

**Bureau of Land Management
Casper Field Office
DECISION RECORD
for
Blue Gulch Trailhead
DOI-BLM-WY-P060-2011-52-EA**

In accordance with 43 United States Code 8010 et seq., it is my decision to approve the proposal to develop a trailhead and associated recreation facilities, based on the analysis conducted in Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-WY-P060-2011-52-EA and the attendant Finding of No Significant Impact.

Conditioned through mitigation measures, I find that this action will not result in significant impacts on the human environment pursuant to Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27 (a) and (b) (1) through (10) and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. I further find this action in conformance with the Casper Resource Management Plan (Dec 2007) and that it will not cause unnecessary or undue degradation. A copy of this Decision Record shall be followed by and in the possession of the on-site operator during all undertakings approved herein.

Specifically, the approved action consists of managing the site to the administrative guidelines set for Rural-Developed area and to construct a small trailhead and trail extension to connect the Grey Reef Campground and Redds Day Use Area. New recreational infrastructure would include a comfort station, a parking lot, an access road, and an accessible pedestrian trail, which includes a bridge and interpretive signs. The formalized trailhead would be known as the Blue Gulch Trailhead, named after one of the two existing drainages and depicted in Figure 4.

The existing road would be realigned, resurfaced and delineated with bollards if necessary to prevent off-road motorized use and would provide access to a surfaced parking area. This parking area would be located on the bench above the riparian zone. The existing asphalt surface would be utilized as a parking lot and would be large enough to accommodate 10 to 15 vehicles. Up to six picnic sites would also be developed and connected by the access road. Motorized travel and parking would be limited to the defined parking area and individual picnic sites. Parking along the access road would not be allowed. No other routes would be made available for motorized use. Any portion of the existing road not used during construction would be barricaded and reclaimed.

The existing septic system would be abandoned and filled-in. One of the existing water wells would remain under the existing right-of-way, the second well will be used for reclamation projects (if feasible to do so). The water will not be made available for public use. Private use will be limited in scope to the existing livestock uses as described in the right-of-way agreement and be maintained at the current level and intensity of use. The well will be maintained in good operating condition and will be sole responsibility of the right-of-way holder.

Mitigation Measures:

Areas that are disturbed because of removing the buildings would be used in the development of the trailhead or would be reclaimed. The space currently occupied by the larger of the two houses would require some re-contouring, prior to development or reseeding. Facilities associated with electric power, including the transformer, power pole, and lines would be removed from the site.

A high priority would be placed on reclamation efforts, in order to improve the overall condition of the site and to reduce the potential for soil erosion. As funding is made available, the BLM would complete wildlife habitat improvement projects and other reclamation efforts described in the Trapper's Route RAMP. These projects would include installation of bat boxes, treatment of noxious weeds, seeding of native plant species, and bank stabilization. Russian olive trees would also be cut down and the area chemically treated. Woody species that would be planted during reclamation are listed in appendix B of the Trapper's Route RAMP.

In accordance with the existing guidelines for rural-developed recreation sites, camping would be limited to designated campgrounds. Therefore, camping would not be allowed at this location.

Public Involvement:

The management guidance for this area was outlined in the Trapper's Route RAMP. This plan set water recreation opportunity spectrum (WROS) guidelines for recreational settings, new developments, and habitat improvement projects as well as limits on recreational activities. The location of the acquired property is categorized as rural-developed based on the existing setting and possible recreation opportunities. Extensive public involvement was an important part of the planning process.

This EA is an addendum to the RAMP and is limited to accepting the WROS category as inventoried and the proposed infrastructure development within the newly acquired property. The BLM consulted with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), the Wyoming Fly Casters, the Conservation Fund, and professional fly fishing guides during the fall of 2007. Additionally, the BLM held a public meeting on March 24th to discuss this specific project and allow for a public comment period.

The majority of comments focused on not over-developing recreational opportunities near the spawning beds, in order to maintain and improve the existing terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Members of the Wyoming Fly Casters Association and commercial fly-fishing guides were concerned about the environmental impacts of an additional boat ramp. The majority of those in attendance favored the walk-in access, parking areas, and interpretive hiking trails. The possible local for the universal accessibility fishing was a concern for some members of the public. The pier location will be reviewed thoroughly before final placement. A formal comment letter was received by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The letter noted that the local office has worked closely with their personnel and that they are in full support of the proposed action.

The only other comment received was solely related to the existence of a valid right-of-way for the water well. Changes to the proposed were incorporated into the EA, FONSI and this decision

record to accommodate this valid and existing right. Other minor changes and clarifications were also made in response

Rationale for the Decision:

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment and the attendant FONSI (DOI-BLM-WY-P060-2011-052-EA) for the Blue Gulch Trailhead. I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the Record of Decision and Approved Casper Resource Management Plan dated December 7, 2007 and it will not cause unnecessary or undue degradation.

Appeal:

Any party who is adversely affected by this decision has a right to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, in accordance with the provisions described in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4.410. A person who wishes to appeal must file notice with the Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Casper Field Office, 2987 Prospector Drive, Casper, WY 82604, within thirty (30) days of publication of the decision. The *Notice of Appeal* must identify the decision being appealed, and may include a statement of reasons for and any argument the appellant wishes to make. If the notice does not include any statement of reasons for the appeal, the appellant shall file such a statement with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 801 North Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia 22203, within 30 days after the notice of appeal was filed. The appellant shall serve a copy of the *Notice of Appeal* and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, P.O. Box 25007 D-105, Denver Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225 not later than 15 days after filing the document. Service of the copy may be made by delivering the copy personally or by sending it by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested.

Request for Stay:

If you wish to file a petition (pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21) for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your *Notice of Appeal*.

A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- i. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
- ii. The likelihood of appellant's success on the merits;
- iii. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- iv. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

The appellant requesting the stay bears the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted. The appellant shall serve copies of the *Notice of Appeal* and petition for a stay on each party named in this decision from which the appeal is taken, and on the Appeals Board to which the appeal is taken.

Authorized Officer: Rhen Etzemiller Date: 4/16/2012
Rhen Etzemiller,
Assistant Field Manager, Casper