

CHAPTER 11 – RECREATION

11.1 RESOURCE OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Monticello Field Office (FO) (previously referred to as the San Juan Resource Area in the 1991 Resource Management Plan [RMP]) administers an area that has gained international recognition as an area possessing extraordinary natural beauty and numerous recreational opportunities. These include opportunities for hiking, biking, boating, cultural resource viewing, camping, off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding, rock climbing, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife viewing, sightseeing and scenic photography. This Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) presents the current recreational use patterns, and addresses the increasing demands for personal and commercial recreational uses since the completion of the 1991 RMP.

Recreation areas are of two types: Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs), which are specific areas of recreation management and are managed for intensive use, and Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs). The Monticello ERMAs encompass those areas within the Monticello FO that are not managed as SRMAs. Figure 11-1 depicts the major recreational facilities within the FO area.

11.1.1 Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)

Special Recreation Management Areas require special management programs for areas of intensive use, usually in the form of specific management rules and guidelines. Within the Monticello FO area there are currently three SRMAs: the San Juan River SRMA, the Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA, and the Canyon Basins SRMA. Figure 11-3 depicts the location of the SRMAs within the FO area.

11.1.1.1 San Juan River SRMA (SJRMA)

The San Juan River SRMA (SJRMA) encompasses approximately 15,000 acres on the north side of the San Juan River, from Montezuma Creek downstream to the boundary of the Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA, west of the town of Mexican Hat, Utah. The south side of the San Juan River is under the jurisdiction and administration of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Navajo Nation.

The Monticello FO regularly patrols the San Juan River from Sand Island, 3 miles west of Bluff, Utah to Clay Hills Crossing, which lies within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA). Occasionally there are BLM patrol trips from Montezuma Creek to Sand Island.

Float trips are regulated by a permit system, with the majority of trips occurring from March through September, though river use is open year-round. Launch sites include Sand Island and the Mexican Hat Boat Ramp; other sites are also used occasionally. Take-out locations are the Sand Island Boat Ramp, the Mexican Hat Boat Ramp, and Clay Hills. The majority of trips originate at Sand Island, and camping occurs along the north side of the San Juan River in unreserved sites between Sand Island and Government Rapids. Below Government Rapids, camping sites are designated and reserved through a permit system. Some trips start at Montezuma Creek or Navajo Reservoir.

Cultural sites are frequent along the San Juan River from Montezuma Creek to approximately the area where Comb Ridge cuts through the river at river mile seven. River House Ruin on the north side of the river at mile 6 is a popular site for boaters to stop and explore. OHV riders also occasionally use this area.

Existing Facilities within the San Juan SRMA

Developed sites within the San Juan SRMA include the Sand Island Campground with 24 sites, Sand Island Boat Launch, and Mexican Hat Boat Launch. The river take-out point at Clay Hills is on land administered by Glen Canyon NRA. There is little development at Clay Hills: a pit toilet, an unimproved dirt ramp, and a rough dirt access road.

Sand Island has a 24-site campground, with trash and toilet facilities, a ranger station and residence, a solar panel array, a boathouse, a concrete boat ramp, the nearby Sand Island Petroglyph Panel Trail, a demonstration natural garden, and long- and short-term parking lots.

Mexican Hat has a gravel parking lot, a dirt boat ramp, and a pit toilet.

11.1.1.2 Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA / Cedar Mesa

Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA consists of approximately 385,000 acres. The designation *Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA* describes the management area. Grand Gulch is one canyon system within Cedar Mesa; Cedar Mesa refers to all of the Cedar Mesa canyons.

The Cedar Mesa area of the Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA is an area of regional, national and international significance for recreation. It is located approximately 25 miles west of the town of Blanding, Utah and 10 miles north of the town of Mexican Hat, Utah. It is bordered on the north by the Manti-La Sal National Forest (NF), on the east by Butler Wash, on the west by Scenic Highway Route 276, and on the south by Highway 163 and the Glen Canyon NRA. In 2003, 5,471 day-use permits and 11,789 overnight (camping) permits were issued.

Cedar Mesa provides a variety of recreational activities including: sightseeing, backpacking, hiking, and saddle and pack stock use. The major attractions within Cedar Mesa are its cultural resources: numerous guidebooks and Internet websites describe in detail the high concentration of cultural sites that include lithic scatters, petroglyph and pictograph panels, pit houses and pit structures, Pueblo kivas, granaries, and cliff dwellings. An educational bulletin, published by the BLM, describes the fragile cultural environment and advises appropriate hiking and camping practices (BLM, [no date]).

Existing Facilities in the Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA

The Kane Gulch Ranger Station, located at the main access point into Grand Gulch, is the primary administrative site for the management of the area. Bureau of Land Management employees and volunteers, who live and work there seasonally from mid February to November, staff the Ranger Station. Several other buildings and a number of travel trailers are sited there. The construction of a new ranger station is currently being contracted.

Developed recreation sites within Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA include: the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, Arch Canyon Ruin, Comb Wash Campsite, Fish and Owl Canyon Trailheads, and Mule Canyon Ruin Interpretive Site.

Other Popular Visitation Sites

Valley of the Gods. The Valley of the Gods is located in the southern portion of the Monticello FO area. Activities include sightseeing, primitive camping, hiking, and biking. The annual Bluff Balloon Festival is held there for one day in January. The area is well known for its scenic quality, with outstanding views of Cedar Mesa sandstone and unique geologic formations. County Road 242 (a dirt, single-lane road) takes a 17-mile circuitous route through the valley, passing many features of interest.

Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway. The Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway is a scenic drive providing an opportunity for viewing prehistoric and modern Native American cultures and remarkable desert scenery. This scenic byway runs through a portion of the Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA.

11.1.1.3 Canyon Basins SRMA

Canyon Basins SRMA encompasses approximately 214,000 acres. It is surrounded by Canyonlands National Park (NP) and Glen Canyon NRA on the west, Manti-La Sal NF on the south, and Hart's Point on the east. Located within the SRMA boundaries are the following Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs): Indian Creek, Lavender Canyon, Bridger Jack Mesa, Shay Canyon, Butler Wash, and Dark Canyon. Other well-known recreation areas within the SRMA include Beef Basin, Shay Mesa, Dark Canyon Plateau, and Salt Creek Mesa. The Indian Creek Recreation Corridor is an attraction for rock climbing, camping, backpacking, motorized vehicle use, and archeological site viewing. An environmental assessment (EA) is currently being prepared for the Indian Creek Recreation Corridor, and a decision is expected in Spring 2005.

Existing facilities within the Canyon Basins SRMA include: Newspaper Rock Interpretive Site, Newspaper Rock Campground (10 sites), Indian Creek (upstream from the Falls) Campsite (3 sites), and Hamburger Rock Campground (8 sites).

Dark Canyon ACEC

The Dark Canyon ACEC (62,040 acres) has the same boundaries as the Dark Canyon Primitive Area. It includes Dark Canyon with its side canyons of Lost, Lean-To, Youngs, and Black Steer, and then Bowdie Canyon, Gypsum Canyon, and Fable Valley. This area was designated as a primitive area in December 1970 to protect its scenic, recreational, and other values. The Dark Canyon ACEC contains the largest block of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) P-Class in the area (see ROS descriptions in Section 11.1.6). The lower portions of Dark Canyon (3 miles), Bowdie Canyon (2 miles), and Gypsum Canyon (3 miles) are within the Glen Canyon NRA and are areas proposed for wilderness designation. The upper portion of Dark Canyon is within the Manti-La Sal NF and was designated in 1984 as the Dark Canyon Wilderness Area, encompassing about 50,000 acres (BLM 1986).

11.1.2 Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs)

Recreation areas within the Monticello FO area that are not part of a SRMA are discussed below as part of the ERMAs.

11.1.2.1 Colorado River

The Monticello FO manages the portion of the Colorado River from the northernmost FO area boundary at the Colorado River south to Canyonlands NP (from approximately river mile 50 to river mile 31).

Canyonlands NP manages this river area under a mandatory over-night permit program. Day use does not require a permit. A river put-in is available at Potash, on private property, for floating and access to the river as it flows through Canyonlands NP and the world-famous white water of Cataract Canyon.

11.1.2.2. Other Popular Recreation Sites within the ERMA

Hole in the Rock Trail

This trail is both a historic feature as well as a recreation area. The trail was established in 1879 as a route between the settlements of Escalante and Bluff. Major use of the trail is by four-wheel drive vehicles for scenic driving. The trail segment within the Monticello FO area is approximately 115 miles long (see Chapter 4–Cultural).

Montezuma Creek

This area includes Three Kiva Pueblo, listed as a Recreation/Cultural Interpretive Site.

Old Spanish Trail

Designated as a National Historic Trail, approximately 20 miles of the Old Spanish Trail, which runs from northern New Mexico to California, lies within the Monticello FO area. The trail enters Utah from the east, near the town of Ucola, about 15 miles east of Monticello. It continues roughly northwesterly along the northern boundary of the Monticello FO area towards Moab. There are no BLM-administered facilities along the trail segment, and the BLM is currently not managing the trail. There is some local and national interest in the trail (see Chapter 4–Cultural).

11.1.2.3 Developed Recreational Sites

Pearson Canyon Hiking Area

The area was designated in the 1991 RMP but has never been developed. There is little interest in formally designating this as a hiking area.

Three Kiva Pueblo (See above)

Butler Wash Ruin

The area is located off of State Highway 95 and has a paved parking lot, a toilet, an interpretive ethnobotany trail, and a ruin overlook with interpretive signs.

11.1.3 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

ACECs are designated areas in the FO area where special management attention is needed to: 1) protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, and scenic values, fish or wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes; or 2) to protect human life and safety from natural hazards (see Chapter 2–Areas Of Critical Environmental Concern [ACECs]).

The ACEC designation is recognition, by the BLM, that an area has important resource values, where special management measures have been established to protect those values. In addition, ACEC designation also serves as a reminder that important value(s) or resource(s) exist within the ACEC boundary that require accommodation when future management actions and land use proposals are considered near or within an ACEC. Further information concerning ACECs can be found in the AMS Chapter 2.

11.1.4 Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs)

Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the BLM is mandated to evaluate waterways for eligibility and suitability in this planning cycle. Chapter 18 of the AMS document describes the Monticello FO's determination of eligibility findings. The suitability study will be considered during the current planning process and within the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

11.1.5 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

Thirteen WSAs were identified in the 1991 San Juan RMP. These areas are popular primitive recreation destinations, and are discussed in detail in Chapter 16 of the AMS document.

11.1.6 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The ROS is a tool used by BLM recreation planners to identify existing outdoor recreational opportunities and management potential, based on a combination of three criteria: recreational activity, setting, and experience. The ROS system divides the range of recreational opportunities into six management classes:

- Primitive (P) – characterized by a roadless, essentially unmodified natural environment
- Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) – characterized by a roadless, predominantly unmodified environment
- Semi-Primitive (Motorized) (SPM) – the same as Semi-Primitive, except that motorized use is permitted
- Roded (Natural) – (RN) characterized by a generally natural environment, with evidence of natural resource modification and use that is in harmony with the natural environment
- Rural – (R) characterized by a substantially modified natural environment
- Urban – (U) characterized by a user-intensive, developed, and modified resource setting

The ROS system describes probable physical settings, experiences, and activities for each class, and identifies where these combinations occur within the FO area (See Section 11.3.3). Recreation Figure 11-2 depicts the current ROS designations for the Monticello FO area.

11.1.7 Developed Sites - Facilities

Developed sites within the Monticello FO area were described under the Resource Overview Section 11.1 and include the following:

Within SJRMA:

- Sand Island Campground and Boat Launch Area
- Mexican Hat Boat Launch Site

Within Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA:

- Kane Gulch Ranger Station Area
- Comb Wash Campsite
- Mule Canyon Ruin Interpretive Site
- Fish and Owl Canyons Trailhead

- Arch Canyon Ruin

Within Canyon Basins SRMA:

- Newspaper Rock Interpretive Site
- Newspaper Rock Campground
- Indian Creek Campground
- Hamburger Rock Campground

Within ERMA:

- Pearson Canyon Hiking Area (listed in the 1991 RMP, but no development has taken place)
- Three Kiva Pueblo Interpretive Site
- Butler Wash Ruin Interpretive Site

11.1.7.1 Developed Campgrounds

The Monticello FO has five developed campgrounds, which are described below.

Table 11.1. Developed Campgrounds in the Monticello FO Area

Campground	Fee	# of Units	Group Sites	Water
Sand Island	Yes	24	Yes	Yes
Newspaper Rock	No	10	No	No
Hamburger Rock	Yes	8	No	No
Comb Wash	Yes	4	No	No
Indian Creek (Falls)	No	3	No	No

11.1.7.2 Developed Boat Launch Areas

Developed boat launches in the area are located at Sand Island Campground (concrete), and Mexican Hat (sand beach, and gravel parking area). There is a primitive boat take-out at Clay Hills on land administered by Glen Canyon NRA.

11.1.8 Activities

Recreation activities in the FO area include:

- Hiking – Hiking occurs throughout the FO area. Areas where hiking is more heavily concentrated include Cedar Mesa/Grand Gulch, Dark Canyon, and the Indian Creek area, which provides access to rock climbing sites.
- River Running – River running is an extremely popular activity on the Colorado and San Juan Rivers. River running includes groups using rafts, canoes, and kayaks.
- Cultural site visitation – This activity occurs throughout the FO area, both formally and informally. Visits to cultural sites occur informally when coupled with hiking, backpacking, camping and river running. For example, cultural sites occur frequently along portions of the San

Juan River. Boaters can hike from the river bottom to view sites in conjunction with their river trip. Other specific areas where cultural resource viewing and recreational activities occur together are in Cedar Mesa/Grand Gulch and Indian Creek.

- Camping – Dispersed camping occurs throughout the FO area, as well as in regulated sites off of roadways. Dispersed camping is widespread in the Cedar Mesa and Indian Creek areas. Backpacking/camping occurs most frequently in Cedar Mesa/Grand Gulch and in Dark Canyon.
- OHV Use– OHV use occurs throughout the FO area, but most intensely in Butler Wash, Indian Creek, Piute Pass, Jacob’s Chair, Arch Canyon, and in the winter months, on the west side of the planning area. Additional OHV uses occur on what were old mining roads and County Class B and D roads throughout the FO area.
- Rock climbing – Rock climbing is concentrated in the Indian Creek area. Indian Creek is world-renowned for its climbing opportunities, and is an international visitor draw.
- Horseback riding – Stock use occurs in Comb Wash, Butler Wash, Harts Draw, Arch Canyon/Texas Flats, and Grand Gulch Plateau/Cedar Mesa, Lavender Canyon and Fable Valley.
- Hunting – Hunting takes place most frequently in Dry Valley for antelope; Indian, Spring and Montezuma Creeks for turkey; Spring Creek, Harts Draw and Deer Flats for mule deer; Red and White Canyons, Lockhart Basin and Hurrah Pass for bighorn sheep and mountain lion; and Beef Basin for mountain lion.
- Wildlife viewing and photography occur throughout the FO area.
- Commercial permitted recreation – Commercial recreation occurs throughout the FO area, and includes hunting, hiking, river running, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use, camping, pack and stock use, and annual events such as the balloon festival. Recently there has been a strong interest in commercial ATV tours combined with cultural site visits.
- Special Events – The Monticello FO issues permits annually for the following special events: the Bluff Balloon Festival at Valley of the Gods, a Bluegrass Festival at Sand Island, and a Jeep Jamboree in Arch Canyon. Currently, groups are applying for an International Adventure Tour-Land Rover Challenge, and future San Juan ATV Safari events.

11.2 SPECIFIC MANDATES AND AUTHORITIES

11.2.1 Current Guiding National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents

11.2.1.1 The San Juan Resource Management Plan (RMP)

The 1991 San Juan RMP for the Monticello FO is the current guiding document for recreation management throughout the San Juan Resource Area (SJRA). The management objectives are: “to develop recreation sites; to designate SRMAs and manage so as to protect recreational opportunities in accordance with RMP goals; to manage public lands to preserve most ROS P-Class areas and protect most ROS SPNM-class areas in accordance with RMP goals; to designate all of SJRA as open, closed, or limited for ORV use, depending in part on ROS classes and on the need to protect other values in specific areas; and to recognize critical environmental values in specific areas.” (BLM 1989)

11.2.1.2 Grand Gulch Cultural and Recreation Management Plan (1993)

This plan provides management direction for the Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural Resource Management Area and the Cedar Mesa ACEC over a ten-year period. See page 11-12 for Grand Gulch SRMA management objectives.

11.2.1.3 Indian Creek Recreation Corridor Environmental Assessment (Decision in Spring 2005)

The Indian Creek Corridor Plan EA is currently being prepared. The issues being addressed in the document include: the level of protection of cultural and natural resources, and the degree or extent of visitor services that should be provided. As described in the EA, Indian Creek has historically been a relatively remote area with few visitors. This has changed dramatically over the last decade because of the extraordinary resources and recreational opportunities that the area provides. The rapidly growing popularity of the area has greatly increased the impact of humans on the area's environment, and has created a demand for additional visitor services and facilities (BLM 2004).

The Monticello FO area will be using the Final EA and the decision record as guidance in managing the Indian Creek Recreation Corridor.

11.2.2 Federal Register Notices

April 14, 1976 (Volume 41, No. 73) Commercial and Private San Juan River Permit Limits

March 3, 1980 (Volume 45, No. 43) San Juan Permit Limits (Sand Island and Mexican Hat)

January 15, 1981 (Volume 46, No. 10) San Juan Permit Limits (Montezuma Creek)

October 2, 1981 (Volume 46, No. 191) San Juan River Corridor SRMA Definition

March 15, 1983 (Volume 48, No. 51) Changes in Private and Commercial Boating Fees on San Juan

April 2, 1993 (Volume 58, No. 62) Extension of San Juan River Permit Season, Reduced Fee Requirements, and Added River Use Requirement

July 29, 1999 (Volume 64, No. 145) [page 41133] Special Recreation Permits

May 16, 2000 (Volume 65, No. 95) [page 31234 – 31244] Permits for Recreation on Public Lands

October 1, 2002 (Volume 67, No. 190) [page 61732 – 61749] Permits for Recreation on Public Lands

11.2.3 CFR Recreation Authorities

43 CFR 2930 Permits for Recreation on Public Lands

CFR 43 Part 8340 Off-Road Vehicles

CFR 43 Part 8350 Management Areas

CFR 43 Part 8360 Visitor Services

36 CFR, Subpart 71 Recreation Fees

11.2.4 Instruction Memoranda

IM UT 2004-061, Designating Off Highway Vehicle Routes in the Land Use Planning Process

IM UT 2004-050, Challenge Cost Share (CCS) and Cooperative Conservation Initiative (CCI) Agreements

IM 2002-014, Purpose and Use of Recreation Fee Revenues and Related Appropriate Recreation Funds

IM UT 2001-090, Implementation of Utah Recreation Guidelines

IM WO 02-119, Automatic Fee Adjustments for SRPs

IM WO 99-033, Recreation Fee Collection Guidance

IM WO 01-020, Implementation of Golden Eagle, Age, and Access, and Access Passport Program

11.2.5 Federal Mandates

The following federal mandates guide decisions about recreation use and off highway vehicle use on BLM lands.

Wilderness Act of Sept. 3, 1964

The Wilderness Act of 1964 sets the precedence for the designation of Wilderness Inventory Areas and WSAs, limiting motorized and mechanized travel. Detailed information about the Wilderness Act can be found in Chapter 16–Wilderness of the AMS document.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968

This act relates specifically to recreation because WSRs can be classified as Recreational River Areas, consisting of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Although there are no segments of WSRs that fall within the Monticello FO planning boundaries, this act is relevant to the current planning effort. More detailed information about WSRs is included in Chapter 18–Wild and Scenic Rivers of the AMS.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1969

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program providing grants to outdoor recreation and open space projects. The fund receives its revenue primarily from the Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leasing receipts. The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funding for state and local pass-through grants through the National Park Service (NPS). Projects typically include land acquisitions, and outdoor recreation facility development and renovation. This act is relevant to recreation planning because it could provide funding for specific projects.

National Trails System Act of 1968

The National Trails System Act is based on the following premises:

a) In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation, trails should be established (i) primarily,

near the urban areas of the Nation, and (ii) secondarily, within scenic areas and along historic travel routes of the Nation which are often more remotely located.

(b) The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining these objectives by instituting a national system of recreation, scenic and historic trails, by designating the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system.

(c) The Congress recognizes the valuable contributions that volunteers and private, nonprofit trail groups have made to the development and maintenance of the Nation's trails. In recognition of these contributions, it is further the purpose of this Act to encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate, of trails.

11.2.6 Executive Orders

Executive Order 11644, Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands. Executive Order 11644 states:

Those regulations shall direct that the designation of such areas and trails will be based upon the protection of the resources of the public lands, promotion of the safety of all users of those lands, and minimization of conflicts among the various uses of those lands. The regulations shall further require that the designation of such areas and trails shall be in accordance with the following:

- (1) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resources of the public lands.
- (2) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats.
- (3) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such issues with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.
- (4) Areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated Wilderness Areas or Primitive Areas. Areas and trails shall be located in areas of the National Park System, Natural Areas, or National Wildlife Refuges and Game Ranges only if the respective agency head determines that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, aesthetic, or scenic values.”

Executive Order 11989, Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands. Executive Order 11989 added the following provisions to Executive Order 11644:

- (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3 of this Order; the respective agency head shall, whenever he determines that the use of off-road vehicles will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public lands immediately close such areas or trails to the type of off-road vehicle causing such effects, until such time as he determines that such adverse effects have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence.
- (b) Each respective agency head is authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by off-road vehicles except

those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open to such use pursuant to Section 3 of this order.

Amended by Executive Order 12608: Sec. 7. Consultation: "Before issuing the regulations or administrative instructions required by this order or designating areas or trails as required by this order and those regulations and administrative instructions, the Secretary of the Interior shall, as appropriate, consult with the Secretary of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission".

11.2.7 Non-Executive Orders

Fee Demonstration Laws, Recreation Permit Administration BLM Handbook H-2930-1. January 2, 1998 Federal Register Notice Volume 63, Number 11 placing restrictions on recreational use in the Indian Creek area.

Standards for Public Health and Guidelines for Recreation Management for BLM Lands in Utah.

11.3 CURRENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

11.3.1 Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)

General management guidance for recreation in the Monticello FO area provides for specific areas to be managed as SRMAs in recognition of intensive recreation use or other special recreation values. The San Juan RMP established the San Juan River SRMA, Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA, and the Canyon Basins SRMA. Although no specific management plans have been written for the San Juan River and Canyon Basin areas, they are managed for recreational use. The Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural and Recreational Area Management Plan is addressed below.

11.3.1.1 San Juan River SRMA (SJRMA)

The San Juan River is managed under the San Juan River Operating Procedures Manual. Recreational and commercial boating operates under a mandated permit system described below. All river runners make arrangements for their permits through the Monticello San Juan River Office.

A draft San Juan River Interim Operating Procedure includes guidelines for daily launch limits, private and commercial river-permit procedures, research permit procedures, and river use stipulations for private and commercial river users. Launch limits are dependent on the time of year: between April 15th and July 1st (typically a period of higher water) no more than six groups or 65 people may launch from Sand Island and no more than three groups or 50 people may launch from Mexican Hat per day. During the rest of the year, seven groups or 75 people may launch from Sand Island, and five groups or 50 people may launch from Mexican Hat per day.

An ongoing campsite monitoring survey is conducted every five years by BLM staff to determine camping impacts to beaches. Assigned campsites are moved if appropriate. Universities and other organizations conduct numerous scientific or sociological studies each year. Currently, there is a freeze on commercial river outfitter numbers, pending RMP or San Juan River plan guidance.

11.3.1.2 Grand Gulch /Cedar Mesa SRMA

Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural and Recreational Area Management Plan (1993)

The Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural and Recreational Area Management Plan established the following overall objectives for the planning area, specifically for the Cedar Mesa area including Grand Gulch:

- protect and preserve cultural resources;
- protect, preserve, and enhance the natural character, solitude, inspirational value and scenic quality;
- protect and preserve primitive and semi-primitive and non-motorized recreation opportunities; and
- increase awareness, appreciation, and stewardship of cultural and natural resources through education and interpretation.

Recreation resource management decisions specific to the Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA include:

- The Grand Gulch Plateau area was identified as an area to be managed to preserve ROS primitive (P) class and protect ROS semi-primitive non-motorized class (SPNM) areas.
- The following ROS classes were assigned within the Cultural and Recreation Management Area : primitive (P) class, semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) class, semi-primitive motorized (SPM) class, and roaded natural (RN) class. See Figure 11-2 for a depiction of current ROS areas within the FO planning area.
- Five recreation sites were identified for development or improvement including: Kane Gulch Ranger Station Area, which is planned for construction in 2005, Comb Wash Campground, which is funded for 2006, Arch Canyon Campground, Butler Wash Ruin, and Mule Canyon Ruin. All have been developed or being planned for development except for Arch Canyon. Comb Wash Campground is scheduled for development in 2006 (Arch Canyon will likely not be recommended for development in the current RMP revision; it may be recommended in 2006).

The Grand Gulch Cultural Resources Management Area Plan established a permit system in 1999 to help reach management goals. Permitting includes private and non-commercial recreational use, overnight non-commercial recreational use, commercial recreational use, and saddle and pack stock use (BLM 1993).

Additional guidelines stipulate that no overnight camping with stock is allowed in parts of Fish Canyon, Owl Canyon, McLeod Canyon, and all of Bullet Canyon. All stock users must obtain a permit from the BLM FO in Monticello at least 3 weeks in advance for private parties, and by July of the previous year for commercial trips. Walk-in overnight permits are not available.

No more than one stock trip at a time is allowed in Grand Gulch, Fish and Owl Canyons, Mule Canyon south of Utah State Highway 95, Road Canyon, or Lime Canyon. Johns Canyon is mentioned but is not part of the Cedar Mesa use stipulations.

Grand Gulch Management Stipulations for Saddle and Pack Stock Use

The BLM publishes and distributes stipulations concerning saddle and pack stock use.

11.3.1.3 Canyon Basins SRMA

Dark Canyon

Since the implementation of a fee program on Cedar Mesa, there is increasing use of Dark Canyon and increasing interest from commercial operators for permits. There is little current on-the-ground management by the BLM within the Dark Canyon ACEC. In 2003, the canyon was used by 53 commercial hiking operators, excluding universities (BLM 2004).

Indian Creek Corridor

An EA is currently being prepared (with a decision expected in spring of 2005) for recreational management and planning within the Indian Creek Corridor. At present, the corridor is managed under the current RMP.

11.3.2 Extensive Resource Management Areas (ERMAs)

Guidance supports dispersed recreation use throughout the San Juan planning area, with permits required for commercial and private use in special areas where protection of resource values is needed. Areas within the ERMAs include:

Colorado River – Approximately 12,000 overnight permits are issued by Canyonlands NP for river recreation. This includes flatwater use (e.g., jetboating, fishing, rafting) and Cataract Canyon white water river rafting. Currently, the permit limit for running Cataract Canyon is 8,000. There is very little unpermitted day use of the river in Canyonlands NP because of the distance from put-ins and take-outs. Commercial use is expected to increase outside of the park (Personal communication, Dave Wood, 2004). No formal river management agreement exists between the BLM Monticello FO and Canyonlands NP.

Hole In the Rock Trail – The trail is open to OHV use. Sections of this trail lead into Glen Canyon NRA. Within the Glen Canyon NRA, vehicle use is open to licensed vehicles, but not unlicensed OHVs.

Old Spanish Trail – There are no BLM facilities along the trail, and the trail is currently unmanaged by the Monticello FO area.

11.3.3 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The ROS is described in Section 11.1.6 and in the San Juan RMP as well as in other documents.

- Primitive (P-Class) areas are managed to be essentially free from evidence of human use. Activities allowed are those that would protect the primitive recreational activities, settings, and experiences.
- Semi-primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) areas are managed to provide a predominantly natural environment with limited evidence of human use. The recreational goal in these areas is to provide not more than 20 group-encounters a day.
- Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) areas are managed similarly to P-class areas, but motorized boat use on the San Juan River is allowed.
- Roaded Natural (RN) areas are closed to ORV use to protect adjacent P-class areas.

The ROS in the current RMP is used in evaluating proposals within the planning area. The current acreages designated for each ROS class within the planning area are listed below.

Table 11.2. ROS Acreages

ROS Class	Acres
Primitive (P-class)	245,723
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	550,537
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	375,074
Roaded Natural (RN)	1,154,052
Rural	14,286
Urban	2,371

Source: BLM 2003b

11.3.4 Off-Highway Vehicle Management (OHV)

The San Juan RMP defines the level of OHV opportunities, and the reasons for OHV closure areas. The table below is a summary of current guidance on OHV use in the planning area.

Table 11.3 OHV Guidance Summary

Designation/Location	Acres
Open to OHV use	611,310
Limited use with seasonal restrictions	540,260
Seasonal restrictions only	328,760
Seasonal restrictions with other limitations	211,500
Seasonal restrictions with limitations to protect:	
Bighorn sheep	329,750
Antelope fawning area	12,960
Deer winter range	197,550
Limited to Existing Roads and Trails	265,730
To protect floodplain, riparian and aquatic areas	6,000
To protect cultural, scenic, and recreational values:	
Alkali Ridge ACEC	35,890
Shay Canyon ACEC	1,770
Most SPNM-class areas	505,700
Road corridors adjacent to SPNM-class areas	12,300
Limited to Designated Roads and Trails	211,010
To protect cultural, scenic and recreational values:	
Cedar Mesa ACEC	208,970
Hovenweep ACEC	1,500
Pearson Canyon SRMA	1,920
SPNM-class areas in SRMAs	49,590
Developed recreation sites	250
Closed to OHV Use	354,820

Table 11.3 OHV Guidance Summary

Designation/Location	Acres
To protect vegetation study areas:	
Bridger Jack Mesa	5,290
Lavender Mesa	640
To protect cultural, scenic, and recreational values:	
Butler Wash ACEC	13,870
Cedar Mesa ACEC, partial	114,790
Dark Canyon ACEC	62,040
Indian Creek ACEC	13,100
Scenic Corridor ACEC	78,390
P-class areas	196,040
San Juan River SRMA SPM-class area	9,830
RN-class area on Mancos Mesa	9,430

Source: BLM 1989

In addition to the guidance outlined above, an emergency closure for OHVs in Indian Creek became effective in 1999.

Off-Highway Vehicle use is monitored intermittently in four areas in the planning area, including Fish Creek Canyon, Butler Wash, Bridger Jack Mesa and Indian Creek. Monitoring includes the determination of the number of tracks encountered along a transect, the type of tracks observed, and any vehicles observed. The monitoring report concludes with any recommended action or immediate on-the-ground action. Photo logs are also kept to document resource damage. All WSAs in the planning area are monitored for OHV intrusions.

11.3.5 Permitting

11.3.5.1 Special Recreation Permits (SRPs)

Guiding and events are becoming an increasingly important part of the local San Juan County economy, as commercial outfitting provides a living for many people in the local area. However, permitting is a time consuming activity for BLM staff because there must be a NEPA environmental analysis before a permit can be issued. A Cost Recovery Program is in place for any NEPA proposal that is estimated to take more than 50 hours of professional specialists’ time.

As of 2003, there are 70 land- and river-based commercial outfitters in the Monticello FO area. Commercial outfitter types and numbers are tabulated below.

Table 11.4 Commercial Outfitters

Types of Uses	Number of Permitted Commercial Outfitters
River uses	11
Jeeping	5
Biking	2

Table 11.4 Commercial Outfitters

Types of Uses	Number of Permitted Commercial Outfitters
Climbing	4
Canyoneering	4
Hiking/Cultural site touring/Rock art viewing	59
Hunting	7
OHV touring	7
Horse packing	5
Llama packing	5
Shuttle services	1
Self Awareness Retreats	1
Photography	1
Hot air ballooning	0
Retreats	0
Others	38 (in 2003)

Source: BLM 2004a

11.3.5.2 Non-commercial Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) and Special Events

Special Recreation permits are required for commercial and competitive recreational uses for groups and for OHV events involving 50 or more vehicles on BLM-administered public lands. Special recreation permits are also required for recreational use on public lands by organized non-commercial groups of eight or more, such as Boy Scouts and public school groups. All applications must provide:

- A map of the area.
- An operation plan.
- For commercial applicants, a fee of \$80.00 or 3% of gross receipts attributable to the use of BLM lands, whichever is greater of the two, plus the Special Area use fee. For events, a fee of \$4.00 per day per participant.
- For non-commercial applicants in Cedar Mesa, a fee of \$4.00 per person per day, and \$8.00 per person per trip (overnight).
- For a non-commercial, organized group permit (for lands other than Cedar Mesa), a fee of \$4.00 per person per day.
- Proof of insurance.
- A post-use report.

The above list includes Fish and Owl Canyons, Road Canyon, Lime Canyon, Slickhorn Canyon, North and South Mule Canyons, and commercial-use allocations affect the aforementioned Cedar Mesa canyons. In Cedar Mesa, the commercial-use allocation of 30% of total use applies to commercial, in-canyon over-night use. Commercial non-stock day use is not regulated as to time and place. Stock use within Cedar Mesa is limited to one stock party (commercial or non-commercial) at a time in any canyon.

Commercial outfitters are required to submit a schedule of use prior to the BLM issuing a SRP (BLM 2003).

11.3.5.3 Commercial and Non-Commercial River Permitting

In addition to the permit stipulations stated above, additional stipulations apply to the San Juan River. The BLM has instituted a mandatory, assigned campsite system on the San Juan River beginning at Slickhorn (sites A-E), Grand Gulch, Trimble, Oljato, and Steer Gulch campsites, which are the only campsites available at higher water levels. The BLM reserves dates at these nine campsites on a rotating basis for commercial use (BLM 2002).

- From March 1 to May 14 and from June 16 to October 31, river parties may schedule two nights in the lower section of river. Groups may not camp for more than one night at any of the nine assigned campsites.
- From May 15 to June 15, due to higher water levels, high demand and limited alternative campsite availability, river parties may schedule one night only in this lower portion of the river.

11.3.6 Fee Demonstration, Fee Collection, and Budget for Programs

Due to a lack of base budgetary support, the Monticello FO has come to rely on the Fee Demonstration program for needed funds. The Monticello FO collects fees for recreational use in several locations including the San Juan River, Cedar Mesa and fee collection sites at three campgrounds.

Services to the public are provided from these fee monies, such as maintenance of campgrounds, boat ramps, and restroom facilities; staffing of the San Juan River Ranger Station and the Kane Gulch Ranger station; and expenses related to the San Juan River and Cedar Mesa permit activities.

Table 11.5 below shows the Base Funding for the Recreation Program in 2003, and visitation and revenues from the Fee Demonstration projects.

Table 11.5. Base Funding for Recreation and Fee Demonstration Projects

	2002 Visitation	2002 Revenues	2003 Visitation	2003 Revenues
San Juan River UT-04	13,048	\$105,822	13,690	\$116,591
Cedar Mesa UT-05	8,065	\$65,236	8,283	\$62,435
Monticello UT-06	0	0	0	0
Monticello – Other UT-13	81,269	0	75,338	\$39,487
Recreation - Base Funding				\$98,000
Total	102,382	\$171,058	97,311	\$316,513

Source: BLM 2003

Base funding for 2004 and 2005 is set at \$93,000.

San Juan River

The following fees are collected for trips on the San Juan River.

- Sand Island to Mexican Hat - \$6.00 per person/trip
- Mexican Hat to Clay Hills - \$12.00 per person/trip
- Sand Island to Clay Hills - \$18.00 per person/trip

Cedar Mesa

The following fees are collected for trips in Cedar Mesa.

- Overnight Permit - \$8.00 per person/trip
- 7 Day Pass - \$5.00 per person
- Single Day Use Pass - \$2.00 per person
- Seasonal Day Use Pass - \$20.00 per person (Department of Interior, BLM, Notice of Implementation of special area permit fees, March, 2001)

Campgrounds

Fee pipes have recently been installed at the Hamburger Rock, and Comb Wash_Campgrounds. The fee is currently \$6.00 for camping; however, this is a new system that is currently being evaluated by Monticello FO staff.

11.4 RESOURCE DEMAND AND FORECAST

11.4.1 Trends in Outdoor Recreation Activities

According to staff in the Monticello FO, the following trends in recreation have been observed in the resource area:

- increase in OHV use;
- increase in commercial activity requests;
- increase in Special Event requests;
- increase in rock climbing;
- increase in visitation of recreation and cultural sites due to increase in distribution of information via the Internet; and
- increase in demand for private and commercial river use.

Additionally,

- mandatory permit systems are pushing campers out of these areas into other open areas;
- overflow camping use by visitors that cannot find room in NPS campgrounds is becoming a problem;
- visitors are finding more and more information and services available on the Internet, and are expecting BLM to provide comparable information; and
- private visitors and commercial operators are beginning to be displaced by the crowds in the NPS lands around Moab and are moving into the Monticello area (Reiter and Blahna 1998, 1998a).

The Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) documents visitor days for various activities throughout the FO area. Although these numbers are not completely accurate, they do reflect the proportionate use of the resource for recreation activities. The table below shows recreation use for the Fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Table 11.6 Visitor Days 2001 - 2003

Activity	2001	2002	2003	2002-2003 Increase or Decrease
Camping	39,202	36,103	51,266	+ 15,163
Boating (non-motorized)	29,734	19,308	21,696	+ 2,388
Hiking	8,789	12,169	15,244	+ 3,075
Backpacking	9,722	8,817	11,389	+ 2,572
Viewing Cultural Sites	3,859	4,098	4,321	+ 223
OHV Use	153	1,833	6,610	+ 4,777
Non-motorized events and activities	63	1,386	157	- 1,229
Hunting	N/A	1,119	3,432	+ 2,313
Driving for Pleasure	N/A	663	2,069	+ 1,407
Mountain Biking	N/A	662	1,816	+ 1,154
Pack Trips	N/A	493	813	+ 320

11.4.2 San Juan River Recreation

Boating use on the San Juan River is very popular. A lottery became necessary because there were too many people interested in floating the river. Many more private users apply than obtain permits, and many more companies would like to have commercial permits on the San Juan River. Pending the completion of a San Juan River Management Plan, commercial use is currently capped by the number of operators and by the number of launch dates.

The Monticello FO has documented visitation on the river by various user groups (commercial, private, educational). The tables below (for 2002 and 2003) show that the largest user group is private, followed by the commercial user group. A total of 1,027 trips were recorded for 2003.

Table 11.7 San Juan River Visitation by User Group

Type of Trip	Trips 2002 – % of Total Trips	Trips 2003 – % of Total Trips
Commercial Trips	230 – 29%	253 – 25%
Private Trips	532 – 67%	741 – 72%
Educational Trips	37 – 4%	33 – 3%
Total Trips	799 – 100%	1,027 – 100%

Source: BLM 2003a

Table 11.8 San Juan River Visitation by Location

Location	Trips 2002	Users 2002	Trips 2003	Users 2003
Sand Island to Mexican Hat	494	4,347	579	5,248
Sand Island to Clay Hills	144	1267	202	1,671
Mexican Hat to Clay Hills	139	1,223	220	1,839

Source: BLM, 2003a

Table 11.9. Visitation and Revenue at Sand Island Campground

	Visitors 2002	Revenue 2002	Visitors 2003	Revenue 2003
Total Visitors at Sand Island Campground	3,679	\$6,982	4,070	\$11,669
Number of People in Group Campsite	1,470	\$1,224	735	\$1,022

Source: BLM, 2003a

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A study published in the International Journal of Wilderness (April 2001, Volume 7, Number 1) shows that the majority of river runners, 78% on the Upper San Juan (Sand Island to Mexican Hat) and 63% on the lower segment from Mexican Hat to Clay Hills, are satisfied with the numbers of river runners.

Use numbers fluctuate considerably according to the volume of the water in the river. More boating use is in the spring when water is higher. As summer passes, river water and levels of boating use declines. Commercial use is especially vulnerable to decreases in water flow. Because of the current drought, the Bureau of Reclamation predicts that water levels will fluctuate at levels similar to the past two years.

Water levels are especially critical in the lower segment of the river from Mexican Hat to Clay Hills. Despite low water, river runner demand usually takes most of the available permits. Many commercial trips cancel trips in the lower canyon during low-water flows. If commercial users cancel, private boaters use the commercial reservations.

The most popular trip origin and destination is from Sand Island to Mexican Hat, with more than double the trips as any other stretch of the river. The majority of trips originate from Sand Island Campground.

11.4.2 Cedar Mesa / Grand Gulch Recreation

Recreational use in Grand Gulch occurs year round; however, the heaviest use occurs between March and November. Backpacking, day hiking, dispersed camping and stock use are the predominant recreational activities. The seasonal recreational nature of the Monticello FO area is reflected in the overnight permits issued for Cedar Mesa.

Table 11.10. Cedar Mesa Visitation

	2002	2003
Total Permits - Overnight	2,282	2,812
April (busiest month)	735	848
May (second busiest month)	400+	817
Total Permits – Day Use	1,000+	1,086

Source: BLM, 2003a

Table 11.11 Grand Gulch/Cedar Mesa Overnight Visitor Limits

	Kane Gulch	Bullet Canyon	Government Trail	Collins Canyon	Fish/Owl Canyons	Road Canyon	Lime Creek	Mule Canyon	Slick-horn Canyon
Reservation	14	12	6	12	14	12	12	12	12
Walk-In	12	10	6	10	12	10	10	10	10
Total	26	22	12	22	26	22	22	22	22

Source: BLM (No Date)

11.4.3 Indian Creek Corridor Recreation

As described in the Indian Creek EA, recreational use has changed over the past decade. What was once a remote area with few visitors has now become an international rock-climbing destination. The rapidly increasing popularity of the area has severely increased the impact of humans on the corridor environment, and has created a demand for additional visitor services and facilities.

11.4.4 Hole in the Rock Trail

There is an increasing interest for special events and private use of this trail. Many local residents have ancestors that traveled on this trail. These residents want to visit the area, and they have established The Hole in the Rock Foundation to protect their interests and work with the BLM on issues concerning this trail.

11.4.5 Regional Visitation

As part of the San Juan County Tourism Profile, the Utah Division of Travel Development publishes visitation numbers for various locations throughout the county. These numbers can be viewed as an indicator for regional visitation and are shown below for 2000–2002. The Utah Division of Travel Development regional visitation data in San Juan County for 2003 were not available at the time that this document was produced (Williams 2004).

The Monticello FO manages overflow camping from adjacent areas specifically from Natural Bridges National Monument (NM) and Canyonlands NP.

Table 11.12 San Juan County/Regional Visitation Counts, 2000–2002

Location	Visitation			% Change 2001–2002
	2000	2001	2002	
SR 491 UT/CO Border	771,975	773,800	792,505	+2.4
SR 163 UT/AZ Border	700,800	708,100	742,775	+4.9
Glen Canyon NRA	2,568,111	2,340,031	2,101,775	-10.2
Monument Valley	358,573	270,556	225,000	-16.8
Canyonlands NP	401,558	368,592	375,549	+1.9
Gooseneck State Park	33,007	33,265	28,107 ¹	-15.5
Natural Bridges National Monument	112,573	97,171	109,709	+12.9

Source: Utah Division of Travel Development 2003.

¹ The 2003 visitation count for Gooseneck State Park is 57,098, a 203% increase from 2002 to 2003 (Williams 2004)

11.4.6 Off-Highway Vehicle Use (OHV)

The Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation monitors OHV registration through the Utah Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The following data show a dramatic increase in OHV ownership in the State of Utah and San Juan County during the past 5 years (Note: OHV registrations include ATVs, non-street legal motorbikes, snowmobiles and dune buggies. Vehicles that are street legal, such as jeeps and trucks, are licensed, and are not considered OHVs for registration purposes).

Table 11.13. OHV Registrations 1998, 2002, 2003

	1998	2002	2003	% Increase
Statewide	77,361	160,583	167,174	216 %
San Juan County	342	914	961	281%

Source : (DMV 2004)

An OHV Survey completed by the Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism entitled Off-Highway Vehicle Four-Wheeler Survey (1998), summarizes the use characteristics of visitors to the Moab Easter Jeep Safari. The results of this study can be extrapolated as a representation of all OHV users in the region, and is relevant also to the Monticello FO area. Typical expectations of OHV users include scenery, naturalness, seeing a new area, and remoteness. Socializing within one's group was also identified as a high expectation of this user group. Typical users were not characterized as risk takers. The primary management priorities of this user group are to:

- protect natural resources;
- not close or restrict use on any existing routes;
- provide new trails;
- mark and sign popular routes;

- let existing trails get more difficult; and
- emphasize information and educational approaches to minimize impacts and to inform and educate OHV recreationists (Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism 1998a).

Areas that have intense OHV use include Butler Wash, Comb Wash, Montezuma Creek, Indian Creek, and Hole in the Rock Trail.

Demand for OHV activities is expected to continue to increase in the Monticello FO area. This will place demands on the FO to provide for and monitor motorized users. This upcoming demand also has implications for OHV designation and for route marking.

There are active OHV groups, both local and national, that want to see improved management from the BLM in terms of OHV route development and opportunities. The BLM has also received comments from the public asking for marked OHV trails and trailhead facilities and staging areas.

The Monticello FO has also felt increased pressure from commercial companies for SRPs for OHV guiding and tours as well as from groups that organize group events such as the San Juan ATV Safari and the Jeep Jamboree.

11.5 CONSISTENCY WITH NON-BUREAU PLANS

11.5.1 San Juan County Master Plan

The current San Juan County Master Plan addresses recreation on public lands with a series of Objectives and Implementation strategies. It states that San Juan County supports responsible public land recreation and tourism (San Juan County Master Plan 1996). When responding to public land recreation proposals the County will consider:

- The County's ability to provide essential services such as law enforcement, emergency services, water and waste management, and search and rescue.
- The impacts on traditional recreational uses, for example OHV trail development at the expense of traditional hiking or riding trails.
- Other traditional uses, such as grazing, energy mineral development, wildlife and other issues that have formed the basis of San Juan County's past and present land use ethic.
- Forming partnerships with concessionaires, agencies and special interest groups for the purpose of facilitating recreation management in an orderly fashion.
- Anticipated economic returns and allocations of revenues received.

11.5.2 San Juan County All-terrain Vehicle (ATV) Plan

The San Juan County ATV Plan, August 2002, was developed with the purpose of providing long-range direction for ATV use in San Juan County. The implementation of the plan is intended to provide local residents and visitors with the opportunity to have a quality recreational experience in the county. County policies regarding this plan are centered on enabling legislation (Utah Code Annotated, Section 41-22-1 et seq.) to claim Class B and D roads within the county boundary. The plan promotes coordination and cooperation with the BLM. Six sub-areas are proposed for formal ATV trail development and include:

- Cameo Cliffs/Hook and Ladder Trail System
- Blanding to Monticello Trail System

- Piute Pass Trail System
- Blanding North Trail System
- Jacobs Chair Trail System
- Bluff/Hole in the Rock Trail System

Off-highway vehicle uses are consistent with the San Juan County Master Plan (page 29) July 8, 1996: “The County views recreation and tourism as an additional economic opportunity. The County believes this opportunity may only be in its infant stage. The County will continue... promoting the County’s tourist industry.”

11.5.3 Utah School Institutional and Trust Lands Administration (SITLA)

The management goals of SITLA include development of state lands in order to earn revenue. However, SITLA coordinates with other federal and state agencies on recreation, case-by-case, as the need arises through the state Resource Development Coordinating Council (RDCC) process. As federally administered lands have become increasingly restrictive of OHV use, SITLA lands have absorbed some of the dispersion of OHV use onto state lands, with similar degradation of resources. Recent Utah state legislation has allocated increased revenues from OHV licensing for improvements of easements and natural resources, and mitigation of OHV-caused degradation of natural resources on SITLA lands. The common concerns on federal and state lands from OHV activities are expected to foster a stronger working relationship between SITLA and the BLM (Personal communication, Kim Christy, 2004).

11.5.4 Canyonlands National Park (NP)- National Park Service (NPS)

Canyonlands NP is adjacent to the Monticello FO planning area on its west and northwestern boundary. The NPS completed a Natural Resources Management Plan and EA for Canyonlands NP in May 1985. Recreation on NPS lands is typically managed differently than on BLM lands. A specific Natural Resources Management Plan for each park guides activities.

11.5.5 Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA) – National Park Service (NPS)

Glen Canyon NRA is adjacent to the Monticello FO planning area on its west and southwestern boundary and on the San Juan River. The NPS has completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for personal watercraft in the Glen Canyon NRA. The Record of Decision (ROD) was made available in June 2003. To implement the management decisions described in the ROD, the NPS will publish a special regulation to specifically authorize the use of personal watercraft in the Glen Canyon NRA, which will implement geographic restrictions on personal watercraft use and define an additional flat-wake zone. All personal watercraft used in the recreation area after December 31, 2012 will be required to meet the 2006 emission standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the manufacturing of gasoline marine engines (61 FR 52087-52169). New management actions will also include strategies to better protect recreation area resources, improve visitor safety, and reduce recreational use conflicts (NPS 2003a).

11.5.6 Other National Park Service (NPS) Areas

Natural Bridges National Monument (NM) and Hovenweep NM are recreation destinations within the boundaries of the Monticello FO planning area, under the guidance of NPS General Management Plans.

Hovenweep NM is currently preparing a new General Management Plan and EIS. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on August 28, 2003 by the NPS to prepare an EIS for a General Management Plan for Hovenweep NM. This effort will result in a comprehensive general management plan that provides a framework for making management decisions regarding the preservation of natural and cultural resources, visitor use and interpretation, and development of appropriate park facilities (NPS 2003b).

11.5.7 Canyons of the Ancients NM – Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Canyons of the Ancients NM, which lies adjacent to the Monticello FO planning area on the eastern Utah border, covers about 164,000 acres of public land managed by the BLM in the Four Corners area in Montezuma and Dolores Counties, Colorado. Canyons of the Ancients contain a very high density of archaeological sites (more than 6,000 recorded, up to 100 per square mile in some places) representing the Ancestral Puebloan and other Native American cultures, as well as important historic and environmental resources. Canyons of the Ancients NM is in the process of developing a RMP. Some of the issues to be addressed in the management plan include but are not limited to:

- preserving cultural and natural resources;
- balancing multiple uses such as recreation, livestock grazing, and energy development;
- preserving traditional Native American activities;
- integrating Monument management with community, tribal, and other agency needs;
- providing visitor services; and
- access and transportation on the public lands.

11.5.8 Manti La-Sal National Forest Plan Update – U.S. Forest Service (FS)

The Monticello FO planning area surrounds the Manti-La Sal NF. The Manti-La Sal NF is currently undergoing a Forest Plan Revision that will be relevant to planning for the Monticello FO. There is an opportunity for consistency across administrative boundaries regarding OHV designations, recreation opportunity spectrum, and special recreation areas. The Monticello FO is already working together with Forest Planners on WSRs, as well as on issues related to Dark Canyon. The FS is in the public scoping phase and is slightly behind the schedule of the Monticello FO RMP.

11.5.9 Other Plans for Consideration

Other plans that may be relevant to the Monticello FO planning process include planning efforts for the Grand Junction District of the BLM in Colorado, and community plans for the towns of Bluff, Blanding and Monticello, Utah.

11.6 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

11.6.1 Dependence of Local Industry on Public Lands

While the economy of San Juan County is dependent on many industries, recreation visitation provides both jobs and local tax base. Since recreation visitation occurs largely on BLM land, a portion of the San Juan County economy is based on the availability of BLM lands for recreation. The Utah Division of Travel Development estimates that the percent of local jobs tied to the tourism industry in San Juan County is 20 percent. Traveler spending in San Juan County in 2002 was estimated to be \$22 million,

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down from approximately \$37 million in 2001 and approximately \$43 million in 2000. The local tax negative impact to the local economy was approximately \$778,000 in 2001 and \$708,000 in 2002. Revenue and tax data for 2003 were not available at the time of document production (Utah Division of Travel Development, 2003, Williams 2004).

11.6.2 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The ROS overlaps with other designations such as WSAs. The public is confused about this. Also, the public does not generally understand the ROS system.

11.6.3 Increased Recreation Use

The current RMP does not address recreation numbers. San Juan County is actively promoting itself as a recreational destination, but BLM facilities and recreation staff remain limited. There are major increases in use, and there could be impacts to other resources that have not been identified. SRMAs are not adequately addressed in the current RMP, and SRMA boundaries need to be reevaluated based on visitor use, recreation opportunities and the resource involved. The current RMP does not identify the kinds of levels of land use that could sustain recreational values. There are no accurate numbers on private recreational use other than the permitted uses on the San Juan River and Cedar Mesa. At current staff levels, it is becoming difficult to keep up with SRP and NEPA workloads.

11.6.4 Resource Conflicts/Impacts

Various recreational activities create impacts to resources including riparian areas, vegetation, wildlife, vegetation, soils, grazing, oil and gas, and cultural resources. Resource conflicts occur when two uses compete for the same resource, such as recreational use in wildlife habitat. Specific areas where resource conflicts are occurring include:

- Recreation vs. Natural Resources – specifically at Indian Creek where camping impacts the riparian area, traffic impacts safety, and high use impacts human health and safety.
- Recreation vs. Cultural Resources – The Cedar Mesa area of Grand Gulch has a reputation for being a premier place to hike into Indian ruins and remote canyons. Although managed by permit, information available on the Internet and in guidebooks is leading hikers to sensitive cultural sites. The issue is how to protect cultural sites and still allow for visitation and education at Newspaper Rock, Butler Wash, Comb Wash, Cedar Mesa, and Montezuma Creek. This issue is particularly intense along the San Juan River and on Cedar Mesa.

11.6.5 User Conflicts

As recreational use has increased throughout the Monticello FO area, recreationists have moved into areas historically used by other resource users, such as ranchers, and the oil and gas industry. Conflicts have developed among these user groups. Conflicts are known to exist between:

- grazing and OHV users;
- recreation and grazing users;
- non-motorized recreation and motorized recreation users;
- rock-climbing and grazing (specifically in Indian Creek) users;
- commercial vs. private users (related to San Juan River users as well as backpackers throughout the resource area, especially in Dark Canyon); and

- river runners and OHV users.

11.6.6 Health and Safety

11.6.6.1 Flooding

Flooding is an issue for recreational use in the SJRA. Flash floods are a real and seasonal danger in narrow canyons and canyon crossings. Recent flooding in specific areas provides an example of the problem: portions of Newspaper Rock and Sand Island Campground were recently inundated by floodwaters. Newspaper Rock Campground is now non-functional; roads have been washed out, tables buried, and signs torn from the ground. As a result of flooding, camping on the San Juan River can become difficult, as beaches are washed away. Sand Island campground is particularly prone to flood damage. Trails may also become inundated and non-functional. The BLM currently lacks the funding to address and rectify the damage that occurs from flooding.

11.6.6.2 Human Waste

Human waste disposal is becoming an issue in the more popular hiking slot canyons and dispersed camping areas. The public is demanding that the BLM respond to this concern.

11.6.7 Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)

11.6.7.1 San Juan River SRMA (SJRMA)

There is no current river management plan for the San Juan River. Natural resources issues identified by staff in the Monticello FO are described below.

- Weeds are taking over many parts of the riparian corridor and popular camping areas.
- Higher use is making the protection of threatened and endangered species more difficult.
- Increased visitation, and access to more information, is making the protection of cultural sites difficult.
- Siltation on the lower half of the river has changed the boating experience and may cause potential closure in 10-15 years.
- Water development in the upper basin has created lower flows to lower [river](#) segments; boaters, especially those with larger commercial boats, are having problems getting through and are canceling launches.
- Launch ramps at the Sand Island campground and at Mexican Hat Boat Launch are prone to flood damage.
- A San Juan River Management plan should be written.
- Management Agreements with the Navajo Nation and Glen Canyon NRA should be written (as of February 2004 these are underway).
- The boundaries of the SRMA need to be deleted due to the “accretion” of land at approximately River Mile (minus) -9 to River Mile approximately (minus) -5, south of the private parcels located at the town of Bluff.

The 2001 Utah Rivers Study completed by the Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism asked visitors to identify problems along the Upper and Lower San Juan River. The table below shows results of this study. However, it should also be noted that 97.6% of boaters on the upper San Juan and 99.4% on the lower San Juan said they were satisfied with their river trip experience.

Table 11.14 Issues Identified by Users on the San Juan River

Upper San Juan River	Lower San Juan River	Both Sections
Destruction of historic resources	Hard finding unoccupied campsites	Litter along the river
Graffiti or other vandalism	Not enough campsites along the river	Evidence of cattle
Lack of information about the river	Cattle droppings at campsites	Graffiti/Vandalism
Lack of water at launches and take-outs	Destruction of historic resources	Lack of water at launches
Vegetation and soil trampling at launches	Litter along the river	
	Low flying aircraft	
	Lack of water at launches and take-outs	

Source: Blahna and Reiter 2001

Because of flooding damage, approximately \$50,000 worth of Sand Island Campground repair is needed. A handicapped-accessible walkway needs to be designed and constructed at the Petroglyph Rock panel. Funding, engineering and design work need to be coordinated for each of these projects.

11.6.7.2 Grand Gulch Plateau SRMA / Cedar Mesa

Currently Cedar Mesa is being managed under the Grand Gulch Cultural and Recreation Management Plan EA, which needs to be revised. This area in particular has a widespread reputation as a premier place in which to hike, with prehistoric ruins and scenic canyons. Cedar Mesa is a fee demonstration site, with 8,065 paying users in 2002. Permits are required to hike the area and are obtained either at the Monticello FO or at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on Cedar Mesa. Information available on the Internet and through guidebooks is drawing an increasing number of hikers to sensitive cultural sites. The issues include educating the public and protecting these sites while still allowing for visitation. Controlling increasing day use is seen as another management issue. Drought has seemingly increased day use over backpacking use.

Although the backpacking permit system seems to be working on some busy weekends, visitors are complaining that the canyons are too full or that they cannot get the trips they want. If all the canyons are filled, then many stock users cannot get the trips they want due to permit limitations. This is primarily due to the short season.

A new Ranger Station is planned with construction forecast for 2005. The funding is approved, and some ancillary equipment has been purchased and installed. Other issues include stock use, commercial

permitting, woodcutting, and Tribal concerns. A previous draft of the EA for the new Comb Wash campground (identified in the 1991 RMP) needs to be updated.

11.6.7.3 Canyon Basins SRMA

Indian Creek Recreation Corridor

The Indian Creek Recreation Corridor is developing an increasing national and international reputation in its appeal as a rock-climbing site. Climbing magazines regularly publish articles about the area and its unique climbing experience. Issues and concerns arising from the area's increase in popularity include: an increase in size and use of dispersed camping areas; management of human waste; preventing human-livestock conflicts; lack of adequate and safe parking; and protection of cultural sites within the immediate climbing area.

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The Access Fund, a climbing lobbying group, has a very strong commitment to this area and recently, with private industry support, published a brochure on Indian Creek. The Nature Conservancy, which owns the Dugout Ranch in the area, is funding the preparation of the Indian Creek Corridor EA. As mentioned previously, this document should be completed in spring of 2005.

Dark Canyon

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The mandatory permit system on Cedar Mesa seems to be pushing additional camping use into Dark Canyon. If this trend continues, a permit system for Dark Canyon will be necessary. Commercial interest and the use of Dark Canyon is originating from FS, NPS, and BLM public lands. There is a need to study overall use. Limits of acceptable change (LAC) (see Section 11.7) have been identified by the three agencies; however, the area lacks, and may need, a management plan.

11.6.8 Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs)

11.6.8.1 Colorado River

There is a lack of BLM first-hand knowledge of resources in this area, and there is no Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Canyonlands NP. A joint agreement between the BLM [Monticello FO](#) and Canyonlands NP to manage the Colorado River segment needs to be initiated and completed.

11.6.8.2 Other Areas within ERMA

Hole In The Rock Trail

The NPS closure to OHVs is in conflict with BLM and San Juan County OHV designations, which allows OHV use on the trail. There is increasing use and interest by outfitters for commercial tours of the trail. Monticello FO cultural staff is concerned about increasing vehicle use.

A programmatic EA or language in the RMP needs to be written to cover trail work and maintenance, so that a site-specific EA does not have to be written every time a trail outside of Cedar Mesa requires maintenance.

The need for a programmatic EA or language in the RMP has been identified to cover the SRP/NEPA requests for commercial uses such as: cultural tours, OHV tours, bicycle tours, canyoneering, backpacking, and special events such as OHV Safaris and adventure races.

11.6.9 Facilities

The availability of facilities is directly related to public health. BLM has noted that an inadequate number of organized campgrounds and restroom facilities contribute to unhealthy levels of human waste in consolidated areas, especially in high use areas such as Indian Creek. Funding for maintenance of existing facilities is also an issue.

11.6.10 Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

11.6.10.1 OHV Use

The increase in the use of OHVs has created several issues for the Monticello FO. First, the speed of OHVs allows easier access than foot travel to remote parts of the area, making management of this activity and the area utilized more difficult, while also increasing the potential range of impacts. Secondly, the popularity of this activity continues to grow, and the addition of special events puts additional strain on resources. Planning for areas in which OHVs can be used continues to receive national and local attention. Specific issues identified by the BLM include:

- Although the current RMP identifies all public lands as open, limited, or closed, the Plan does not give specific management guidance within these designations.
- The OHV designations outlined in the SJRMP do not currently address the amount of recreational use now occurring or the potential of resource damage associated with this use.
- Areas that are closed to motorized travel are not necessarily consistent with WSAs.
- OHV use is open in areas of conflicting designations and is not coordinated across field office boundaries.
- In the current RMP none of the OHV designations have been implemented. Maps depicting existing RMP decisions are out of print and not available to the public.
- Increased use creates the need for additional management and planning, which is not funded.

There is a need to evaluate and update the OHV designations and develop a current map of the Monticello FO in order to ensure that the FO is in compliance with Executive Order 11644 as amended by Executive Order 11989 and also to ensure that the FO is following the National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands, January 2001.

There is also a need for the Monticello FO to implement the designated routes on the ground and provide an OHV map. This has not been completed.

The Monticello FO needs to determine if there is an appropriate area that could accommodate an Open Play area.

11.6.10.2 OHV Legal Issues

Off-highway vehicle use is a highly contentious issue. The root of this issue is buried in the Revised Statute (RS) 2477 issue, which is beyond the scope of the RMP. There has been a settlement and an agreement regarding RS 2477 between the Governor of Utah and the Secretary of Interior, but the guidance necessary for the field office to implement this agreement has not been received. The BLM is currently involved in two lawsuits over OHV use: one in Butler Wash and one in Indian Creek. The city of Bluff has signed a petition to prevent OHV use within city limits. San Juan County has developed an OHV Plan, which proposes increasing use and access to promote tourism, which is not always consistent

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Deleted: The increase in the use of OHVs has created several issues for the Monticello FO. First, the speed of OHVs allows easier access to remote parts of the area, making management of this activity and the area itself more difficult, while increasing the potential range of impacts. Second, the popularity of this activity continues to grow, and special events put additional strain on resources. Planning for areas in which OHVs can be used continues to receive national and local attention. Specific issues identified by the BLM include:¶

<#>Although the current RMP identifies all public lands as open, limited, or closed, the Plan does not give specific management guidance within these designations. Future planning efforts need to address default OHV designations for the times of the year outside the seasonal wildlife limitations.¶

<#>The OHV designations outlined in the SJRMP do not currently address the amount of recreational use now occurring or the potential of resource damage associated with this use.¶

<#>Areas that are closed to motorized travel are not necessarily consistent with WSAs. OHV use is open in areas of conflicting designations and is not coordinated across field office boundaries.¶

<#>None of the OHV designations have been implemented. Maps depicting existing RMP decisions are out of print and not available to the public.¶

<#>Increased use creates the need for additional management and planning, which is not funded.¶

There is a need to evaluate and possibly update the OHV designations and develop a current map of the Monticello FO in order to ensure that the FO is in compliance with Executive Order 11644 as amended by Executive Order 11989 and also to ensure that the FO is following the National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands, January 2001. ¶

There is also a need for the Monticello FO to implement the designated route on the ground as part of the OHV map. This has not been completed from the existing RMP. ¶

The Monticello FO needs to determine if there is an appropriate area that could accommodate an Open Play area such as the Butler Play area. ¶

There is a need to designate the trail system in the Indian Creek area. ¶

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with BLM management goals. Specific controversy surrounds Arch Canyon, Jacobs Chair, Bridger Jack, Piute Pass, and Montezuma Creek trails.

There are numerous OHV issues, which include: illegal explosive blasting used to open OHV trails into a WSA; the uncompleted designation of roads and trails within the FO area; the updating of travel maps; the San Juan County bulldozing of OHV routes on BLM-administered public without BLM concurrence. There are OHV – cultural resources conflicts, expectations to provide services to the OHV community, legal questioning of the of Indian Creek and Comb Wash emergency closures, and a private OHV user group that is producing OHV maps that the BLM cannot authorize and that the Canyonlands Natural History Association will not sell.

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11.6.11 Permitting

Special Recreation Permits (SRPs)

The demand for SRPs is increasing. Many commercial outfitters based in the Moab area are expanding their base into the Monticello FO area, creating an increase in hiking, biking, guided hunting and river running activities. Large event requests, primarily for OHV activities, are also becoming more frequent. Issues surrounding SRPs include group size, limits on commercial companies, potential damage to cultural and visual resources, and continued coordination with other BLM Field Offices, the NPS and the FS. Additional challenges include:

- Lack of guidance under the current RMP regarding acceptable use levels for commercial use.
- Large-scale permits require a lengthy NEPA process and extensive staff time that is not planned in the workload, in the current roles of Monticello FO staff.
- The BLM Cost Recovery process for SRPs is too expensive for many small companies. RMP programmatic NEPA guidance is necessary to prevent any undue hardship to these small companies.

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The OHV descriptions outlined in the RMP currently do not address the amount of recreational use now occurring or the potential for increased use and resource damage associated with this use.

11.6.12 Funding

Fee Demonstration Projects

Fee demonstration projects are in place on Cedar Mesa and the San Juan River and are essential to program operations. Revenues are down from 2001 because of drought and, therefore, decreased demand for permits (see Table 11.5 in Section 11.3.6). There is discussion over whether fees should be raised to be consistent with current fees charged in other areas. Both the Navajo Nation and Glen Canyon NRA have expressed an interest in receiving a portion of the revenues generated from river permits. This may require an increase in the overall San Juan River permit fees.

11.6.13 Staffing

A small staff manages the Monticello FO Recreation Program. The current full-time staff consists of two recreation planners, three part-time river rangers, two part-time rangers in Kane Gulch, two full-time permit assistants, as well as several volunteers. Several problems arise from a shortage of staff:

- Evaluation and processing of SRPs and the associated NEPA documents are not adequately addressed, as the requests for commercial permits increase.
- Managers over the past years have indicated a lack of “field presence” within the FO area due to the lack of staffing. Staff is not readily available for field monitoring due to other demands on their time.
- Presently, there is no staff to ensure that funded projects have the necessary NEPA requirements completed in a timely manner, and to apply for additional funding for more projects that have been identified. Contracted workers construct most of the funded projects. Staffing, funding, and time are too limited to maintain or repair existing facilities.

11.6.14 Inter-Agency Coordination

Interagency coordination exists within Hovenweep and Natural Bridges NMs, Canyonlands NP, Glen Canyon NRA, Manti-La Sal NF, as well as with the Navajo Nation and Ute Tribes. There are numerous recreation-oriented issues concerning these agency and tribal areas.

BLM staff has expressed the need for coordination with the following agencies:

- San Juan County – Is working as a partner with the BLM Monticello FO, under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands – There is a need to contact and coordinate with SITLA concerning recreational use on these lands which lie within the Monticello FO planning area.
- Navajo Nation – The preparation of a cooperative agreement to address management issues along the San Juan River was begun in the late 1970s, but was never completed.
- Moab Field Office – Managing the expansion of visitor recreation into the Monticello FO planning area from the Moab FO because of overcrowding has also been identified as a challenge.
- Canyonlands NP – A MOU should be established between the Monticello FO and Canyonlands NP for management of the Colorado River.
- Glen Canyon NRA – A MOU should be established between the Monticello FO and Glen Canyon NRA regarding San Juan River management. This has commenced as of Spring 2004.
- Natural Bridges NM – Planning jointly to develop an overflow campground.
- Hovenweep NM – The NM is surrounded by BLM-administered public lands and shares a small BLM ACEC area that is currently protected under VRM for its scenic quality.
- Manti-La Sal NF – Is proceeding with its planning process, and has two eligible WSR segments that drain into the Monticello FO planning area.

Deleted: White Canyon lies within BLM and NPS jurisdictions, and contains one of the rivers that the BLM has determined to be eligible for WSR status

11.7 MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Several opportunities exist for management in the Monticello FO area. Major categories discussed below include specific plans, recreation designations, funding and education, and coordination.

11.7.1 Focus Areas

The concept of “focus areas” could be implemented to alleviate conflict between users. Using this concept could allow the better matching of expectation and experiences. A focus area would concentrate on a single primary use, while allowing other non-interfering uses. For example, a dirt bike/ATV area may be

designated, but mountain biking would still be allowed within this area. A particular area may be designated as a mountain biking focus area; hikers would still be allowed to use this area, but it would be managed primarily for mountain bike use. An area managed for hikers might not allow any motorized or mechanized use as that use would conflict with the quiet experiences that hikers seek.

A variation of the concept of focus areas is temporal management. Temporal management rotates type of use during specified time periods. For instance, a trail might be open to hikers only on one day a week, to hikers and mountain bikers for two days a week, and to all users, motorized and non-motorized during the remaining four days of the week.

11.7.2 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The concept of ROS combines the idea that an opportunity is provided by particular qualities found in nature, qualities found in recreational activities, and qualities found in managerial direction. By combining variations of these qualities, a variety of recreation opportunities are achieved. Variations on management and activities on the resource are usually expressed in a range of opportunities, from primitive to developed areas. The inventory completed by staff in the Monticello FO could be carried forward as a management strategy to create a balanced range of opportunities throughout the FO area. For example, areas that are used primarily for backpacking could be designated in the ROS spectrum as Primitive, while areas that are typically used for motorized vehicles could be designated as ROS class to include roads and developed recreation opportunities. The current ROS could be reviewed for relevancy to current use. The ROS could also be used in conjunction with other strategies, such as LAC, described below, or the concept of focus areas, described above. The ROS will be used in the RMP effort, and an opportunity exists to modify the ROS within the planning area (personal communication, Suzanne Garcia, 2004).

11.7.3 Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)

LAC is usually applied to a specific resource area when the management of users, and their impacts, can be controlled to achieve a desired state of the resource. In the Monticello FO area, this could be applied to specific recreation areas with an established goal for use. If the goal for the resource is set, then chosen social or resource indicators will determine when activity levels should be modified. For example, the LAC for a specific OHV route could be set at a soil disturbance threshold. As soils are degraded up to a pre-determined point, activity levels would be modified in order to maintain achievement of the goal set for that route.

11.7.4 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

ACECs may be established through this RMP process. ACECs established through this process may provide restrictions to certain recreation activities.

11.7.5 OHV Management

The RMP must designate all lands for OHV use as open to cross country travel, closed, and limited to either existing or designated roads and trails. Those areas designated as "limited to designated roads and trails" would have specific, designated OHV routes. To arrive at these designations, the purpose and need of inventoried vehicle routes would be assessed and the resource conflicts associated with vehicle routes would be identified.

11.7.6 National Recreation Area (NRA)

The RMP could consider and recommend a NRA, National Conservation Area, or combination of the two (e.g. Indian Creek). Only Congress can designate such an area. Typically, NRAs are located on large reservoirs, or around major population centers. National Recreation Areas could also be established in areas that provide outdoor recreational opportunities to a large number of people. A NRA could provide additional funding and management structure to high-use portions of the Monticello FO planning area. A National Conservation Area could provide protection to certain landscape features or recreational values.

11.7.7 Develop Specific Plans in Conjunction with the Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Establishing specific plans could have the effect of reducing NEPA requirements and processing times, allowing better response times for commercial SRP applications.

11.7.8 Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)

Additional SRMAs could be considered for high-use areas where more intensive management is required. Existing SRMAs requiring enhanced or special management for recreational uses for protection of recreational-related resources values should also be addressed in the RMP. The plan should establish criteria to provide consistent application of special and extensive recreation management areas with the planning area.

11.7.8.1 San Juan River SRMA

Sand Island Campground and Boat Launch

Approximately \$50,000 worth of flood damage repairs to the Sand Island Campground and Boat Launch area have been identified. These repairs are currently unfunded but have been requested.

San Juan River Management Plan

A River Management Plan should be written to help address the issues stated by both the BLM and public by outlining strategies for use. Specifically, a River Management Plan could help to increase user satisfaction, reduce invasive weeds, protect cultural sites, and address permitting issues. The plan could also be structured as a Joint Management Plan between Glen Canyon, the Navajo Nation, and the BLM, promoting consistent management of the resource.

River allocations should be reviewed and established at appropriate limits within the RMP.

Commercial use should be evaluated and limits established in the RMP.

11.7.8.2 Grand Gulch SRMA / Cedar Mesa

Kane Gulch Ranger Station Facility

The Kane Gulch Ranger Station is scheduled for construction in 2005, and funding has been approved.

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Hole in the Rock Trail

Considering the conflicting resource uses along the Hole in the Rock Trail, and its significance as a historic resource, a management plan could help alleviate conflicts.

11.7.8.3 Canyon Basins SRMA

The boundaries of the Canyon Basins SRMA could be redefined.

Deleted: Fish and Owl Creek Toilet Installation¶
Toilet installation is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2004.¶

Indian Creek Recreation Corridor Plan and EA

The Indian Creek Recreation Corridor Management Plan EA will address the following issues:

- Environmental/cultural education interpretation in Indian Creek
- Cultural resource protection
- Riparian/Wetland protection
- Climbing practice
- Camping areas – developed and dispersed
- Human waste management
- Trails to climbing area
- Parking at climbing areas

Some issues and solutions identified in the Indian Creek Recreation Corridor EA could only be implemented by incorporating management changes into the RMP. For instance, there would need to be changes in camping designations.

A continuing opportunity exists for collaborative planning in Indian Creek, involving the Dugout Ranch, the Rocky Mountain Field Institute and The Nature Conservancy.

Additional partnership building could be pursued.

Additional funding and staff would be necessary to implement the decisions made in the Indian Creek Recreational Corridor EA.

Dark Canyon

There is a need to write a Dark Canyon Management Plan. The need for the plan was identified in the current (1991) RMP, and the need persists. As the FS, BLM and the NPS complete their cooperative studies of the Dark Canyon Area, a permit system limiting use may become necessary. There is also a need for a MOU between the three agencies regarding joint management of the area, and discussions on permitting private and commercial use. There is an opportunity for implementation of a fee demonstration program. Management limitations include lack of staff and funds for all three agencies.

There is a need for a programmatic EA or language in the RMP to cover the SRP/NEPA requests for the following uses: cultural tours, OHV tours, bicycle tours, canyoneering, backpacking, and special events such as OHV Safaris and adventure races. A programmatic EA or language in the RMP needs to be written to cover trail work and maintenance so that a site-specific EA does not have to be written every time there is a need to maintain a trail outside of Cedar Mesa.

11.7.9 Extensive Resource Management Areas (ERMAs)

11.7.9.1 Pearson Canyon Developed Site

As mentioned in Section 11.1.2.3, this area was designated in the current (1991) RMP but has never been developed. There is presently little interest in formally designating this as a hiking area. This designation could be removed.

11.7.9.2 Montezuma Creek

Opportunities exist to improve the Three Kiva Pueblo. The ruin is in need of repair, improved interpretation, and an overall long-term management plan.

11.7.9.3 Hole in the Rock Trail

Establish an agreement with the NPS on OHV management and interpretation for the trail. Work with the Hole in the Rock Foundation to develop a long-term management strategy for this trail; this could include designating the trail as a National Historic Trail. Management issues could be addressed in a Travel Management Plan.

11.7.9.4 The Old Spanish Trail

Opportunities exist for cultural and historical interpretation. Historic Trails funds are available for interpretation, but staff time is a limitation. The opportunity also exists for the Monticello FO to coordinate with the Moab FO on improving trail interpretation. Trail-group partnerships could be a management opportunity.

11.7.9.5 Additional Recreation Designations:

Overlapping land management designations could be eliminated.

Limits of Acceptable Change studies could be conducted to determine the appropriate level of use of various areas. However, limitations are that this process is labor and time intensive and frequently produces alternatives that are difficult to implement.

11.7.10 Facility Development

Funding could enhance facility development throughout the Monticello FO area. BLM staff has recognized the following facility needs within the FO area:

- complete construction of the new Kane Gulch Ranger station, water system and housing trailer at Kane Gulch; funding has been obtained and project is underway for 2005
- additional restrooms in key locations would help alleviate the increasing problem of health and human safety;
- additional informative kiosks could aid in proactive user education;
- improved parking areas and access to high-use areas could alleviate traffic flow problems and the perception of congestion among users;
- developed campgrounds where dispersed camping has been identified as a problem would consolidate use and protect the integrity of surrounding resources;

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- more trailheads and staging areas for recreation;
 - construct the Comb Wash Campground as identified in the current RMP [Funded for 2005];
 - pursue a joint BLM/NPS campground on Cedar Mesa to deal with overflow traffic from Natural Bridges NM;
 - determine and construct appropriate levels of OHV trailhead facilities, toilets, parking size, and kiosks;
 - build a handicapped accessible trail to the petroglyph panel at Sand Island;
 - repair the flood damaged road and facilities at Sand Island Campground;
 - work with the NPS on the design and maintenance of the Clay Hills Boat Launch; and
 - encourage the NPS to expand their developed campground in the Needles District in order to reduce the increased camping on BLM land, due to overflow from Canyonlands NP.
- Trails need to be designated and put in the BLM facility monitoring and maintenance system.

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11.7.11 Travel Management Plan

The Preparation Plan for the RMP identifies OHV use as a major issue. The goal stated in this document is that OHV use and management would be addressed and updated in an effort to resolve resource conflicts with natural resources and still provide for responsible recreational use. Establishing a travel management plan could reduce user conflicts, streamline permit procedures, and reduce NEPA efforts.

11.7.12 Permitting

Permitting systems that limit recreational use could be implemented in those areas where LAC or monitoring studies indicate that excessive numbers of visitors are damaging resources. Possible areas for permitting include but are not limited to, Indian Creek and Dark Canyon, as well as day use on Cedar Mesa.

11.7.13 Funding

Additional funding for the recreation program in the Monticello FO would create additional opportunities that could include increased staffing, education and interpretation, facility development and continued maintenance of facilities.

11.7.14 Fee Systems

Implementing additional fee systems in areas of high recreational use could increase funding. In particular, Indian Creek could be considered as a fee area.

Fees for river permits could be raised. It has been many years since they were increased. An increase may also be necessary to provide for Navajo and NPS participation in permitting and patrol functions. An MOU between Canyonlands NP and the BLM to jointly manage the Colorado River could produce additional Fee Demonstration funding.

11.7.15 Education and Interpretation

The BLM FO staff has indicated that an important component in recreation management and recreation resource protection is proactive user education. Education could occur in several ways including:

- programs to highlight the relationship between natural and cultural resources and recreational use, including additional ranger staff, displays and brochures;
- additional outreach to educate recreation users on regulations within the FO area, (e.g., using undeveloped, dispersed camping areas); and
- an expanded FO website to present recreation opportunities and applicable restrictions.

11.7.16 Staffing

Additional funding could be devoted to staffing needs. Staff could fulfill needs in the following ways:

- educate users through outreach programs before user conflicts or resource damage occurs;
- attend to other resource needs, such as noxious weed monitoring and control;
- process SRPs;
- prepare NEPA analysis and review; and
- construct funded projects.

11.7.17 Interagency Coordination

Consistent coordination should be maintained between the following agencies. The limiting factors are staff time and money for all of the agencies.

Interagency coordination would be useful in several areas within the Monticello FO area, and would provide opportunities to improve management within the FO area. Specifically, Dark Canyon, which is administered by the BLM, the NPS, and the FS; Cedar Mesa, which is administered by the BLM and Glen Canyon NRA (Muley Point and lower Grand Gulch); SITLA, which administers land interspersed throughout the FO area; White Canyon, which is administered by the BLM and the NPS (Natural Bridges NM); and San Juan County, which administers the county roads within the FO area.

- San Juan County – An opportunity exists to coordinate with San Juan County on the management of motorized and non-motorized recreation.
- Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) – Opportunities exist for closer working relationships regarding OHV use and special events on both SITLA and BLM lands.
- Navajo Nation – The process to develop a cooperative agreement to address management issues along the San Juan River was begun in the late 1970s, but never completed. This process has recently been restarted, and an opportunity exists to complete the cooperative agreement.
- Moab FO – Managing overflow visitation from the Moab District has also been identified as a challenge, but an opportunity exists to manage the impacts of this expansion of recreational activities.
- Canyonlands NP – An opportunity exists to establish a MOU between the Monticello FO and Canyonlands NP to help manage overflow camping in the Monticello FO area as well as management of the Colorado River on BLM-administered lands.
- Glen Canyon NRA – Coordination of river use within the FO planning area and Glen Canyon NRA, and use on the San Juan River are management opportunities. Management agreements with the Navajo Nation and the Glen Canyon NRA could be prepared. As of February 2004, a MOU process involving the Glen Canyon NRA, the BLM, and Navajo Nation is underway. OHV use and special events are also opportunities for closer working relationships.

- Natural Bridges NM - Mutual concerns regarding hiking and camping within the NM and the FO planning area are opportunities for interagency coordination.
- Hovenweep NM - No major issues.
- Manti-La Sal NF – Management discussions concerning Dark Canyon are proceeding between the NF and the Monticello FO.
- Canyonlands Natural History Association - Opportunities exist to increase the partnership with the CNHA to assist the BLM with Canyonlands visitor interpretation.
- Non-profit organizations – Opportunities exist to build cooperative relationships with non-profit organizations, which could assist with resource management and monitoring.

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