S		
REPTILES			
Midget-faded rattlesnake	BLM-S	Utah milksnake	BLM-S
MAMMALS			
Black-footed ferret	FE, SE	Big free-tailed bat	BLM-S
Canada lynx	FT, SE	Yuma myotis	BLM-S
Townsend's big-eared bat	BLM-S, SC	Spotted bat	BLM-S
Fringed myotis	BLM-S	River otter	ST

BLM-S: BLM Sensitive Species
 FE: Federally Endangered Species
 FT: Federally Threatened Species
 C: Federal Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered
 SC: State Species of Concern
 SE: State Endangered Species
 ST: State Threatened Species

* Water depletions in the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Basins, may affect the species and/or critical habitat in downstream reaches in other states.
 ▲ Water depletions in the South Platte River may affect the species and/or critical habitat in downstream reaches in other states



BLM wants your ideas on wildlife and special status wildlife species.

What are the areas of highest priority for protecting, maintaining, and restoring wildlife habitat? What actions and use restrictions are needed to achieve desired populations and habitat conditions?

VEGETATION COMMUNITIES

The GSFO lies within three physiographic regions (ecoregions): the Southern Rocky Mountains, the Colorado Plateau and the Utah High Plateaus. The Southern Rocky Mountains ecoregion extends from approximately Rifle to the east. The Colorado Plateau extends from Rifle to the south and southwest. Only the very western part of the GSFO falls within the Utah High Plateaus ecoregion. The Utah High Plateaus extends from the top of the Roan Plateau northwest of Rifle to the north and west. Within a specific area, the type and amount of vegetation present are largely determined by precipitation, elevation, topography, aspect, soil types and human actions.

Primary Vegetative Cover Types - Within the GSFO, there are ten primary vegetative cover types.

Vegetation Type	Percent	Characteristic Species
Aspen Woodlands	5	Quaking aspen dominated woodlands
Barren/Talus Slopes/Rock	5	Barren, Talus slopes, Rock outcrops, Soil
Coniferous Forest	9	Douglas-fir; Lodgepole pine; Engelmann spruce; subalpine fir
Gambel Oak woodlands	9	Gambel-oak dominated shrublands
Grasslands	3	Grass or forb dominated rangelands (bluebunch wheatgrass, needle-and-thread grass), subalpine meadow (Thurber's fescue) agricultural land
Mesic Mountain Shrublands	14	Shrublands with big sagebrush, Gambel oak, serviceberry, snowberry, mountain mahogany, antelope bitterbrush)
Pinyon-juniper woodlands	37	Pinyon pine; Utah juniper; sometimes Rocky Mountain juniper, with shrubs, grass, rock
Riparian	1	Cottonwood, willow, tamarisk, alder, Colorado blue spruce, sedge and rush
Salt-Desert Shrublands	1	Black greasewood; shadscale; Gardner's and four-wing saltbush; low rabbitbrush; black and bud sagebrush, and some big sagebrush
Sagebrush Shrublands	16	Basin, Wyoming, Mountain and Subalpine big sagebrush; sometimes low rabbitbrush; rubber rabbitbrush
TOTAL	100	

Indicators - In the past decade, GSFO's primary means of assessing the current condition of the vegetative communities has involved using the LHA process. This process involves utilizing a checklist of biotic, abiotic and hydrologic features to determine whether the Public Land Health Standards (<http://www.co.blm.gov/standguide.htm>) are being met. The indicators associated with Standard 3 for healthy plant and animal communities are as follows:

- Noxious weeds and undesirable species are minimal in the overall plant community.
- Native plant and animal communities are spatially distributed across the landscape with a density, composition, and frequency of species suitable to ensure reproductive capability and sustainability.
- Plants and animals are present in mixed age classes sufficient to sustain recruitment and mortality fluctuations.
- Landscapes exhibit connectivity of habitat or presence of corridors to prevent habitat fragmentation.
- Photosynthetic activity is evident throughout the growing season.
- Diversity and density of plant and animal species are in balance with habitat/landscape potential and exhibit resilience to human activities.
- Appropriate plant litter accumulates and is evenly distributed across the landscape.
- Landscapes are composed of several plant communities that may be in a variety of successional stages and patterns.

Trends - With few exceptions, very little monitoring data has been collected in the past two decades from which to assess the trends in the condition of plant communities throughout the GSFO.

General observations of trends throughout the rest of the GSFO, are based in the LHAs that are being completed on BLM land within the GSFO. LHAs have been completed on 7 of the 13 landscapes identified in the GSFO. Of the 7 landscapes with completed assessments, 5 had at least some portions which were not meeting Standard 3 for healthy, productive plant and animal communities. General reasons for failure include the following:

- Historic Over-grazing – contributed to reduction in cover of herbaceous plants, loss of native, perennial grasses and forbs, increase in noxious weeds such as cheatgrass, encroachment of pinyon-juniper trees
- Lack of Fire – increase in density and cover of sagebrush, sometimes leading to reduction in cover of grasses and forbs, encroachment of pinyon-juniper trees
- Drought – reduced vigor of vegetation, some mortality, some reduction in recruitment of young plants
- OHV and other Human Recreation Use – Destruction of vegetation, habitat fragmentation, introduction of noxious weeds
- Natural Gas Development and ROWs – Direct loss of vegetation, change in species composition to early seral stage species, introduction of noxious weeds and other undesirable, aggressive non-native grasses, habitat fragmentation.
- Grazing – heavy livestock grazing combined with heavy big game winter use on some sagebrush and salt desert shrub communities resulting in poor vegetative vigor, decadent sagebrush with poor recruitment, as well as reduction of native, perennial grasses and forbs
- Development of Private Lands - Physical loss of habitats on private lands due to development, thus reducing the connectivity and continuity of habitat located on BLM lands.

Improved data collection and analysis is the key to understanding the condition and trend of vegetative communities and directing and prioritizing future management actions needed to resolve land health concerns.



BLM wants your ideas on vegetation management.

What are the areas of highest ecological importance for protecting, maintaining, or restoring vegetation and wildlife habitats? What areas are currently in need of management actions or use restrictions to achieve desired vegetation conditions? What actions and use restrictions are needed to achieve desired vegetative conditions?

FLUID MINERALS MANAGEMENT

There are five US Geological Survey (USGS) identified total petroleum systems and 20 Assessment Units extend into the Piceance Basin. The western portion of the GSFO (including the Grand Hogback) is the Piceance Basin, which is the eastern half of a greater geologic basin known as the Uinta-Piceance Basin. Most of the hydrocarbon production in GSFO is natural gas with very little associated oil, natural gas liquids and water. The gas production is from the Tertiary Wasatch and Cretaceous Mesaverde Group formations.

Western Portion of the GSFO – The oil and gas development activity in GSFO is concentrated on the western 22% of the Field Office (the area west of the Grand Hogback), where the high potential for the occurrence and development of oil and gas resources is found. The majority of the lands within this western portion of the GSFO is either already leased or being addressed through the separate planning process for the Roan Plateau. Of the 127,335 acres of BLM mineral estate in this high potential area that is not within the Roan Plateau Planning Area, 95 percent has been leased. Most of the unleased land outside of the Roan Planning Area is located along the Grand Hogback, with a few small scattered parcels elsewhere. The 73,602-acre Roan Plateau Planning Area contains 57,491 unleased acres, which are being address in the pending Roan Plateau RMP Amendment.

The total USFS mineral estate within the high potential areas of the Glenwood Springs planning area is 231,729 acres. Currently 117,191 acres are leased and the remaining acres available for lease are 114,538 acres. Leasing decisions on National Forest lands are addressed through National Forest planning and will not be addressed in this planning effort.

Additional leasing may occur in the area of the USGS Hanging Wall Assessment Unit (Grand Hogback) which is sparsely leased in the northern part of the play. Almost all of the areas mapped as medium, low and no-known potential for the occurrence of oil and gas are not leased.

Eastern Portion of the GSFO - The eastern 78% of the GSFO (east of the Grand Hogback) consists of the Eagle Basin, the White River Uplift, and mountain ranges to the south and east. Due to the low potential for the economic occurrence of oil and gas resources no USGS oil and gas assessment has been completed for this area. The Eagle Basin is primarily a Pennsylvanian-age depositional basin located in a structurally complex area. This basin has relatively low potential for the discovery of significant gas based on available well data (subsurface data) and surface data. The basin has very low potential for discovery of economic oil accumulations due to very high thermal maturity of most Paleozoic rocks and the presence of only small areas containing younger rocks with oil source beds. There are some non-competitive leases located north of Gypsum which is classified as a low potential area.

Future Development - Development within the GSFO will continue to take place in the areas that are currently being developed. Infill drilling and step out drilling will be the major portion of future activity. Although drilling of proven reserves will continue, much interest is being shown by the gas industry for the technically recoverable resources identified by the USGS and displayed in the EPCA study. These interests are for the coal bed natural gas plays and for the Niobrara play. It is estimated that 99% of the drilling will occur in the area identified as high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas resources. Approximately one percent of future drilling activity will occur in areas of medium and low potential and no drilling activity is predicted in the areas identified as no-known potential. The area within the Roan Plateau Planning Area that could be leased in the future would be drilled based on constraints addressed in the Roan Plateau Plan. The Roan Plateau Planning Area has significant reserves and would certainly produce gas. Most of the existing wells are on fee minerals, with an increase on BLM minerals occurring presently and projected to increase in the near future. Industry will continue to drill heavily on fee minerals and as they drill out the fee mineral estate a significant increase of drilling on federal mineral estate will occur. This would also happen as a result of the BLM leasing lands within the Roan Plateau Planning Area that currently are not leased. Increased drilling will also occur on USFS lands since only half of the available lands for leasing are currently leased. It is projected that much of the USFS drilling will occur in the later half of the life of this plan.

Unitization - There are 28 units and participating areas with the GSFO boundary. They are all located in the area that is classified as high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas. The units are all located south of

Interstate 70 and involve 259,600 acres of land regardless of mineral estate and surface ownership. In fact much of the unitized area is on the White River National Forest. The Proposed RMP Amendment for the Roan Plateau Planning Area includes a unitization approach for the 34,758 acres on top of the Plateau.

Communitization - Communitization is used extensively within the GSFO. There are 128 communitization agreements involving more than 44,746 acres. They mainly communitize gas production from the Mesaverde/Williams Fork, but some communitization agreements communitize gas production from other formations such as the Wasatch Formation and the Cozzette Member of the Iles Formation. All of the communitization agreements are located within the area classified as high potential for the occurrence of oil and gas.

Spacing - Current State of Colorado spacing requirements is 40 acres (600' setbacks from lease line) for wells greater than 2500 feet in depth, but can be increased or decreased depending on geology and reservoir characteristics. The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission uses the term "default spacing" with modification occurring through Cause Orders. These adjustments are meant to maximize production of the resource while minimizing surface disturbance and expense. In the case involving production from the Williams Fork Formation, 10 acre spacing has been justified and approved. Currently the Wasatch Formation is be drained on 160 acre spacing. New spacing regulations will be necessary to accommodate new drilling and production techniques. Future production from previously undeveloped plays such as the Niobrara may also require spacing changes. Tight sands, compartmental geology, and reservoir characteristics may increase the demand for tighter spacing in the future in other reservoirs than the Williams Fork.

Adequacy of Existing Management - Existing management is generally adequate to achieve objectives for minerals management. However, the RMP revision should serve to resolve: 1) resource conflict, 2) management inconsistencies and 3) incorporate best management practices and best available technology in minerals development. The following are issues related to minerals development (fluids and non-fluids) that can be addressed in the RMP revision:

- Conditions of Approvals, Best Management Practices, and reclamation may be reviewed for previously leased areas in this planning effort.
- New or different leasing stipulations (no surface occupancy, controlled surface use, and timing limitations) and Conditions of Approval can be developed for un-leased areas to ensure consistency with revised resource management objectives.
- In areas of high erosion potential, reclamation has generally taken longer than specified in the lease or Conditions of Approval. The RMP revision should address minimizing resource impacts.
- Conventional and unconventional oil and gas well drilling and completion in areas where there is the potential for oil shale development should be addressed. Oil shale potential areas may be impacted if improper casing length and cementation is used during well drilling and completion to isolate the oil shale intervals.
- Coal bed methane development has not been addressed in previous plans. Resource development potential, drilling, operational requirements, spacing, and conflict with other uses should be addressed in detail. Requirements for production water disposal and possibly from each producing interval (if constituents are different) should be addressed.
- In areas rated as medium, low and no-known potential other resource values can take precedent over oil and gas exploration and development. Since these areas are not leased, new lease stipulations can be applied to possible future leasing.



BLM wants your ideas on Fluid Mineral Management

How should BLM/partners resolve: 1) resource conflict, 2) management inconsistencies and 3) incorporate best management practices and best available technology in fluid minerals development.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Current Level of Use (inc Roan Plateau area) -

Approximately 552,007 acres of the BLM lands within the GSFO are within grazing allotment boundaries, which are managed in accordance with the 1984 (RMP). Unallotted acreage includes small isolated parcels not included within existing allotment boundaries, and areas within allotment boundaries that currently have no permitted livestock grazing. Allotments are an outgrowth of the grazing districts and permitting system established to manage livestock grazing in these districts by the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act. The livestock that graze on GSFO lands are primarily cattle, but also include sheep and some domestic horses. The relative numbers of these kinds of livestock have not varied much over the last ten years.

Animal Unit Months - Federal livestock grazing permits generally are expressed in terms of animal units (AUs) per area or total AUMs. One AUM is the amount of forage required by an AU (i.e. 1,000 lb. beef cow with or without a nursing calf) for one month or the tenure of one AU for a one-month period. If one AU grazes on an area of rangeland for six months, that tenure is equal to six AUs for one month or six AUMs. In general, the number of animal units, multiplied by the number of months they are on the range equals the number of AUMs available or used.

There are a total of 253 allotments in the GSFO. In addition to public land, these allotments may contain other federal lands (e.g. National Forest Service), state lands, and private lands. Of these allotments, 191 are currently permitted for livestock grazing and 62 allotments have no grazing authorization. There are 147 permits authorizing grazing use on these allotments. Total active preference (permitted use) is 44,762 animal unit months (AUMs) and there are 19,163 AUMs in suspension. Total permitted numbers change frequently due to conversions of the class of livestock and changes in allotment or livestock management. The allotments are used for grazing cattle (88 percent of the allotments), sheep and cattle (5 percent of the allotments), or sheep (7 percent of the allotments). Four of these allotments also have horse permits. There were 32 unallotted allotments in 1983. Of the 32, twenty-three have remained unallotted, three were included in other allotments, one was split into 2 allotments, and four were allotted a total of 411 AUMs.

There are 133 Section 3 permits and 14 Section 15 permits. Section 3 allotments are those that are within a grazing district, as provided in the Taylor Grazing Act. Section 15 allotments are those that are outside a grazing district. All Section 15 allotments in the GSFO are located in Routt County. Section 15 permits account for only 2,247 of the total 44,779 AUM's permitted in the GSFO. The 1983 RMP reported 37,488 existing AUMs in use and initially allocated 37,852. Projected allocation expected after vegetation manipulation practices was 50,594 AUMs. Authorized use is the number of AUM's billed in a given year and is often lower than permitted use due to many factors, including precipitation levels, forage production, and market and social factors.

Colorado Standards for Public Land Health - The Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (<http://www.co.blm.gov/standguide.htm>), effective 1997, establish appropriate conditions for soils, riparian systems, upland vegetation, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species and water quality (BLM 1997). These standards not only pertain to impacts associated with livestock grazing, but also to other rangeland impacts from activities such as recreation, development activities, wildlife grazing and wild horse management. Public Land Health and Guidelines are implemented through LHAs, determination documents, environmental assessments, permit renewals, and other permit changes.

Existing management practices for livestock grazing have been focused on achieving Land Health Standards and meeting other resource (vegetation and soils) objectives established for allotments. This has been accomplished by better conformance with the guidelines for livestock management such as changing the duration of grazing use, reducing animal units, and improving grazing distribution. Reducing the duration of grazing use and improving livestock distribution are generally the key to meeting rangeland objectives particularly those associated with riparian areas. Improved grazing management has been accomplished by employing a variety of actions such as: adjustments in grazing permits (including the addition of terms and conditions designed to maintain/improve riparian zones and wetlands – utilization/trampling limits herding/riding requirements, placing salt and supplemental feed away from riparian zones), construction of water developments, construction of pasture fencing, ensuring compliance with maintenance of range

improvements, and ensuring compliance with grazing permits. Vegetation manipulation projects have been used to improve allotment conditions and reset vegetation seral status.

Characterization - Trends in livestock grazing reflect changes in livestock species, changes in permittees and their perspectives, and changes in permitted use or season of use. Absentee ownership of base property associated with many of the allotments has increased, as has the number of permittees that do not rely on livestock grazing for their primary source of income. Changes in the types of permittees that run livestock on the RMP planning area have resulted in diversification of perspectives. Some permittees have shifted the focus of their management to habitat improvement for wildlife and recreation as an alternative source of income.

Changes in permitted use or season of use are in response to changes in rangeland condition socio-economics, and other factors. The condition of the land is due to a variety of factors such as climate, wildlife, livestock, oil and gas development, recreational use, and increased population. Increased development and recreational demands are resource uses that are competing for resources that are limiting to livestock grazing. If rangeland condition deteriorates, BLM has the ability to reduce the number of permitted AUMs, manage plant communities that provide forage and browse through vegetation treatments, change the season of use, require deferment and pasture rotations, and/or install range improvements such as fences, water pipelines, spring developments and reservoirs. These range improvements often enable more intensive grazing systems and encourage better livestock distribution and grazing utilization, but also require more management on the part of the grazing permittee. Range improvement efforts and permittee involvement are crucial to sustain resources and meet resource demands. BLM's traditional goal in managing livestock grazing is to provide sustainable habitat for livestock and other animals, which is likely to remain as the primary focus of BLM's management of livestock.

Trends - Urbanization of rural areas within GSFO has also caused conflicts with livestock grazing. New land owners are often times unfamiliar with state livestock laws and associated fencing requirements. Conflicts develop when livestock authorized on public land drift onto private land. This is largely the result of public/private land boundaries that are not fenced, poorly fenced, or where fences have not been maintained.

Rural-urban interface conflicts such as the one above, have often forced ranchers to seek other areas for grazing. Livestock operations near more urban areas in GSFO such as Aspen, Glenwood Springs, Eagle and Gypsum have consequently diminished as well as livestock use on public land surrounding these areas.

Increasing elk populations have also been an issue with many grazing permittees. Elk are often in direct competition with livestock for forage resources. Those who own land where concentrated winter elk use occurs (i.e., distributional problems) typically express the most concern.

Increased oil and gas activity in the western portion of GSFO has also increased conflicts with livestock operations. As new roads are constructed and use of existing roads increases, control of livestock has become more difficult.



BLM wants your ideas on Livestock Grazing Management.

Describe how public lands can be managed to become as productive as feasible for livestock grazing, including guidelines and criteria for future allotment- specific adjustments in season of use or other grazing management practices. In addition, identify guidelines and criteria for future allotment-specific adjustments in the amount of forage available for livestock, season of use, or other grazing management practices.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Background on Visual Resource Management

BLM's visual resource management (VRM) system provides a way to identify and evaluate scenic values to determine the appropriate levels of management. VRM is a tool to identify and map essential landscape settings to meet public preferences and recreation related experiences today and into the future. The BLM's VRM system helps to ensure that actions taken on the public lands today will benefit the visual qualities associated with the landscapes described above, while protecting these visual resources for adjacent communities in the future.

Table 9.2 -1. BLM VRM Classes

Class I Objective: To preserve the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention;

Class II Objective: To retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low;

Class III Objective: To partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate; and

Class IV Objective: To provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high.

VRM management classes are assigned for all BLM public lands based on an inventory of visual resources and management consideration for other land uses. VRM inventory consists of a scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis, and a delineation of distance zones. Based on these three factors, BLM lands are placed into one of four visual resource inventory classes. These inventory classes represent the relative value of the visual resources. GSFO VRM classes were assigned in the 1984 RMP.

Characterization- The landscape type within the GSFO is diverse and consists of foothills, mountains, plateaus, mesas, canyons, broad and narrow river valleys. Vegetation types vary from low land sagebrush, grasslands and scrub oak to pinyon and juniper forests, to aspen and spruce in the higher elevations. Some of the streams and rivers flowing through and adjacent to GSFO public lands include the Colorado, Eagle, Roaring Fork rivers, Deep Creek, Thompson Creek, Sweetwater Creek, the Elk Creeks, Rock Creek, Egeria Creek and Abrams Creek. Several prominent features within the landscape exist in the resource area such as the Roan Cliffs and Anvil Points, the Hogbacks, Castle Peak, Deep Creek Canyon, Bull Gulch, Thompson Creek, and East Fork of Parachute Creek, and Thompson Creek.

The GSFO RMP planning area currently surrounds 10 communities (Parachute, Rifle, Silt, New Castle, Glenwood Springs, Dotsero, Gypsum, Eagle, Carbondale, El Jebel/Basalt) and is bisected by some of Colorado's busiest highway corridors (I-70, Highways; 82, 131, 13). Visual quality has been a concern to most residents in the GSFO RMP planning area. Given the location of GSFO managed public lands and their close proximity to communities and key transportation corridors the combined effects of scenic quality, the high degree of sensitivity, and visual accessibility resulted in 40% of GSFO area has been managed as VRM Class II. The current VRM Classes were chosen to provide emphasis to scenic quality along the following transportation corridors; Interstate 70, Highways 82, 131, and the Colorado River Road. Three additional areas; Deep Creek, Thompson Creek and Bull Gulch were proposed for special management to protect their outstanding scenic qualities.

The following is a summary of VRM classes from the 1984 RMP.

Class	Acres	Percent of Resource Area
Class I	13,470	2
Class II	225,106	40
Class III	149,112	26
Class IV	176,690	31
Class V	1,664	1

Trends - Public lands in the GSFO are highly fragmented. The landscape is experiencing a high degree of human modification due to urban development (and its associated infrastructure/uses) and from energy development activities. Most gas development has taken place in the western portion of Garfield County which has resulted in modifying the landscape into a more industrialized setting. Growing pressure is being

placed on the visual resources as a result of activities such as: fire management, utility corridors, roads and trails, communication sites, pipelines, livestock grazing, water tanks, etc. Public concern is also on the rise regarding preservation of visual and scenic quality for open space and scenic backgrounds in residential areas and for recreational uses.

Tourism also plays a major role in the economy of western Colorado and much of the GSFO is viewed in route to or is adjacent to major tourist destination areas, such as Vail and Aspen. As the state's population grows, more visitors will be attracted to the public lands for recreation opportunities in natural-appearing landscapes. In addition, a high demand will be placed scenic resources near population centers.

Visual Resource Assessment - In response to increasing concerns from local communities a VRM assessment for GSFO is currently being conducted for key transportation corridors and other sensitive viewsheds in coordination with adjacent communities and other local, state, and federal agencies. This assessment will look at viewsheds that have been deemed important throughout the RMP planning area to ensure that the plan looks at what communities and other local, state, and federal agencies deem as being visually and aesthetically important through a data gathering exercise. In addition, current VRM Classes from the 1984 RMP has data defects and will be updated within those sensitive viewshed to ensure that VRM class boundaries reflect "real world" conditions. The assessment will be available in the spring of 2007.

Management Adequacy - The current visual resource classes were prescribed in the 1984 GSFO RMP. They are insufficient to be used as a management tool because of data inconsistencies and the outdated nature of the class designations. With increases in both resident populations and in tourism, scenic values and visual open space has become more important. Current VRM objectives have been maintained in some areas while other areas are experiencing land use modifications that are becoming evident. Sensitive viewshed preservation will continue to compete with other land use allocation decisions and management activities for urban development infrastructure needs, energy development, recreation uses, and other surface use activities.

The Planning Process - The RMP revision will reevaluate and assign VRM classes for all BLM lands based on the inventory of visual resources and management considerations for other land use allocations. While visual values will be considered, they do not establish management direction. Final VRM objectives and boundaries will result from and reflect resource allocation decisions made in the RMP. The planning effort will weigh all resource allocation decisions so as not create conflicts managing the very values which the management plan seeks to foster. For example areas where land uses are not "discretionary", such as with valid existing rights, must be allowed but their affect to visual quality can be minimize through mitigating measures.

In accordance with the BLM manual H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook, VRM classes will need to correlate with recreation management objectives and setting prescriptions that have been set for recreation management zones in every SRMA.

The revised RMP will need to address BLM guidance, which requires that all WSAs be managed as VRM Class I areas. Currently, the WSA's within GSFO are fragmented in management objectives and have VRM Classes within each unit ranging from VRM Class II to IV.



BLM wants your ideas on Visual Resource Management

Based on your management/land use proposals, what are the appropriate visual resource classes that align with and support your proposed management suggestions?

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern - The 1984 Glenwood Springs RMP designated Deep Creek (2,380 acres), Bull Gulch (6,714 acres), Blue Hill (4,718 acres), the Glenwood Springs Debris Flow Hazard Zone (6,675 acres), Lower Colorado River (4,269 acres) and Thompson Creek (formally Natural Environment Area (4,286 acres)) as ACECs (Federal Register Vol. 49, No. 11, January 17, 1984) and manage as follows:

Deep Creek

- Designate as unsuitable for utility and communication facilities
- Manage under VRM Class I
- Identify as a recreation management area
- Identify as a potential peregrine falcon introduction site
- Prohibit vegetation manipulations for livestock, wildlife and timber management
- *Recommended for formal mineral withdrawal

Bull Gulch

- Designate as unsuitable for utility and communication facilities
- Close to ORV use
- Designate as fire management zone-ecosystem management area
- Identify as a recreation management area

Blue Hill Archaeological District

- Designate as sensitive zone for utility and communication facilities
- Restrict ORV use to existing roads and trails
- Designate as fire exclusion zone
- Classify as a critical watershed because of the soil erosion hazard
- Designate as sensitive area for cultural and Native American resources

Glenwood Springs Debris Flow Hazard Zone

- Limit motorized vehicle use to designated roads and trails
- Designate as sensitive zone for utility and communication facilities
- Designate as fire exclusion zone
- Prohibit surface facilities for oil and gas development
- Prohibit timber harvesting
- Limit livestock use to light grazing

Lower Colorado River Cooperative Management Area

- Identify cooperative management with CDOW
- Designate as sensitive zone for utility and communication facilities
- Exclude livestock

Thompson Creek Natural Environment Area was designated as an ACEC in 1985 (Federal Register Vol. 50, No. 65, April 4, 1985) to preserve geological, ecological, cultural, and scenic values and to provide for educational and recreational use.

Thompson Creek

- Designate as unsuitable for utility and communication facilities
- No Surface Occupancy on oil and gas leasing
- Prohibition of vegetation manipulation and timber harvesting
- Close to ORV use
- *Recommended for formal mineral withdrawal

Management Adequacy and Opportunities- Current management direction for three designated ACECs (Lower Colorado River Cooperative Management Area, Blue Hill Archaeological District, and G.S. Debris Flow Hazard Zone) has been sufficient to protect the identified resource values associated with those areas. However, three designated ACECs (Deep Creek, Thompson Creek, and Bull Gulch) are in need of more specific management direction. These ACECs are experiencing “new” and increased recreation uses that were not addressed in the 1984 RMP. These new uses (i.e. climbing, mountain biking, paint ball, geo-caching,) are potentially threatening resource values. Travel management needs to be addressed for motorized and mechanized both within and on lands adjacent to the ACECs to address ongoing travel related issues. Management plans with specific ACEC objectives need to be prepared to protect resources and reduce user conflicts.

Three areas have been identified as deserving special management attention by the state of Colorado’s Natural History Program and by the BLM Geologic Advisory Group in “Faults, Fossils, and Canyons, Significant Geologic Features on Public Lands in Colorado, 1989”. These recommendations were based on specific guidelines and criteria and focused on sites of national or statewide significance. The three areas identified within the GSFO were the Dotsero Crater, the McCoy Fan Deltas, and the Gypsum Cliffs. The McCoy Fan Delta is experiencing an increased amount of OHV (motorcycle) use that has potential to damage the exposed Pennsylvanian fan deltas. Portions of the Dotsero Crater are currently being mined as a “saleable” for cinder block. The Gypsum Cliffs are being managed under VRM class II objectives and to date have incurred no significant damage. Current management prescriptions need to be looked at in this revision to determine if these values meet ACEC criteria and should be preserved.

The 2002 Glenwood Springs RMP Evaluation Report recommended that the Lower Colorado Cooperative Management Area ACEC should be re-evaluated to determine whether or not it should be dropped from ACEC designation due to the difficulty in managing its sparse and scattered acreage. One value associated with this ACEC is the presence of two endangered fish species, the Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker. In conjunction with the presence of these fishes, the scattered BLM lands along and within the Colorado River and within the 100-year flood plain, are identified as designated critical habitat for these two fish. Given the endangered status of these two fishes, they are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Thus any federal activity or activity authorized or funded by federal entities is subject to Section 7 consultation under the Act where impacts May Affect these fish or their habitat. Given their protection under federal law, ACEC designation provides no additional protection to these fish and the absence of the ACEC designation for these scattered lands would not preclude continued protection for these native fishes or their habitat.

Mineral Entry - Since none the ACECs have been formally withdrawn from mineral entry as identified in the 1984 RMP, the potential for mineral entry in the all the ACECs could further threaten ACEC values. The report mentioned new opportunities for designation have emerged from the increased cultural inventoried areas and special status plant species identification. The report also identified a need to keep a monitoring log for ACECs.

ACEC Decisions for the RMP Revision - As part of the RMP revision process, the current ACECs will be re-evaluated to determine maintenance of relevant and important values and whether ACEC designation is still necessary to protect these values. Management prescriptions for these areas will also be reviewed to ensure they can protect the identified relevant and important values. In addition to the re-evaluation of existing ACECs, public and internal proposals to designate additional ACECs will be evaluated through the RMP revision process.



BLM wants your ideas on ACECs

So what areas do you think should be identified and proposed as an ACEC and what areas should be re-evaluated to determine if ACEC designation is still necessary to protect the relevant and important values?

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Wilderness Areas - There are no congressionally designated wilderness areas administered by the GSFO.

Background on Wilderness Study Areas - In 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act, thereby establishing a national system of lands for the purpose of preserving a representative sample of ecosystems in a natural condition for the benefit of future generations.

Until 1976, most land considered for, and designated as, wilderness was managed by the National Park Service and USFS. With the passage of the FLPMA in 1976, Congress directed the BLM to inventory and assess public lands under its administration for potential wilderness designation. Congress gave the Department of the Interior 15 years to complete the wilderness inventory. This inventory was done on a state by state basis. Through this process, four areas (Castle Peak, Bull Gulch, Hack Lake and Eagle Mountain) in the GSFO were identified as WSAs. The Grand Hogback, Storm King, Thompson Creek, Pisgah Mountain were inventoried but did not qualify as a WSA.

In 1991, BLM Colorado made its suitability recommendations for 54 WSAs in the State of Colorado. The wilderness studies considered each area's resource values, present and projected future uses of the areas, public input, the manageability of the areas as wilderness, the environmental consequences of designating or not designating the areas as wilderness, and mineral surveys. Based on the suitability recommendations, 3 WSAs within the GSFO were recommended to be part of the national Wilderness Preservation System. A discussion for each WSA can be found in the Colorado BLM Wilderness Study Report, Volume Four, Pages 427-549, Grand Junction District Study Areas, Colorado BLM Wilderness Study Report.

Proposal Name	Acres Recommend for Wilderness*	Acres Recommend for Non-Wilderness*
Bull Gulch	10,414	4,586
Castle Peak	0	11,940
Eagle Mountain	330	0
Hack Lake	10	0
Total	10,754	16,526

*Source: Wilderness Study Report, Volume Four, Grand Junction District Study Areas, BLM, October 1991.

These four WSAs, established under the authority of Section 603(c) and 202 of FLPMA, are being managed to preserve their wilderness values according to the BLM's interim management policy, and will continue to be managed in that manner until Congress either designates them as wilderness or releases them for other uses. Activities that would impair wilderness suitability are prohibited in WSAs. There are six primary provisions of FLPMA with regard to interim management of WSAs:

- WSAs must be managed so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness.
- Activities that are permitted in WSAs must be temporary uses that create no new surface disturbance, nor involve permanent placement of structures.
- Grazing, mining, and mineral leasing uses that existed on October 21, 1976 may continue in the same manner and degree as on that date, even if this would impair wilderness suitability of the WSAs.
- WSAs may not be closed to appropriation under the mining laws to preserve their wilderness character.
- Valid existing rights must be recognized.
- WSAs must be managed to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

Characterization - According to WSA monitoring reports, no major impairment has occurred to either the any of the WSAs. Minimal vehicle violations and fire suppression activities were noted. Recreational use and related impacts to naturalness and opportunities for solitude are continuing to increase within the Bull Gulch WSA along the Colorado River particularly at "Jack Flats". Both permitted commercial and private floatboaters utilize this area frequently for overnight use due to the limited opportunities for camping along the river below Catamount.

Eagle Mountain (Maroon Bells- Snowmass Addition) is currently has an "Open" travel designation. Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not limited to existing routes and cross country is allowed. In order to protect the WSAs consistent with the BLM's interim management policy for lands under Wilderness Review, alternatives must close the Eagle Mountain WSA (330 acres) to motorized and mechanized vehicle use, including snowmobiles and mountain bicycles, to be compatible with this objective. In addition, this would bring these lands in line with management of the adjacent Maroon Belles Wilderness.

Some travel violations continue to occur along the Southern portions of the Bull Gulch WSA due to the open vegetation and topography. Several reclamation projects have occurred in Bull Gulch and Castle Peak WSA's since they were closed to motorized and mechanized uses under the Castle Peak Travel Management Plan. Based on this information, current management is successfully protecting the wilderness characteristics within all WSAs.

The Roan Plateau Planning Process - Being newly acquired lands, wilderness inventories were conducted in the Roan Plateau planning area under the general inventory and planning authority of Sections 201 and 202 of FLPMA. Please refer to the Final, Roan Plateau RMPA and EIS, August 2006.

The RMP Revision - The status of the existing WSAs will not change as a result of the GSFO RMP revision. Only Congress can designate the WSAs established under Section 603 of FLPMA as wilderness or release them for other uses. However, BLM may make decisions to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation (H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook).

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

What is Wild and Scenic River Designation? The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed in 1968 to preserve selected rivers or sections in their free-flowing condition to protect “the water quality of such rivers and to fulfill other vital national conservation purposes.” Only Congress can make Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designations. The GSFO does not currently administer any stream segments that are part of the WSR System.

Why did BLM conduct a Wild and Scenic River Evaluation? BLM is required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to assess river and stream segments under its management jurisdiction as part of its RMP revision process. Before a river corridor can even be considered for designation as either as a Recreation, Scenic, or Wild River Area, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542) requires a determination that the river and its immediate environments possess one or more specific “outstandingly remarkable values.” The eligibility study for the KFO and GSFO is available at <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo>. The eligibility study details which river and stream segments, *occurring on BLM lands*, meet the eligibility criteria for federal WSR designation.

What did the study eligibility determine? The eligibility study, prepared in advance of the two field offices revising their RMPs, evaluated 244 river and stream segments and found 27 were eligible, including seven segments of the Colorado River.

What is the difference between the eligibility study and the suitability study? To be designated as Wild and Scenic, a segment must have been determined to be both eligible and suitable. The eligibility study was done as baseline data for the RMP revisions. It focused on the specific eligibility criteria described below. The suitability study will incorporate analysis of current and future uses (see below) of the eligible stream segments and will be included in the Draft RMP revisions. The Draft RMP revisions will include a wide range of possible alternatives.

What are the criteria for a stream segment to be eligible? To be eligible for WSR designation, a river or stream segment must possess one or more “outstandingly remarkable value,” have sufficient water quality to support those values, and be free-flowing. Outstandingly remarkable values could be scenic, recreational, geological, fish related, wildlife related, historic, cultural, botanical, hydrological, paleontological, or scientific.

How will BLM management change as a result of this eligibility determination? BLM’s policy is to protect any outstandingly remarkable values identified in the eligibility study until a decision on suitability can be made. BLM must protect the free-flowing character, tentative classification of the segment (based on the level of stream corridor development), and identified outstandingly remarkable values of eligible segments. Future BLM management actions will conform with interim protective management until a decision on suitability is made.

How does BLM define “free-flowing”? Free flowing does not mean that the stream has a completely natural flow regime. It means that within the analyzed stream segment, there are no dams or diversion structures that impound a significant amount of water for extended periods of time. Congress has designated WSRs immediately below major storage projects, even though the natural flow regime has been changed significantly by the project.

What specifically will be looked at during the suitability study? During the suitability phase, the BLM will analyze all of the potentially competing uses for each segment, potential management prescriptions for each segment, and the positive and negative impacts of various management approaches. The process identifies how stream-related values can best be protected and enhanced. It fully considers the impact possible to other values, such as water supply. During this process, the federal agencies consider alternative approaches to managing water-dependent values, fully recognizing that WSR designation may not be the only way to protect these values.

How will stakeholder and public involvement be incorporated into the suitability determination? The suitability process is designed to be a highly inclusive process. Personnel with knowledge in oil and gas development, grazing, water rights and water supply, and policy analysis must be involved for this analysis to be successfully completed. The suitability process will be conducted as part of the RMP revision process. There are numerous opportunities for stakeholders and the public to get involved in this process. The first opportunity is during the scoping process which is currently underway. The BLM will be holding scoping meetings on April 10, 11, and 12. For more information, visit the following address: <http://www.blm.gov/rmp/co/kfo-gsfo>.

When will the suitability phase be complete? The suitability phase is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2009 with the completion of the RMP revisions.

Do BLM's eligibility and suitability determinations create any federal water rights to protect the outstandingly remarkable values? No. A federal water right is not created unless Congress designates a stream segment as a WSR.

How could a BLM suitability determination affect a future water supply project? If BLM determines that a stream segment is suitable, it cannot take any actions that would significantly impact the outstandingly remarkable values, water quality, and free-flowing nature of the stream segment. If a proposed water supply project is located within a suitable stream segment, the project proponent can request that BLM amend its RMP to allow the project to be built. BLM may or may not grant that request, based upon an analysis of the importance of the water supply project relative to the impact it would have on outstandingly remarkable values, water quality, and free-flowing nature of the stream segment.

3) Managers will be studying various viewpoints for the planning area. What are the benefits (social, recreational, environmental, and economic, etc.) that your changes above provide to: public land resources, public land users businesses, communities, etc.?

4) Any other issues, comments, or suggestions?

Feel free to attach additional information.

_____ (Please tri-fold this sheet & tape shut before mailing – Do not staple) _____

BLM
PO Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459

Place
First Class
Stamp
Here

**Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
Attn: Joe Stout, RMP Project Manager
PO Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**