

# A Recreation and Visitor Services Strategy



# **Bureau of Land Management Colorado Recreation Program**

## **Mission Statement**

BLM Colorado recreation will; through innovative partnerships, stakeholder commitment, and community-based collaboration; maintain the valued recreation opportunities, desired landscape settings and public land health ensuring long-term ecological sustainability while providing benefits to visitors, communities, and the natural and cultural environment.

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## Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 258.2 million acres of America's public lands, located primarily in 11 western states and Alaska. The BLM manages over 8.4 million acres in Colorado alone, providing recreation opportunities for over 5 million annual visitors. Among the many recreation areas that BLM Colorado manages are numerous Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) and National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units. These include Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (NCA), Gunnison Gorge NCA, five designated Wilderness Areas, and 54 Wilderness Study Areas.

Heritage Tourism—traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities reflecting the stories and people of the past and present—has become one of the fastest growing tourism segments in Colorado, growing at twice the rate of other tourism segments. The BLM Anasazi Heritage Center showcases Native American heritage within the Four Corners region.

## Why a BLM Colorado Recreation Strategy?

The Bureau's vision is "to enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources." BLM manages diverse lands and programs of which recreation has developed into a major use of public lands, comparable to range, minerals, and realty. This strategy, while focusing on recreation, must be viewed as only one aspect of many composing the

BLM's multiple-use mission. Recreation is not necessarily appropriate on all lands that BLM manages. However, the program is an expanding endeavor, is important to Colorado residents and visitors, and we need to approach it strategically.

The BLM Recreation and Visitor Services Program is focused on three basic components of recreation opportunities on public lands: 1) types of recreation opportunities and experiences that can be provided, 2) the character of recreation settings within which they occur and retaining that character, and 3) services that can be provided by the BLM and its collaborating partners. Obviously, the BLM is not the only provider of recreation experiences and benefits. Therefore, BLM strives to develop collaborative partnerships with other land management agencies, state and local governments, recreation service providers, and a host of interest groups and individuals to provide a complete spectrum of recreation opportunities.

The recreation use of Colorado's public lands and its management by the BLM continues to undergo significant change. These changes are multi-dimensional, involving population demographics, related changes in consumer demands and use, advances in state-of-the-art leisure science, improved technology, competing uses, and updated recreation-tourism policy. The purpose of this strategy is to improve BLM Colorado's responsiveness to these changing conditions and leverage its resources and staff in the process.

While this strategy sets neither recreation management objectives nor specific program actions, it does provide strategic direction for the application of recreation objectives in the development of management plans and their implementation in day-to-day field operations. It does so in a way that enables BLM Colorado to respond to national program direction that is unique to the diversity of its recreation areas, its communities and the services they provide, and the desires of BLM's own distinctive recreation clientele, while caring for the resources that provide the original experiences.



This strategy is therefore organized around program objectives, not management objectives set through land use plans. The seven program objectives in this strategy have been adopted by the BLM Executive Leadership Team with input from the agency's diverse recreation constituents.

## Complementing the BLM

In May 2003, the BLM wrote a work plan called "The BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" referred to as the Purple Book. The plan was developed in response to two goals established by the Department of the Interior:

1. Provide for a quality recreation experience, including enjoyment of natural and cultural resources; and
2. Provide for and receive fair value.

To accomplish these goals, seven key objectives were set. The Colorado Recreation Strategy embraces these objectives and highlights actions to be taken within the next five years specific to BLM Colorado. These seven objectives establish the framework for the BLM Colorado Recreation Strategy.

## What's Changed that Requires a Strategy?

**Changing Demand.** The composition of BLM Colorado's recreation users and constituents began to see significant changes in the 1980s and 90s. U.S. Census data (2006 estimated population) shows that Colorado's population has increased by 44 percent since 1990. Colorado's desirable climate and natural resources are magnets for booming Front Range urban growth, and the growth of destination resorts, second homes, and retirement communities. Eight of the 20 fastest growing counties in the nation during the 1990s were in Colorado. More than any other state in the West, Colorado also has the highest proportion of counties having a high percentage of second homes. Business relocations to Colorado's rural communities and to metropolitan base-camp cities alike, coupled with the growth of cottage industries, compound these dramatic changes in both rural and urban life and the consequent increased recreation-tourism demand.



All of this socio-cultural and related economic change has profoundly affected the BLM's management of public lands recreation use. BLM's recreation users now include both visitors and affected local communities and their residents. The distinctive character of public lands recreation settings are vitally important to Coloradans who value these wide-open spaces as integral to their quality of life.

There has also been an accompanying diversification of the recreation-tourism markets wanting to use and enjoy BLM public lands. Nationally, the BLM has recognized at least three distinctively different recreation-tourism markets, i.e., destination, community, and undeveloped settings.

### Changes in BLM Recreation Management.

Another significant change comes with advancements in recreation science and management. Again, during the 1980s and 90s, recreation management for BLM Colorado meant managing a variety of outdoor recreation activities. This simplistic approach to meeting user demand by activity treats recreation as "fun and games" for participants. People wanted hiking trails, so BLM built hiking trails. People wanted to float rivers, so BLM developed a river program and so on. Since recreation management was structured around individual activity demands, the BLM's recreation program/staffing was therefore structured around such principle recreation activities and initiatives as off-highway vehicles (OHV), river boating, hiking, trails, interpretation, permits and fees, etc.

Managing recreation today on BLM public lands is much more complex. Technological advances have brought new recreation

activities to the public lands, including exponentially increasing mountain bike and off-highway vehicle use. This diversity of often competing recreation activities desired by visitors coupled with the dramatic increasing use of public lands, caused BLM recreation managers to realize that activity-based management forced recreation planning, management, staffing and funding into a “reactive” mode. Public land managers were focused on facilitating activity use of the public lands without attention to the changes in setting we were causing, thereby diminishing the character of the lands that produced beneficial outcomes to the public.

At the same time, visitors and residents voiced concerns that the character recreation settings in which they recreate were just as critical as the activities available to them on public lands. Recreation management focusing solely on activities could allow the distinctive landscape character—especially areas that were characterized by more primitive, natural-looking, and undeveloped recreation settings—to change. In turn the recreation experiences made available for visitors could be impacted. However, it appears that economies are strong, communities are thriving, and BLM visitor numbers are on the rise. While recreation management has negligible control over such external influences as private land growth and energy development, public land managers can enhance visitors’ quality of life and beneficial outcomes produced for communities, economies, and the environment itself through a management approach that follows this strategy.

an activity-focused approach to an “outcomes-focused” approach called benefits-based management (BBM). BBM is the application of an outcomes-focused philosophy to the delivery of recreation services. BBM provides the conceptual framework to view, plan and collaboratively provide recreation services as a means to larger “ends”—beneficial outcomes to individuals, communities, economies and the environment. By paying attention to “why people recreate” and the supporting recreational setting characteristics —“what the public lands are becoming,” in addition to “what people want to do”—and how that may impact land health standards, managers have a logical framework that considers all the essential workings (implementation actions, recreation settings, recreation opportunities and outcomes, and potential resource impacts) that go into delivering the quality recreation services BLM’s visiting and resident customers desire.

## What’s Going to be Different?

The seven national Recreation and Visitor Services Program objectives, around which this strategy is structured, provide a comprehensive answer to this question. Some of these objectives involve substantial programmatic changes, whereas others are mostly refinements of current management practices. While many components of this strategy are novel, others are already being implemented.

## Goals for the Strategy

This Strategy is designed to increase public lands stewardship through consistent and coordinated management of the BLM Colorado recreation program in order to achieve the best possible balance of recreation uses and land health standards statewide.

The primary goals of the Strategy are to:

To improve recreation services and internal operations, BLM Colorado is moving beyond



1. Set a framework for achieving sustainable experiences and quality of life outcomes for individuals, communities, and the environment;
2. Sustain the diversity, distinctive character, and capacity of BLM recreation settings; and
3. Increase the economic stability and sustainability of the BLM Colorado recreation program.

## Taking Stock in Moving Forward

The three BLM Colorado Resource Advisory Councils developed recreation guidelines in 2000 to meet the Land Health Standards on BLM-managed lands in Colorado (see Appendix 5). These standards, which remain applicable today, were developed to set prescriptive guidelines to minimize and prevent adverse impacts to land health. They are complementary to the Recreation Strategy contained in this document. The guidelines were primarily developed for project- and activity-level planning, whereas the strategy is designed to articulate the focus of the overall recreation program for BLM Colorado.

BLM Colorado manages substantial public lands lying in close proximity to many sizes and types of Colorado communities. These include:

1. Adjoining service communities such as Montrose, Craig, Meeker, Kremmling, Cañon City, Glenwood Springs and Cortez;
2. Destination resorts such as Steamboat Springs, Telluride, Vail, and Gateway Canyons; and
3. Metropolitan base camps, including Denver, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction.

Actions of recreation-tourism providers within each of these communities are not only essential to the use and enjoyment of BLM public lands, but they also influence and determine the character of recreation opportunities found there.

BLM Colorado public lands offer extremely diverse kinds of recreation, distinctively different from those provided by other



agencies. These public lands provide opportunities to reconnect with rural roots and get away from the intensive recreation “rat race.” BLM Colorado public lands offer the opportunity to trek up a 14,000-foot peak, drift down miles of pristine Class I-V rivers, hike a remote wilderness area, ride a technical single-track mountain bike trail, rock crawl on a challenging 4x4 route, ride along on a Wild West cattle drive, explore a remote red rock canyon, experience intact historic and prehistoric cultural sites, or drive along one of Colorado’s many Scenic and Historic Byways to view spectacular landscapes. Many other recreation experiences are also available, such as auto touring, driving OHVs, viewing wildlife, historic interpretation, exploration, examining fossil sites, Nordic skiing, rock climbing, hiking, backpacking, camping, and, of course, hunting and fishing. In partnership with over 800 commercial permittees, BLM Colorado offers safe, professionally guided recreation experiences for visitors of all abilities and provides significant economic benefit for local communities and regions throughout Colorado.

Several areas of BLM public lands have been deemed outstanding, legislated for special management by Congress with support by national and local constituencies. They include: Canyons of the Ancients National Monument; Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, which contains the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness Area; McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, which contains the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Area; the Powderhorn Wilderness Area; and the Tabeguache Area. Recreation uses within these areas are mandated more specifically but provide a large portion of the overall recreation spectrum for BLM Colorado.

In addition, Colorado has 54 wilderness study areas which BLM is mandated to manage for their wilderness values until Congress makes a decision on their future. BLM Colorado also manages numerous SRMAs for specific recreation objectives. The designation of an SRMA is determined through the BLM's public land use planning process.

## Recreation and Tourism in Colorado

Recreation and tourism in Colorado are big business - statistics show how significant and valuable recreation is to the Colorado economy, local communities, residents and visitors alike:

- 94 percent of all Coloradans engage in outdoor recreation.
- Over 90 percent of Coloradans are trail users.
- OHV registrations have increased 223 percent from 1995 to 2003, an average of 18 percent annually.
- Colorado has the nation's highest alpine skiing visitation, garnering more than 20 percent of the nation's skiers in 2006. Our state's ski resorts posted a record season, up by more than 500,000 skier visits from 2005. Public lands adjoining resorts offer important recreation opportunities for product diversification, both by area and season. [www.media-coloradoski.com]
- Colorado also has the highest whitewater rafting visitation in the nation. In 2005, commercial rafting visitation was up 14.1 percent at nearly 505,000 with 2006 numbers roughly the same. [Colorado River Outfitters Association Annual Report]

- Colorado is the only state that offers unlimited over-the-counter elk hunting licenses.
- Many Colorado communities' economic livelihoods are built around the fall big-game hunting seasons.
- Colorado public lands are a critical component to the recreation and tourism industry, and many rural communities are dependent on the recreation opportunities and settings afforded by adjoining public lands.

For the BLM, recreation and tourism have traditionally been viewed simplistically. Changing demographics, growth of destination resorts, diversification of products, and a vigorous Colorado Tourism Office promotion budget have changed the BLM's perspective. BLM now has significant visitor, community resident, business, and other constituent demand for touring, resorts, special events, and opportunities to learn about and enjoy their heritage. This requires BLM to collaboratively work and plan with communities and interested publics while upholding our fundamental duty to meet or exceed land health standards.

The proximity of many BLM public lands to rural communities makes them vitally important to the quality of life of Colorado residents. These "community backyards" are readily accessible for getting outdoor exercise, escaping workplace stress, and enjoying the closeness of friends and family. The proximity of BLM public lands to communities is also an increasingly important outdoor-oriented lifestyle factor in the relocation of businesses from congested urban areas to the Intermountain West. The same factors that make BLM public lands enjoyable to visit make adjoining communities particularly desirable places to live and work. For affected communities, recreation areas on BLM public lands provide a higher sense of community satisfaction, greater sense of integration, connection to nature, alternative activities for youth, and improved local economic stability. Many factors, including population growth, recreation-tourism demand, and limited funding have challenged BLM's ability to manage recreation in Colorado.





## Resource Impact Concerns and Challenges

Multiple challenges are posed by Colorado's population growth. Urban Front Range growth within an easy drive of BLM public lands accelerates destination recreation demand. Increased rural community growth from business relocations, second homes, and retirees creates corresponding increases in community-based recreation demand on readily accessible adjoining BLM public lands. Growth of tourism industry promotion and use likewise sends increasing numbers of outdoor adventurers to BLM public lands. Underlying these challenges is BLM's dispersed recreation use and its need to maintain the distinctively undeveloped and open-space character of its recreation settings and the experiences and other benefits BLM public lands provide.

In addition, increased energy development throughout the state has stimulated rural growth in certain areas, which in turn generates greater recreation demand. The BLM must meet the challenges presented by the increase in energy development in many areas where recreation is also popular. In turn, the increased working population in nearby communities increases demand for quality recreation opportunities.

BLM Colorado will fund studies to identify desires for public lands recreation areas and related activities during the resource management planning process. These studies will help BLM determine visitor and community resident desires for resulting experiences and other benefits, and the setting characteristics on which their sustained benefit realization depends.

Comprehensive travel management is a major challenge. New recreational vehicles are capable of negotiating terrain and reaching places that were considered inaccessible to these uses 20 years ago. To address consequent affects to public land health as well as user conflict, the BLM is involving affected users and interested stakeholders in comprehensive travel management planning. Related increases in use require addressing many resource issues, including fragmentation of wildlife habitat



and the spread of invasive species and noxious weeds through all forms of travel on BLM public lands.

Another concern that BLM must consider in its planning efforts is maintaining the habitat and resources upon which recreation is dependent. For instance, water diversions could severely change recreational boating, fishing, and camping opportunities and drastically change the livelihood of individual businesses and communities. Energy development in heavy use and/or pristine recreation settings can irretrievably impact experiences and opportunities. Increased recreation and development can also have a negative impact on archeological and historical resources. These resources are of great interest to Heritage Tourism but how do we enjoy them without destroying them? New interpretation and education will be integral for the agency to address these concerns.

The tourism industry is increasingly looking for recreational experiences that will result in longer visitor stays in their area and provide opportunities for recreating during the spring and fall shoulder seasons. Local communities and their residents are also placing increasing value on maintaining the character of recreation settings to enrich their quality of life and lifestyles. BLM will continue to experience a growing demand to provide these types of opportunities.

## BLM Authorities in Managing Recreation

The BLM's authority to manage recreation is based on the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. The

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Code of Federal Regulations–Title 43, and BLM Manuals also provide guidance in managing Colorado’s public lands. See Appendix 3 for additional information.

Land health standards were established for BLM in 1996. In 2000, Colorado’s three resource advisory councils recommended specific objectives and actions for BLM to consider when contemplating recreation projects to achieve land health standards. This strategy continues to embrace their work (see Appendix 5).

## Strategy Framework

The heart of the BLM Colorado Recreation Strategy—the seven objectives outlined below—are synergistically interrelated; that is the objectives working together are greater than the sum of the objectives standing alone. The first three objectives unify Colorado’s Recreation program. All of these objectives, considered to be the framework for Colorado’s Recreation and Visitor Services Strategy, require managing all components of recreation, within the context of gateway community collaboration, for fair value and fair return.

## Management Objectives and Associated Actions

### Objective 1 Manage Public Lands for Recreation Experiences and Quality of Life

BLM Colorado will work with communities, service providers, interest groups and individuals to produce recreation opportunities and maintain setting and character for visitors and local residents that will provide access to users to achieve health and fitness goals and quality of life benefits from the public lands. Understanding and responding to the recreating public’s desired outcomes and priorities (individual, community, economic, and environmental) are of primary importance!

### Objective 1: Actions

- All new planning efforts will shift focus from activity-based to BBM.
- The shift to BBM further requires prescribing the setting conditions essential to produce the targeted outcomes desired by both land managers and the public. BLM recreation settings are typically more primitive and rugged, require more individual responsibility, and have an overall lower density and demand than lands managed by other agencies
- Planners and managers, in collaboration with communities and constituencies, will inventory and administer setting character to maintain a diversity of settings across the entire spectrum of recreation experiences, which include motorized uses such as motorcycling, four-wheeling, ATVing, snowmobiling and driving for pleasure; mechanized uses such as road biking and mountain biking; quiet recreation experiences such as hiking, Nordic skiing, horseback riding, fishing and backpacking; and Heritage Tourism options that keep the integrity of cultural, paleontological, natural history and historical locations while interpreting the stories of these important places.
- Implement and monitor plan objectives to ensure that benefits, experiences, maintenance of recreation setting character, and land health standards are met.
- Continue working with the business community, organized recreation groups, outfitters, communities, and interested individuals to instill a sense of pride and caring for public lands.



## **Objective 2 Encourage Sustainable Travel/ Tourism Collaboration with Gateway Communities**

BLM Colorado will build sustainable tourism partnerships involving key service-providing businesses and local governments on whom the agency and its customers depend within gateway communities. While some BLM field offices have successfully collaborated with surrounding communities, more field offices will develop and maintain these valuable and essential relationships.

BLM needs to improve and strengthen relationships with service-providing businesses and local governments so that all will understand the approved recreation setting prescriptions and management objectives, agree to them, and market public lands responsibly. If BLM does not have these relationships, we will continue to be reactive and unable to meet the tremendous public demand set for us by our surrounding communities and continue to sustain degradation of important natural resources.

### **Objective 2: Actions**

- Engage the business community and local governments in collaboratively planning and managing sustained recreation-tourism use of public lands that meet or exceed land health standards, addressing needs of shared visitor and resident customers.
- Get involved in community-based planning to address mutual needs including communities (all local governments), service-providing businesses, and the BLM.
- Engage chamber of commerce/tourism groups, outdoor businesses, heritage organizations, outfitters, other private recreation providers, and organized groups for ideas and ways to disseminate information regarding suitable visitor destinations on public lands, maps and user ethics.
- Collaborate with the State Demographer's Office and other agencies to identify statewide recreation-tourism economic impacts by county and place. Data of key economic sectors by distinct activities and

markets would be useful to both gateway communities and field offices in collaboratively maintaining desired setting characteristics.



## **Objective 3 Provide Fair Value and Fair Return through Fees and Commercial Services**

Colorado has the largest commercial recreation permit program in BLM and manages many developed recreation sites. To maintain the quality of recreation experiences and desired setting characteristics on Colorado public lands, BLM must ensure that fair return is collected on the services provided and that the recreation fee program is administered consistently throughout the state. The BLM will work through its Resource Advisory Councils, as well as the Colorado Recreation Resource Advisory Council in administering any fee changes, increases, or new fees in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (see Appendix 4). As the steward of public lands, the agency will be accountable and ensure that funds are returned to support the sites where fees are collected.

### **Objective 3: Actions**

- Utilize the State Special Recreation Permit (SRP) team expertise to develop a consistent, fair, accountable and sustainable permit program.
- Work with communities and engage the public to identify potential areas where individual fees are needed to achieve management objectives and setting prescriptions.

- Evaluate recreation areas and other amenity sites to determine if appropriate fees are charged in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
- Propose new or continued user fees to ensure a fair return for services provided to benefit users following BLM fee policy and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
- Where public lands recreation use requires local government infrastructure and/or private sector visitor services, explore joint fee programs to sustain all services essential to the attainment of desired recreation opportunities and outcomes.
- Continue to work with other agency cooperators, such as Colorado Division of Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, and others—and across BLM's own program and seasonal staff—to monitor and enforce permit requirements.
- Maintain existing statewide intergovernmental agreements to address outfitter violations (i.e. Law Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)).
- Disseminate information locally and at all fee sites and areas explaining how and why BLM uses recreation fee revenue and associated Recreation and Visitor Services appropriations.
- Encourage offices to develop and maintain partnerships that fulfill local needs while balancing recreational demands in administering public lands. A good example of one successful partnership would be the management agreement between the BLM's Royal Gorge Field Office and the Colorado State Parks in managing the popular Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area.

## **Objective 4 Establish a Comprehensive Approach to Travel Planning and Management**

Comprehensive travel planning and management is integral to the character of recreation settings. Travel management decisions support the fulfillment of planning objectives which include desired recreation setting objectives to protect and/or enhance landscape character. In all new land use plans, travel will only be permitted on designated routes, except in established OHV open areas for motorized use. An interdisciplinary team, involving all affected lands and resource programs, will inventory routes, make travel management decisions, and install signage on designated routes in each BLM Colorado field office. Each office will work closely with communities, sister agencies, interest groups, and interested individuals to balance protecting the health of the land with providing appropriate public and administrative travel and access. See [www.co.blm.gov/travelmgt/index.htm](http://www.co.blm.gov/travelmgt/index.htm) for the status on BLM travel management plans and where the public can go to participate in specific travel plan processes.

The State Director has given specific policy direction found in Instruction Memorandum No. CO-2007-020, which explicitly directs BLM Colorado to accomplish comprehensive travel planning.

### **Objective 4: Actions**

- Develop a statewide interdisciplinary Comprehensive Travel Management Policy for BLM-managed lands within Colorado, including specific criteria to be met within given timeframes. Commit Management of Lands and Resources (MLR) programs to provide funding to support Comprehensive Travel Management. Commit to the completion of interdisciplinary comprehensive Travel Management Planning on BLM-managed lands within Colorado by 2015.
- Transportation routes identified for recreation purposes will include opportunities and quality experiences



for all user groups, including hikers, backpackers, equestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, ATVs, four-wheel-drive vehicles, motorcycles, hunters, fishers, Nordic skiers, and snowmobiles. However, this should not be interpreted that all users will be accommodated in all areas.

- Work with interdisciplinary staff to broaden the scope of travel management to integrate with recreation management objectives and make it genuinely comprehensive for all BLM programs.
- Design sustainable travel systems that meet recreationists needs (i.e. providing loops, varying levels of difficulty), and where sharing multi-modal trails or routes will be the norm.
- Integrate Recreation and Visitor Services land use planning requirements and those for comprehensive trails and travel management so that travel management follows, rather than precedes, the development of benefit-based recreation management objectives and setting prescriptions.

### **Objective 5 Ensure Public Health and Safety and Improve Facility Condition and Accessibility**

BLM Colorado will ensure facilities meet public health, safety, and accessibility standards. Proposed future sites will be evaluated carefully for public need, compatibility with recreation setting prescriptions, and future maintenance capabilities focusing implementation on NLCS units and SRMAs. New facilities will only be established to support dispersed recreation with a focus on preserving and maintaining the recreation setting.

#### **Objective 5: Actions**

- Develop facilities (such as trails, restrooms, and visitor centers) and resources that facilitate dispersed use through innovative partnerships for those systems that fit the BLM's role and mission and that can be sustained with the BLM's funding and staffing capabilities.
- Engage communities - including key enthusiasts - in the resolution of health



and safety issues and other conflicts at BLM recreation sites or areas - especially in urban/community interface areas. For example, create a "neighborhood watch" program for public lands.

- Improve capacity to inform visitors about safety concerns (facilities, fire, high water, etc.), environmental conditions, and emergency situations, both on-site and by using web-based and other technologies.
- When possible, work with law enforcement officers and public affairs to publicize vandalism and convictions (e.g. Crime Stoppers program).
- Expand visitor education regarding human waste disposal, mandating a "pack it in, pack it out" policy (including human waste) whenever possible. Continue to mandate and educate the public regarding Leave No Trace ethics such as using firepans, camping ethics, etc.
- Determine if existing facilities meet accessibility standards, management objectives, and desired future conditions. Existing facilities deemed critical will be maintained and/or modified to be accessible, to the extent possible, and safe for visitor use. Facilities not meeting management objectives and accessibility standards will be considered for removal.

### **Objective 6 Enhance and Expand Visitor Services Including Interpretation, Information, and Education**

BLM Colorado will work internally and externally with strategic partners at the local, state, and national level to connect residents and visitors to suitable recreation and Heritage

Tourism opportunities that match visitors with desired experiences. BLM Colorado will improve availability, accuracy, and consistency of visitor information where future desired conditions have been determined and deemed appropriate. Land ethics and stewardship will be heavily promoted.

### **Objective 6: Actions**

- Develop a BLM network at all levels for disseminating information to the public by working with partners to provide accurate information about recreation opportunities (experiences, benefits, settings, services and management controls) to match visitors with the experiences they desire and to support the goals and objectives of BLM and its community partners (local government and businesses).
- Develop statewide leadership to provide front line visitor services staff with the tools and resources (appropriate web site information and recreation-visitor services briefing book) to respond to visitor needs and to articulate BLM policy and regulations by enhancing support from and communication with recreation staff, managers, and public affairs.
- Build existing programs and staff capacity for environmental education and interpretation—working with other organizations (Colorado Association for Environmental Education, Universities, Division of Wildlife’s “Teaching Environmental Education Naturally,” National Association of Interpreters (NAI), user groups, etc.) and providing learning opportunities through student internships with academic recreation and tourism programs. Work with adjacent

colleges, schools, and outdoor education programs to teach land use ethics. Identify opportunities to collaborate to secure funding to enhance visitor services at the local level—especially signing and maps. Focus on NLCS units and SRMAs.

- Working with partners, improve statewide website content to address recreation opportunities, recreation settings, and available visitor services such as consistent interactive maps and content adequate to enable visitors to plan trips that meet their needs.
- Work integrally with other BLM specialists such as minerals, range, and wildlife so that authorized users can proactively be informed about recreation facilities, events, and users, and thus reduce confusion and conflict.

### **Objective 7 Encourage and Sustain Collaborative Partnerships, Volunteers, and Public Service**

Develop and enhance partnerships with key groups and organizations. Partnerships and volunteers enhance and are essential to a successful BLM Colorado recreation program. BLM managers, volunteer coordinators, recreation staff and other program leads will ensure that all partnership and volunteer projects are preceded by and consistent with approved recreation management objectives and setting prescriptions and aligned with the appropriate individuals or groups which best fit the need for that specific instance. This ensures that relationships become sustainable over the long term and creates the greatest benefit for the volunteers, partners and the public lands.

Stay the Trail Colorado, a partnership with the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition; Bicycle Colorado; Colorado State Parks; U.S. Forest Service; Colorado Division of Wildlife; Tread Lightly; and Leave No Trace are just a few of the successful partnerships BLM Colorado has formed. BLM will continue to work with these organizations and others to help promote responsible recreation and visitor safety.



## Objective 7: Actions

- Continue to partner and collaborate with gateway communities and other partners to increase support, strengthen economies, and develop “friends groups” for NLCS units and other BLM recreation destinations.
- Continue and enhance partnerships with other federal and state agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service– BLM “Service First” joint management agreements, Colorado State Parks, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and National Park Service.
- Identify opportunities for companies and community businesses to sponsor projects that achieve management objectives, maintain recreation setting character, and meet land health standards.
- Focus on identifying Heritage Tourism opportunities and work with local communities, partners, historic interest groups, and the tourism community to sustain and promote education about, and enjoyment, and protection of those opportunities.
- Expand the adoption of recreation areas (rivers, trails, etc.) by partners and volunteers, by including them in the planning process as well as in implementing actions and assisting with ongoing maintenance.

### Time to hit the Trail

Together with its field offices, partners, stakeholders, local and state governments, and other federal agencies, BLM Colorado now sets out to implement this Recreation and Visitor Services Strategy. Coordination and collaboration will be key to our effectiveness in successfully applying the identified objectives in order to accomplish the goals of the Colorado Recreation Program—to provide a framework, to sustain the recreation setting, and to increase funding.



BLM Colorado is addressing future budget needs with a dual approach. We are emphasizing continued and new collaboration, partnerships, and shared responsibility among public land agencies, gateway communities, key service providers, and the various constituencies who continue to play a vital role in managing public lands. In addition, BLM Colorado is mandating that field offices realistically plan through land use plans, activity plans, and agreements for a long-term, sustainable recreation program.

The capability of each office to implement this strategy will vary. As the next step, each field office will develop an action plan that will be updated each year that identifies specific actions to implement this strategy

The next five years will see important changes in how BLM Colorado manages its recreation program. A great deal of staff time was dedicated to developing this strategy, and a great deal more time and energy, by all involved with BLM public lands in Colorado, will be necessary in the coming years to take recreation to the next level. Achieving that desired level will require dedication from both those who work and play on BLM public lands.

# Appendix 1

## Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BBM	Benefits Based Management
BMP	Best Management Practice
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CA	Sub-basin and Regional Assessments
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COA	Colorado Outfitters Association
COTI	Colorado Outdoor Training Initiative
CROA	Colorado River Outfitters Association
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DJ	Land Use Plan (LUP) Evaluations
DN	Preparation Plan
DO	Scoping Report/Planning Criteria
DOW	Colorado Division of Wildlife
DP	Draft LUP/EIS
DQ	Proposed LUP/Final EIS
DR	Decision Record
DS	Draft EIS Level LUP Amendment
DT	Approved EIS Level LUP Amendment/Record of Decision
DU	EA Level LUP Amendment
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
EVAL	RMP Evaluation
FAM	Familiarization
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
MLR	Management of Lands and Resources
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAI	National Association of Interpreters
NCA	National Conservation Area
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NLCS	National Landscape Conservation System
NOI	Notice of Intent
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
ORV	Off-Road Vehicle
PG	Support Work for Understanding the Condition of the Public Lands
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRP	Special Recreation Permit
TBD	To Be Determined
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
VCB	Visitor & Convention Bureau
VOC	Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
WSA	Wilderness Study Area



# Appendix 2

## Glossary

**All-Terrain Vehicle:** A wheeled or tracked vehicle, other than a snowmobile or work vehicle, designed primarily for recreational use or for the transportation of property or equipment exclusively on undeveloped road rights-of-way, marshland, open country, or other unprepared surfaces.

**Area of Critical Environmental Concern:** Areas within the public lands where special management attention is required to: (1) protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values; fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or (2) protect life and safety from natural hazards.

**Code of Federal Regulations:** The official, legal tabulation or regulations directing federal government activities.

**Collaboration:** A cooperative process in which interested parties, often with widely varied interests, work together to seek solutions with broad support for managing public and other lands. This may or may not involve an agency as a cooperating agency.

**Comprehensive Travel Management:** The proactive management of public access, natural resources and regulatory needs to ensure that all aspects of road and trail system planning and on the management are considered. This includes resource management, road and trail design, maintenance, and recreation and non-recreation uses of the roads and trails. Travel activities in this context incorporate access needs and the effects of all forms of travel both motorized and non-motorized.

**Cottage Industries:** A cottage industry (also called the Domestic system) is an industry - primarily manufacturing - which includes many producers, working from their homes, typically part time.

**Cultural Resources:** Nonrenewable elements of the physical and human environment, including archaeological remains (evidence of prehistoric or historic human activities)

and socio-cultural values traditionally held by ethnic groups (sacred places, traditionally utilized raw materials, etc.).

**Cultural Site:** Any location that includes prehistoric and/or historic evidence of human use, or that has important socio-cultural value.

**Designated Roads and Trails:** Specific roads and trails where some type of motorized vehicle use is allowed either seasonally or yearlong.

**Developed Recreation Sites:** Facilities will vary from site to site, but generally, BLM sites can include as little as a cleared opening off-trail for primitive camping, to off-loading ramps, informational kiosks and signs, vaulted toilets, campsites with cabanas and fire rings, and graveled access roads.

**Dispersed/Extensive Recreation:** Recreation activities of an unstructured type that are not confined to specific locations, such as recreation sites. Examples of these activities may be hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle use, hiking, and sightseeing.

**Extensive Recreation Management Area:** Areas where significant recreation opportunities and problems are limited and explicit recreation management is not required. Minimal management actions related to the Bureau's stewardship responsibilities are adequate in these areas.

**Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976:** Public Law 94-579, October 21, 1976, often referred to as the BLM's "Organic Act," which provides the majority of the BLM's legislated authority, direction, policy, and basic management guidance.

**Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act:** Signed into law by the President on December 8, 2004, the Act gave federal agencies a long-term, multi-agency recreation fee program. Recreation fees provide crucial resources that allow the federal agencies to respond to increased demand on federal lands. The goal is to provide visitors with a quality recreation experience through enhanced facilities and services.

**Goal:** A broad statement of a desired outcome. Goals are usually not quantifiable and may not have established time frames for achievement.

**Habitat:** A specific set of physical conditions that surround a species, group of species, or a large community. In wildlife management, the major constituents of habitat are considered to be food, water, cover, and living space.

**Heritage Tourism:** Traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities reflecting the stories and people of the past and present.

**Historic:** Period wherein nonnative cultural activities took place, based primarily upon European roots, having no origin in the traditional Native American culture(s).

**Implementation Plan:** A site-specific plan written to implement decisions made in a land use plan. An implementation plan usually selects and applies best management practices to meet land use plan objectives. Implementation plans are synonymous with "activity" plans. Examples of implementation plans include interdisciplinary management plans, habitat management plans, and allotment management plans.

**Land Use Plan:** A set of decisions that establish management direction for land within an administrative area, as prescribed under the planning provisions of FLPMA; an assimilation of land-use-plan-level decisions developed through the planning process, regardless of the scale at which the decisions were developed.

**Management Decision:** A decision made by the BLM to manage public lands. Management decisions include both land use plan decisions and implementation decisions.

**Monitoring:** The periodic observation and orderly collection of data on (1) changing conditions of public land related to management actions, and (2) the effects of implementing decisions.

**Multiple Use:** The management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most

judicious use of the lands for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; the use of some lands for less than all of the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including but not limited to recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the lands and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or greatest unit output.

**National Conservation Area:** A congressionally designated public land area that contains important resources and whose management objectives are (1) to conserve and protect these resources, (2) to maintain environmental quality, and (3) to provide for present and future users within a framework of multiple use and sustained yield.

**National Environmental Policy Act of 1969:** An Act that encourages productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment and promotes efforts to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; enriches the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and establishes the Council on Environmental Quality.

**National Landscape Conservation System:** A system of Congressional, Presidential, or other designated areas managed by the BLM, the components of which include National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Historic Trails, National Scenic Trails, the California Desert Conservation Area, and the Headwaters Forest Reserve.

**Objective:** A description of a desired condition for a resource. Objectives can be quantified and measured and, where possible, have established time frames for achievement.

**Off-Highway Vehicle (Off-Road Vehicle):**

Any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any nonamphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved; (4) vehicles in official use; and (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies.

**Open:** Generally denotes that an area is available for a particular use or uses. Refer to specific program definitions found in law, regulations, or policy guidance for application to individual programs.

**Open Areas and Trails:** Designated areas and trails where off-road vehicles may be operated, subject to operating regulations and vehicle standards, or an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, subject to standards.

**Plan:** A document that contains a set of comprehensive, long-range decisions concerning the use and management of Bureau-administered resources in a specific geographic area.

**Planning Area:** A geographical area for which land use and resource management plans are developed and maintained.

**Public Land:** Land or interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the BLM, except lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf, and land held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos.

**Quiet Recreation:** Outdoor recreation enthusiasts such as hikers, skiers, mountain bikers, equestrians, bird watchers, hunters and anglers who seek the opportunity to enjoy natural soundscapes.



**Recreation Management Zones:** A planning process that provides a framework for defining specific geographic areas on the ground, each of which encompasses the outdoor recreation environments, activities, and experience opportunities.

**Resource Advisory Council:** A council established by the Secretary of the Interior to provide advice or recommendations to BLM management.

**Resource Management Plan:** A land use plan as prescribed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act that establishes, for a given area of land, land-use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, objectives, and actions to be achieved.

**Scenic Byways:** Highway routes that have roadsides or corridors of special aesthetic, cultural, or historic value. An essential part of the highway is its scenic corridor. The corridor may contain outstanding scenic vistas, unusual geologic features, or other natural elements.

**Special Recreation Management Area:** Areas that require explicit recreation management to achieve recreation objectives and provide specific recreation opportunities.

**Stewardship Partners:** Cooperation and collaboration among the BLM, partners, stakeholders, local and state governments, and other federal agencies for the purpose of effectively carrying out the Bureau's mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Strategy:** Defined as the planning and directing of operations, specifically of maneuvering forces into the most advantageous position.

Sustainability: The ability of an ecosystem to maintain ecological processes and functions, biological diversity, and productivity over time.

**Wilderness Study Area:** A designation made through the land use planning process of a roadless area found to have wilderness characteristics as described in Section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

A congressionally designated area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without

permanent improvements or human habitation, that is protected and managed to preserve its natural conditions and that (1) generally appears to have been affected mainly by the forces of nature, with human imprints substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least 5,000 acres or is large enough to make practical its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.

## Appendix 3

### **BLM Authorities In Managing Recreation**

#### **From the Federal Land Policy and Management Act:**

SEC. 102 (a) The Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States that . . .

SEC. 102 (a)(7): goals and objectives be established by law as guidelines for public land use planning, and that management be on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law;

SEC. 102 (a) (8): the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use;

SEC. 102 (a) (9): the United States receive fair market value of the use of the public lands and their resources unless otherwise provided for by statute;

SEC. 103 (c): The term "multiple use" means the management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious uses of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; the use of some land for less than all of the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific

and historical values; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources with the permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit of output.

SEC. 201 (a): The Secretary shall prepare and maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resource and other values (including, but not limited to, outdoor recreation and scenic values), giving priority to areas of critical environmental concern. This inventory shall be kept current so as to reflect changes in conditions and to identify new and emerging resource and other values. The preparation and maintenance of such inventory or the identification of such areas shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands.

SEC. 201 (b): As funds and manpower are made available, the Secretary shall ascertain the boundaries of the public lands; provide means of public identification thereof including, where appropriate, signs and maps; and provide State and local governments with data from the inventory for the purpose of planning and regulating the uses of non-Federal lands in proximity of such public lands.

SEC. 202 (a): The secretary shall, with public involvement and consistent with the terms and conditions of this Act, develop, maintain, and, when appropriate, revise land use plans which provide by tracts or areas for the use of the public lands. Land use plans shall be developed for the public lands regardless of whether such lands previously have been classified, withdrawn, set aside, or otherwise designated for one or more uses.

SEC. 302 (a): The Secretary shall manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the land use plans developed by him under section 202 of this Act when they are available, except that where a tract of such public land

has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law.

SEC. 302 (b): In managing the public lands, the Secretary shall, subject to this Act and other applicable law and under such terms and conditions as are consistent with such law, regulate, through easements, permits, licenses, published rules, or other instruments as the Secretary deems appropriate, the use, occupancy, and development of the public lands, including, but not limited to, long-term leases to permit individuals to utilize public lands for habitation, cultivation, and the development of small trade or manufacturing concerns.....Provided further , That nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing the Secretary concerned to require Federal permits to hunt and fish on public lands or on lands in the National Forest System and adjacent waters or as enlarging or diminishing the responsibility and authority of the States for management of fish and resident wildlife. However, the Secretary concerned may designate areas of public land and of lands in the National Forest System where, and establish periods when, no hunting or fishing will be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, or compliance with provisions of applicable law.

SEC. 318 (d): In exercising the authority to acquire by purchase granted by subsection (a) of section 205 of this Act, the Secretary may use the Land and Water Conservation Fund to purchase lands which are necessary for proper management of public lands which are primarily of value for outdoor recreation purposes.

SEC. 603 (c): ...Once an area has been designated for preservation as wilderness, the provisions of the Wilderness act which apply to national forest wilderness areas shall apply with respect to the administration and use of such designated area, including mineral surveys required by section 4(d) (2) of the Wilderness Act, and mineral development, access, exchange of lands, and ingress and egress for mining claimants and occupants.

## **The Wilderness Act**

SEC. 2 (a): In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness. For this purpose there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by Congress as "wilderness areas", and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and enjoyment as wilderness; and no Federal lands shall be designated as "wilderness areas" except as provided for in this Act or by a subsequent Act.

# Appendix 4

## Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act

### Summary

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act was passed in the 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill signed into law by President Bush on December 8, 2004.

### The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act benefits visitors to Federal public lands by:

- Reinvesting a majority of fees back to the site of collection to enhance visitor services and reduce the backlog of maintenance needs for recreation facilities (including trail maintenance, toilet facilities, boat ramps, hunting blinds, interpretive signs and programs);
- Providing an interagency fee program that reduces confusion over differing fee programs and passes by reducing four national passes down to one.
- Providing more opportunities for public involvement in determining recreation fee sites and fees;
- Providing focused criteria and limits on areas and sites where recreation fees can be charged; and
- Providing more opportunities for cooperation with gateway communities through fee management agreements for visitor and recreation services, emergency medical services and law enforcement services.

### Many recreation activities and sites will continue to be free. The Act includes additional provisions that build on experiences from the Fee Demo program and improve the fee program by clarifying the circumstances in which fees may be charged. The Act prohibits certain fees for:

- General access to national forests and grasslands and Bureau of Land Management areas;

- Horseback riding, walking through, driving through, or boating through areas where no facilities or services are used;
- Access to overlooks or scenic pullouts;
- Undesignated parking areas where no facilities are provided for
- Picnicking along roads or trails; and
- In addition individuals under 16 will not be charged an entrance or standard amenity fee.

### REA applies to Federal recreation lands under the jurisdiction of the following land management agencies:

- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Forest Service
- All agencies except the Bureau of

### Reclamation have had fee authority under Fee Demonstration program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

- The Act authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to establish, modify, change and collect recreation fees at Federal recreation lands and waters as provided for in the Act. The Act will expire December 2004.

### Possible Fees as identified in the Act The Act enables Forests and Grasslands to have three types of fees called Standard, Expanded and Special Recreation Permits.

- Standard fees are typical day use fees. Sites or areas must have specific features and amenities in order to qualify as a fee site.
- Expanded fees are fees that provide direct benefits to individuals or groups. They include things like developed campgrounds, cabin rentals, highly developed boat docks and swimming areas. They may also include services like hookups, dump stations, special tours and reservations services.

- Special Recreation Permits are for areas where natural and cultural resources need protection or where extra measures are required for the health and safety of visitors. Permits may be required for places like wilderness areas, shooting ranges and specialized trail systems.

### **The America the Beautiful Pass**

The Act expands the National Park Pass by authorizing a new "America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Pass".

- This pass will cover entrance fees and standard amenity recreation fees for all Federal recreation lands and waters where a fee is charged.
- Existing National Park passes, Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access passes will be grandfathered in under their existing benefits and will remain valid until expired. These passes will continue to be sold until the new pass is available.

- Site specific and regional passes such as the Adventure Pass for National Forests in Southern California will remain valid and will continue to be available under this Act.

### **REA provides for a high level of public involvement in determining new fee areas and fee schedules by:**

- Implementing the use of Recreation Resource Advisory Committees for national forest and BLM sites and areas to give communities additional opportunities to provide input on recreation fees in terms of new fees, changes or the establishment of sites;
- Providing additional opportunities for public participation and prior notice prior to a new fee being established; and Communicating with the visiting public on how fee revenues are being spent to improve visitor facilities and services.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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December 20, 2000

CO-931  
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EMS Transmission 12/20/00  
Instruction Memorandum No. CO-2001-011  
Expires 09/30/2001

To: Field Office Managers

From: State Director, Colorado

Subject: Final Recreation Guidelines

Attached is the following Recreation Guidelines to Meet Public Land Health Standards on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Managed Lands in Colorado.

Please take appropriate action to include the guidelines in your Resource Management Plans. This can be accomplished through a plan maintenance action. The guidelines are being announced through a press release and will be posted on the Colorado BLM website.

If you have any questions regarding the guidelines, contact Tina McDonald at 303-239-3716, or Dennis Zachman at 303-239-3883.

Signed by Authenticated by

Ann J. Morgan Don Snow  
State Director EMS Operator

Attachment  
cc: Deputy State Director - Colorado, Resource Services  
Branch Chief - Colorado, Social and Cultural Services  
External Affairs (CO-912)

# **Appendix 5**

## **Recreation Management Guidelines to Meet Public Land Health Standards on Bureau of Land Management Lands in Colorado**

**December 11, 2000**

### **Introduction**

Colorado's population has grown significantly in the past ten years - the state's growth rate is among the highest in the nation. As the state becomes more crowded, an increasing number of people seek out undeveloped land to recreate. In addition, Colorado remains a popular destination for tourists, especially those seeking experiences in a backcountry or wildland setting. As a result, public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are absorbing increasing recreational use. In many areas, the increased use has resulted in user conflicts and damage to vegetation, soils, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources.

In February 1997, Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado (Standards) were approved by the Secretary of Interior and adopted as decisions in all of BLM's land use plans, commonly referred to as Resource Management Plans (RMP). The Standards describe natural resource conditions that are needed to sustain public land health. The Standards encompass upland soils; riparian systems; plant and animal communities; special, threatened, and endangered species; and water quality. The Standards relate to all uses of the public lands. The full text of the Standards is found in Attachment 1.

Based on the increased awareness and understanding of the social and environmental impacts of outdoor recreation, the following establishes recreation management guidelines to help achieve and maintain healthy public lands as defined by the Standards. The guidelines are tools, methods, and techniques that can be used by managers to maintain or meet the standards.

It is the intent of these guidelines to encourage and permit a variety of recreational opportunities and enjoyable experiences that are managed to avoid conflicts and serve diverse recreational interests, while at the same time minimizing and preventing adverse impacts to land health, ecosystems, and cultural or natural resources, including historic and archaeological sites, soils, water, air, vegetation, scenery, wildlife habitats, riparian areas, endangered or threatened species, and wilderness areas. Recreational uses are a highly regarded social value of our society which impacts our public lands, and accordingly BLM in Colorado will plan, manage, and pursue funding sources so that various services, areas, and activities are environmentally sustainable for present and future populations.

### **Recreation Management Guidelines**

#### **A. Standards 1 & 2: Upland Soils and Riparian Systems**

1. Manage recreational activities to maintain sufficient vegetation on upland areas to protect the soil from wind and water erosion and to buffer temperature extremes.
2. Minimize disturbances and manage recreation use in riparian areas to protect vegetation, fragile soils, springs, and wetlands.
3. Plan and locate routes, trails, and developments away from riparian and wetland areas, and highly erosive soils.
4. Reduce stream crossings to the minimal number dictated by the topography. Reduce sedimentation and compaction associated with stream crossings.
5. Manage watercraft types and uses as appropriate to protect riparian systems and water quality from adverse impacts.

### **B. Standard 3: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities**

1. Manage recreational use on public lands to promote the survival and health of native plants and animals.
2. Protect against the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.
3. Protect wildlife habitat by preserving connectivity and avoiding fragmentation.
4. Minimize wildlife disturbances and artificial attractions such as feeding wild animals or improper disposal of garbage.
5. Protect plant and animal communities by limiting recreational use by type, season, intensity, distribution, or duration.

### **C. Standard 4: Special Status and Threatened and Endangered Species**

1. Protect habitat for federal and state Threatened and Endangered Species and other special status species.

### **D. Standard 5: Water Quality**

1. Manage recreational uses in coordination with other uses on public lands to achieve or exceed applicable water quality standards.
2. Control water quality impacts resulting from recreational use, such as human waste, trash, and other elements.

### **E. Public Values and Education**

1. Use information and interpretative services as major tools to protect public land health and significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources. As appropriate, improve public knowledge by locating kiosks, interpretive signs, and visitor information facilities at visitor contact points. Provide guidebooks and pamphlets for users.
2. Increase efforts to educate public lands visitors about an ethic of responsible use, through programs such as Tread Lightly, Leave No Trace, Project Archeology, the



International Mountain Bike Association's "Rules of the Trail," and the Public Lands Watch program.

3. Communicate to the members of the public their individual rights and responsibilities in the use and preservation of public lands, including the recognition of the rights and responsibilities of others because public lands are our legacy for the future.
4. Initiate and maintain collaborative partnerships among government agencies, local governments, business communities, volunteers, user groups, stakeholders, educational institutions, individuals, and the private sector to achieve recreation management objectives and implement these guidelines.
5. Encourage the development of a concise educational program to be implemented at the initial point of contact with the public, to promote public land values, knowledge of rights and responsibilities, environmental awareness, communication between the BLM and the public, and changing management practices and policies.
6. In order to mitigate adverse impacts to the public lands, work with the private sector to integrate a responsible recreational use message with the goods or services they provide.

### **F. Recreation Management**

1. Protect natural resources with a priority on management methods that effectively maintain healthy public lands. Utilize the least restrictive but appropriate limitations on public lands activities and users. Recognize that in some cases various levels of regulations and limits on users are necessary.

2. In the development of recreation plans, use the best current and sound recreation science practices to enhance public land health.
3. Develop and maintain updated inventory and monitoring information concerning both the resource and the recreational uses.
4. Use on-the-ground presence as a tool to protect public lands.
5. In order to prevent adverse impacts to the public land health, establish appropriate levels and types of recreational use. Utilize public participation in the development of these levels and types. Where long-term adverse impacts are created or anticipated by recreational uses, limit or control activities through specialized management tools including, but not limited to, designated campsites, permits, area closures, and limitations on stays and number of users.
6. Locate permanent facilities away from riparian areas, cultural sites, or other locations subject to adverse impacts, and relocate existing facilities away from areas that have been adversely impacted.
  - If it is determined that a facility must be located in these areas, it must be properly mitigated. For example, if it is determined that a path must cross a wetland area, appropriate mitigation such as a wooden boardwalk may be constructed to avoid water quality problems and other wetland disturbance.
7. Manage recreational uses to protect cultural, historical, and archeological resource sites, and areas where there are unique wilderness or environmental values. Where appropriate, set aside some areas for certain scientific, environmental, and archaeological activities, and limit or prohibit other recreational uses in these areas.
8. Allow and manage dispersed recreation activities so that the nature and the frequency of such activities does not create adverse impacts to public land health.
9. Set aside areas, limited in number and size, for certain high impact recreational uses, such as off-road vehicles, motorcycles, and target practice to be relatively unrestricted. Establishment of such areas must be consistent with the Standards and other RMP decisions.
10. Manage activities associated with hunting and fishing to protect the resource from adverse impacts to public land health.
11. Often a land area is utilized by many users; implement feasible management methods to maintain the essential enjoyment elements of the various user groups.
12. Encourage public land recreational activities near population centers and highway corridors by placement of appropriate visitor use infrastructure. Provide restrooms and other facilities adequate for anticipated uses at designated campgrounds, trail heads, and other areas where there is a concentration of recreational users.
13. Build collaborative partnerships with local communities and the private sector to provide recreational support services on private land near public land access points where possible.

## **G. Routes, Trails, and Travel Management**

1. Work expeditiously toward the goal of a statewide inventory of routes and trails.
2. Place a high priority on developing local travel management plans with public participation. Travel management plans should consider all forms of travel in the affected area (i.e., motorized, mechanized, and non-motorized). The plans should address travel management prescriptions (such as open, closed, and limited off-road vehicle designations), and identify appropriate actions to meet or maintain public land health standards and meet the needs of the visitor.
3. Until local travel management plans are prepared and implemented, BLM will take prompt action using existing authorities to prevent the proliferation of roads and trails that have caused or will lead to conditions whereby the Standards are not met. Existing authorities include, but are not limited to, restrictions under the specific rules section for off-road vehicle use, amending land use plan decisions pertaining to off-road vehicles, and closure and restriction orders for other uses.
4. When developing travel management plans and/or implementing travel management decisions, managers should consider the following:

- a. Where adverse impacts, user conflicts, damage to ecosystems, injury to the environment, or other conditions are anticipated or are occurring that would impair the health of the public lands and diminish recreational opportunities, restrict recreational travel to designated routes or take other appropriate action such as seasonal closures.
  - b. Cross-country travel (i.e., off of roads and trails) should only be permitted in areas that meet the designation criteria for "open" areas, and the Standards.
  - c. Where conflicts among recreational users can be minimized, combine multiple uses on one route instead of establishing parallel or alternative routes.
  - d. Where and when appropriate, plan, develop, and designate in cooperation with user groups new routes and trails, as well as selected areas for open travel, that enhance and expand recreational opportunities and encourage responsible use with little or no adverse impacts.
  - e. Relocate, abandon, or close routes and trails seasonally or temporarily that adversely impact riparian and wetland areas, wildlife, highly erosive soils, cultural sites, and sensitive ecological systems, and abandon routes that are duplicated or unneeded. Where routes, trails, or other facilities have been abandoned, provide for restoration and revegetation of the site.
5. Where adverse impacts or safety considerations warrant, limit or prohibit public access when authorizing specific routes to oil and gas locations, mines, timber sales, or other areas or sites under permit or lease.
  6. Provide clear maps, signs, guidelines, descriptions, and other information for users of routes, trails, and other facilities or areas, including mileages and estimated hours of travel by type, limitations caused by travel surfaces and conditions, and availability of loop trails. Provide clear information to the public when closures, seasonal use, and other regulations or limits are placed on public lands.



## Recreation Management Implementation Issues

In addition to the implementation objectives included in the Standards, the following critical issues should be considered for successful implementation of the Recreation Guidelines:

1. The guidelines contained in this document are designed to provide direction, yet allow flexibility for local implementation of RMP decisions. Typically, decisions made in RMPs provide resource goals and objectives, allocate resources, identify land areas for limited, restrictive or exclusive use, and provide guidance for implementation. During the implementation process, additional planning may be needed to better define goals, make objectives more specific, and identify or add specific detail to implementing actions. Frequently, multiple guidelines may be used to maintain or achieve the land health standards. All implementing actions will be completed in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with local communities and the interested public.
2. Declining federal budgets challenge the ability of the BLM to provide services adequate to meet growing recreational demands, create difficult management concerns, and place the health of public lands at risk. Addressing current and future needs will require increased agency budgets as well as collaboration, partnerships, and shared responsibility among public land agencies and the various constituencies using public lands.

3. Increasing recreational uses of public lands create increased needs for funding, manpower, and other resources to simultaneously protect the environmental and ecological values of public lands consistent with multiple use and sustained yield principles. Management practices specifically tailored to recreational impacts are necessary to improve and expand recreational facilities and protect effective planning, maintenance, enforcement, monitoring, and programming of public recreational opportunities. Possible supplementary funding resources to meet these goals should be considered, including non-federal resources such as state, county, and local governments, non-profit entities, and private interests.
4. Important to implementing multiple use recreation management and environmental management objectives are: an achievable scientific approach to the inventory and analysis of biological and ecological data; gathering of accurate data on recreational needs, benefits, demands, carrying capacities, and trends; and developing consensus on difficult issues relating to economically sustainable programs, use controls, other limitations and resolution of user conflicts.
5. The involvement by the BLM of the public, other governmental entities, and various recreational constituencies is necessary throughout the planning, use, and evaluation cycle to establish appropriate management priorities. This involvement should encourage a high degree of public interaction, foster collaboration, educate and inform the public regarding important land use issues, and contribute to the successful implementation of the Standards for Public Land Health and Recreation Management Guidelines.
6. Not all RMP decisions require subsequent planning such as activity plans or transportation management plans. If the actions needed to implement RMP decisions are well defined, then only appropriate environmental assessment documentation may be needed. If, however, the decisions and information in RMPs do not contain enough detail, additional planning may be needed to better define goals, make objectives more specific, and identify or add specific detail to implementing actions.
7. During the implementation process, it may be determined that existing RMP decisions are no longer valid or do not adequately meet the needs of the resource or the public. Therefore, it may be necessary to initiate a plan amendment to address the affected decisions in the RMP.
8. It is not possible for each acre to achieve every standard. It is important to assess and consider the overall health of a landscape when applying the recreation guidelines. For example, when determining how to manage vehicle parking in a landscape, it may be determined to concentrate vehicles in a small confined area, rather than having uncontrolled parking throughout the landscape. In this example, this approach would result in improved resource conditions overall although the site specific impacts at the small parking area would be high (e.g., vegetation disturbance).

The guidelines contained in this document are designed as "tools" to assist managers implement recreation management decisions and actions. At this stage, the environmental effects of implementing the guidelines are too broad, speculative, or conjectural to lend themselves to meaningful environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Furthermore, most implementing actions will be subject to further NEPA analysis. Therefore, adoption of the guidelines is categorically excluded from NEPA analysis.

## Glossary

**Activity plan:** A detailed, site specific plan for management of one or more resource programs. An activity plan provides additional specificity needed to implement RMP decisions. Activity plans are completed only if necessary. When multiple programs are addressed, activity plans may be called Integrated Activity Plans or Coordinated RMPs.

**Guidelines, Recreation:** Recreation management tools, methods, and techniques designed to provide activities, experiences, and benefits for the recreating public while maintaining or achieving healthy public lands as defined by the standards. The recreation guidelines contained in this document are directed toward maintaining or achieving public land health.

**Landscape:** A defined land area that forms a management unit or basis of analysis.

**Mechanized Vehicle:** Any non-motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land. An example of a mechanized vehicle is a mountain bike.

**Motorized Vehicle:** Synonymous with off-road vehicle. Examples of this type of vehicle include all-terrain vehicles (ATV), Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV), motorboats, and snowmobiles.

**Non-Motorized Use:** Recreational human and animal foot traffic. Examples include horses, llamas and other domestic animals.

**Off-Highway Vehicle:** This term is synonymous with the term off-road vehicle (or ORV). Whereas off-road vehicle is used in the regulations and includes any motorized vehicle, the term off-highway vehicle (or OHV) is a more contemporary term.

**Off-Road Vehicle:** Any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain, excluding: (1) any non-amphibious registered motorboat; (2) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; (3) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by

the authorized officer, or otherwise officially approved; (4) vehicles in official use; and (5) any combat or combat support vehicle when used in times of national defense emergencies.

### Off-Road Vehicle Designations:

- **Open area** means an area where all types of vehicle use is permitted at all times, anywhere in the area subject to the operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in subpart 8341 and 8342 of this title.
- **Limited area** means an area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, and/or to certain vehicular use. These restrictions may be of any type, but can generally be accommodated within the following type of categories: Numbers of vehicles; types of vehicles; time of season of vehicles use; permitted or licensed use only; use on existing roads and trails; use on designated roads and trails; and other restrictions.
- **Closed area** means an area where off-road vehicle use is prohibited. Use of off-road vehicles in closed areas may be allowed for certain reasons; however, such use shall be made only with the approval of the authorized officer.

**Protect:** To take actions to guard against injury or loss.

**Standards for Public Land Health:** A description of conditions needed to sustain public land health; the standards relate to all uses of the public lands in Colorado.

**Recreation Support Services:** Resource, facility, and visitor management actions taken to provide activities, experiences, and benefits for the recreating public.



**Resource Management Plan (RMP):** A BLM multiple use planning document, prepared in accordance with Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, that:

- a. establishes resource conditions goals and objectives to be attained;
- b. allocates resources and identifies allowable uses;
- c. identifies land areas for limited, restrictive, or exclusive uses; and
- d. provides guidance for implementation of the decisions made in the plan.

**Transportation Management Plans:** An activity plan that focuses on all aspects of transportation in a land area. Transportation planning can also be accomplished within Integrated Activity Plans, or Coordinated RMPs where multiple resource programs are planned for concurrently.

**Visitor Use Infrastructure:** Amenities such as roads, parking areas, and facilities, to protect the resource and support the recreation user in his/her pursuit of activities, experiences, and benefits.





