



# Northwest District

## Kremmling Field Office (KFO – Kremmling)

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**Blue Valley Land Exchange:** The BLM proposes to exchange nine parcels, totaling 1,489 acres of Federal lands managed by the BLM in Grand County, Colorado for nine parcels totaling 1,830 acres of non-Federal lands in Summit and Grand counties, Colorado, owned by Galloway, Inc., the owners of the Blue Valley Ranch (BVR). The exchange results in a net gain of 341 acres of public land. In July 2021, the Kremmling Field Office published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was publicly available for 30 days. During the public availability period numerous comments were received both in support and against the land exchange. Comments were consistent with what BLM received in response to the Draft EIS. The strongest support in favor of the land exchange was received from Summit County Commissioners, Grand County Commissioners, Trout Unlimited, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Next steps are for BLM to issue a decision and Notice of Decision which is currently being routed through BLM to DOI leadership. The decision will initiate a 45-day protest period.

**Upper Colorado River (UCR) Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP):** The Upper Colorado River SRMA is very popular, hosting approximately 95,000 visitors each year. These numbers are collected from commercial outfitters' use reports and Recreation Use Permits collected at Pumphouse, Radium, and State Bridge Recreation sites. Private boaters' use of the river has grown steadily, increasing by 567%, from approximately 7,274 in 2000 to approximately 48,556 in 2016. Over that same period, commercial use has reflected greater up and down variation, ranging from a low of 29,449 in 2005 to a high of 44,639 in 2016. In 2019, the Kremmling Field Office issued an Environmental Assessment to implement the UCR RAMP. Over the past two years, the Kremmling Field Office has completed numerous projects in support of this initiative and in the Spring of 2022 will introduce the supporting Business Plan to the RAC for establishing or increasing fees for sites developed or improved as part of the RAMP.

**Hebron Mobile Air Quality Station:** The Hebron area in North Park has active oil and gas exploration and development. Currently, flaring of natural gas occurs at several well pads due to the absence of a pipeline to transport the gas out of the park. In the early spring of 2021, Ajax Analytics located a portable station to measure benzenes in the Hebron area. The Ajax site was located to the northeast of the proposed location and was a solar powered station. In late July, Ajax Analytics removed their equipment due to renewed oil and gas activity on the east slope. The BLM Colorado State Office supported continued monitoring and is proposing moving a portable station to Hebron to monitor the air quality for approximately three years. The proposed air quality station would be located to the north of Jackson County Road 34. The



station would be constructed on the northwest aspect of the slope, with the meteorological tower top being visible from the county road. The station would be located at the site for approximately 3 years.

## White River Field Office (WRFO – Meeker)

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**Rangeland Management:** The White River Field Office (WRFO) has prioritized fully processed grazing permits and is actively working with permittees to complete land health assessments and apply changes requested by permittees where possible. Private landowners continue to voice concerns about drought conditions and the high population of wild horses.

### Wild Horse & Burro Program:

**Piceance East Douglas Horse Management Area (PEDHMA):** WRFO completed an aerial flight census in the spring of 2021 within the locations of known wild horses both inside and outside the PEDHMA. The estimated number of wild horses following the census is 1,324-1,677. It is important to note that this census was done prior to foaling which averages 20% increase annually. This increased our estimates to 1,589-2,012 horses. Appropriate management levels (AML) for the PEDHMA are 135 to 235 animals. In early January, BLM HQ published the approved WH&B Gather Schedule for 2022 and a gather for the PEDHMA is scheduled for August 28 – September 28, 2022. The current authorization is to gather 1090 horses with 750 permitted to ship to holding facilities. WRFO is working with the local non-profit organization, Piceance Mustangs, to gain their assistance for determining which horses will be returned to the HMA if projected gather goals are met. Local support in favor of the gather is strong, however, at this time it is difficult to determine the amount of public opposition for the approved gather.

**Meeker Mustang Makeover (MMM):** This year's MMM is scheduled for August 26-27, 2022, at the Rio Blanco Fairgrounds in Meeker. This year's event will feature horses from the Sand Wash Basin HMA that were gathered in 2021. The WRFO continues to partner with MMM to provide assistance with event planning and processing adoption applications.

**Mineral Development / Oil and Gas Development:** The White River Field Office (WRFO) currently processes the oil and gas for all three field offices Northwest District field offices (Kremmling Field Office (KFO), Little Snake Field Office (LSFO), and the WRFO within the Northwest District Office. There are approximately 4,000 active oil and gas wells located within the Northwest District Office (approximately 3,400 in WRFO, 300 in LSFO, and 200 in KFO), The largest oil and gas workload within the district is currently located within the WRFO. In 2021, the WRFO's processed a total of 172 Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) (169 in WRFO, 3 in LSFO, and none in KFO). In 2022, the WRFO has completed 3 APDs in WRFO, has two pending



applications in KFO, and is actively working on beginning the review process a multi-year plan of development for approximately six multi-well pads in WRFO. In addition to the processing of APDs the field office processes approximately 2,000 sundry notices annually. The WRFO also completes the oil and gas inspection and enforcement covering all three field offices. The WRFO anticipates completing over 370 total oil and gas inspections (265 within WRFO and 105 within LSFO and KFO planned). In 2022, the WRFO will be working to plug and reclaim two orphan wells north of Rangely. Currently, WRFO only has one active drilling rigs located in the Piceance Basin. WRFO is currently working with the COSO to prepare the first quarter lease sale in conjunction with Royal Gorge Field Office. The actual lease sale is currently scheduled to be held in March of 2022.

**Travel Management:** The BLM issued the Decision Record approving the Travel Management Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment on June 14, 2021. The decision provides access for diverse recreational opportunities, including off-road motorized areas and places for high-quality big game hunting in non-motorized areas. Most of the lands managed by the field office (1.29 million acres) would allow motorized and mechanized travel on designated routes. Two small areas (26 acres) near the Towns of Meeker and Rangely would be open to cross-country motorized travel to allow for the development of a future OHV skills training course and continued public use of a unique hill climb feature. In January 2022, WRFO staff provided a Travel Management presentation to the Rangely Town Council and provided an opportunity for them to ask specific questions about the implementation of designated areas on public lands in their local area.

#### **Land Tenure Adjustments:**

**Buffalo Horn Land Exchange:** In January 2021, the BLM issued a decision to approve a land exchange with Buffalo Horn Properties, LLC that will convey 14 parcels of Federal lands in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties in the Strawberry Creek area (total of 2,652 acres) to acquire one parcel of non-Federal lands in Rio Blanco County in the Smith Gulch area (total of 1,327.06). (Note: Land exchanges are balanced based on appraised values rather than acreage.) The BLM will also accept Buffalo Horn's offer to donate four parcels of non-Federal land in Rio Blanco County (totaling 508.2 acres) that are isolated "inholdings" between the non-Federal exchange parcel and other BLM-managed public land. The BLM received three protests of the decision (from Cody Barnes, Brandon Siegfried, and Colorado Wild Public Lands) which the BLM Colorado State Office is currently reviewing.

**CNCC Shooting Range:** On December 29, 2021, BLM published a combined Notice of Intent and Notice of Reality Action to announce its proposal to sell 3.73 acres of BLM public lands in Rio Blanco County to Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC) to resolve inadvertent, unauthorized use of public lands. CNCC previously leased this parcel of public land for the operation of a shooting range. The lease expired in 2006 and the shooting range is currently



operating without a lease. In 2008, the BLM issued direction to dispose of developed shooting ranges on public lands through direct sale (the agency-preferred method) or by patent through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. In 2017, CNCC applied to purchase the parcel containing its shooting range from the BLM. The amendment would add the parcel containing CNCC's shooting range to a list of public lands identified for disposal, making the land available for direct sale to CNCC. Under a direct sale, the 3.73 acres of land would be sold to CNCC for no less than fair market value, as appraised by the Appraisal and Valuation Services Office of the Department of the Interior (\$25,000). The shooting range facility serves local communities by providing a resource for law enforcement education and training at CNCC, along with local police, sheriffs, and federal agencies for qualifying their law enforcement personnel. The public comment period ends February 14, 2022.

### **Realty Infrastructure Projects:**

**Gateway South:** In December 2016, the BLM issued a Record of Decision to approve the Energy Gateway South Transmission Project which includes the construction of a 416-mile 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line which spans Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. The Field Office continues to review and provide feedback on the individual plans of development and other construction and mitigation plans required by the original EIS for the project. Gateway South is hoping for a notice to proceed by the end of 2021 with construction beginning in June 2022.

**Change in Alignment for Gateway South Powerline across Raven Ridge ACEC:** The Gateway South transmission line within Colorado traverses the Little Snake and White River Field Offices. In March 2021, PacifiCorp submitted an application to the BLM to re-route a short segment (approximately 2.9 miles) of the approved (but not yet constructed) powerline at the Colorado/Utah border. The proposed alternative route would avoid having to either move or cross the existing Western Area Power Administration's Bears Ears to Bonanza 345kv transmission line. The proposed alternative would involve spanning the Raven Ridge Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which would require an amendment to the RMP. The BLM is currently preparing an EA-level RMP amendment to evaluate this proposal.

**Trans West Powerline:** In December 2016, the BLM issued the Record of Decision to approve the Trans West Express Transmission Project. The Field Office continues to review and provide feedback on the individual plans of development and other construction and mitigation plans required by the original EIS for the project. TransWest is hoping to have a notice to proceed in May of 2022 with construction to begin in summer 2022.

**Wolf Creek Reservoir:** In January 2021, the Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District (RBWCD) was approved for a conditional water right of up to 66,720 acre-feet (AF) for the proposed Wolf Creek dam and reservoir along the White River between Rangely and Meeker. The RBWCD is considering both an off-channel location and a mainstem location as the primary alternatives



for the dam and reservoir. Both alternatives would require a right-of-way from the BLM. The BLM would also need to amend the RMP to consider changes in management in this area. The BLM completed a formal pre-application meeting with the RBWCD in March 2021 but has yet to receive an application from the RBWCD. If/once an application is received, then the BLM would begin work on preparing an EIS-level RMP amendment to evaluate the proposal. It is expected that the BLM would be the lead Federal agency and that the EIS would be prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (which is responsible for issuing a permit under section 404 of the Clean Water Act).

## Little Snake Field Office (LSFO – Craig)

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**Large Transmission Line (update): TransWest Express and PacifiCorp's Gateway South:** GWS has hired a construction contractor and is seeking a Notice to Proceed by March 31, 2022. TWE continues to work through Plan of Development reviews and is seeking a NTP in June 2022. The Field Office and consulting parties continue to develop GRSR mitigation plans, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics mitigation plans, and Historic Properties Treatment Plan (HPTP) implementation is expected to conclude in early 2022

**Travel Management Planning (update):** The Decision Record for Travel Management Area 1 is being finalized and is expected to be signed in 2022. The Decision Record for Travel Management Area 2 was signed in 2021. Area 3 Decision Record will be drafted in 2022. By way of a reminder, the Little Snake Field Office has been engaged in detailed, route-by-route travel management evaluation since the completion of the Resource Management Plan Revision in 2011. The RMP made area designations and directed the LSFO to develop implementation level decisions for approximately 4,700 miles of routes. Three EAs for three Travel Management Areas have been reviewed by the public and are now ready for Decision Records.

**Outcome Based Grazing (update):** The proposed action has been reviewed by Affected Interests for the subject allotments. A decision is expected in 2022. The Little Snake Field Office was selected as one of 11 demonstration projects in six states to pilot the BLM's Outcome Based Grazing program. Outcome Based Grazing offers a more collaborative approach when issuing grazing authorizations between the BLM and its partners within the livestock grazing community. The purpose of this project is to improve BLM's management of grazing on public lands by offering livestock operators greater flexibility in livestock management with greater consideration to economic flexibility and specific goals and outcomes of rangeland resources. Decreasing the response time to changing field conditions is one of the primary goals of the demonstration project. The proposed action has been reviewed by Affected Interests for the subject allotments. A decision is expected in 2022.





**Sand Wash Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area (update):** The LSFO has begun the process of developing a ten-year plan to increase reliance on bait-trapping and continued application of PZP contraception to ensure more sustainable population levels in the long term. By way of review, the Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area is located 45 miles west of Craig, Colorado. The HMA encompasses 157,730 total acres, of which 154,940 acres are managed by the BLM, 1,960 acres are privately-owned inholdings, and 840 acres are managed by the State of Colorado. The Appropriate Management Level for wild horses in the Sand Wash Basin Herd Management Area was set by the Little Snake Field Office Resource Management Plan (2011) as a population range of 163-362. This population range was also reaffirmed with the Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment (2015). In September 2021, 733 horses that were determined excess per 43 CFR 4720.1 were removed from inside and outside of the HMA. A follow up aerial population inventory estimated that there are approximately 320 horses remaining within the HMA.

**Craig Chamber of Commerce Agreement (update):** The Chamber has entered into a contract with Logan Simpson Design Inc. to develop Recreation Area Management Plans for South Sand Wash Basin and Little Yampa Canyon Special Recreation Management Areas. The Northwest Colorado Outdoor Coalition has been formed as part of the state of Colorado's Partnership in the Outdoors initiative. By way of review, the Little Snake Field Office has entered into an Assistance Agreement with the Craig Chamber of Commerce to focus on recreational development and economic relief in Moffat County.

## Upper Colorado River District

**Supplemental EIS/RMP for Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) and Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO):** CRVFO and GJFO continue to work on the court ordered Supplemental EIS to address issues related to analysis of downstream greenhouse gas emissions and the range of alternatives for acres available for leasing under their 2015 RMPs and Records of Decision. The CRVFO consolidated oil and gas team will be writing the EIS, with support from a contractor managed by the Colorado State Office. The BLM is currently conducting pre-work, such as drafting the Notice of Intent (NOI), completing GIS calculations, developing the affected environment, and considering a range of leasing alternatives. This may satisfy the plaintiffs (consortium of environmental groups); however, this may create controversy for local governments who rely on oil and gas in their local economies.

**Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) including McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (DENCA)**



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**COVID Response:** The public area of the office is open to a limited number of visitors and about 75 percent of staff are teleworking several days a week. We expect high visitor use at recreation sites to continue and plan to keep recreation sites open to the public. We have adjusted Special Recreation Permits and events to be consistent with COVID restrictions.

**Pine Gulch Fire:** The Pine Gulch Fire was started by a lightning strike on July 31, 2020, approximately 18 miles north of Grand Junction. On August 27, the Pine Gulch Fire became the largest wildfire in Colorado State history, surpassing the Hayman Fire that burned near Colorado Springs in the summer of 2002. In October, both the East Troublesome and Cameron Peak fires surpassed the Pine Gulch Fire in size. Suppression repair has been completed and rehabilitation is ongoing. The BLM prepared an Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation plan for the Pine Gulch Fire, which burned approximately 139,000 acres. The plan outlines emergency stabilization and rehabilitation strategies to address resources impacted by the fire.

**Livestock Grazing:** The livestock grazing closure order that the BLM issued January 22, 2021, remains in place. The closure is in effect for all BLM lands that were burned or seeded for a minimum of two years to allow for recovery and seedling establishment.

**Recreation trail damage:** Major rework of the trails is slated for 2022, which will be aided by the new trail dozer with funding awarded by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife OHV program to the Grand Junction Field Office.

**Debris flows and road damage:**

- The BLM will continue to use previously secured funding for culvert and road repair and maintenance inventory. This contract will provide basic road maintenance in FY22.
- Rain events over the fire have led to numerous debris flows during 2021. Road and culvert repair will continue to be necessary across the 192 miles of roads within the Pine Gulch fire.

**Managing Livestock During Drought:** In February 2021, letters were sent to all livestock operators to provide early notice that continued drought and associated reduction in forage production could result in the need to reduce permitted numbers. The intent of this early notice was to provide operators time to make potential adjustments to their operation. Range staff have been meeting with permittees this fall to verify drought conditions within areas of the field office. Use recommendations are determined based on-site visits to each allotment. Our lower elevation country is being impacted the most by the ongoing drought and several permittees have agreed to reductions or complete non-use of their permits this winter.

**Mountain Island Ranch:** The Grand Junction Field Office completed NEPA on September 1, 2021, for a collaborative project with Mountain Island Ranch (MIR). BLM and MIR will be working together to install Post Assisted Log structures (also known as beaver analog dams) in



the lower Little Dolores River on both private and public land to improve riparian habitat. The structures will help stabilize and restore hydrologic balance to the stream corridor. The project is slated to begin during the Spring of 2022. This project is a continuation of work that MIR began in 2021 on their ranch.

**Use of e-Bikes on Non-Motorized Trails:** The BLM is taking steps to increase opportunities for e-bikes on public lands per guidance in both Secretarial Order (SO) 3376 - Increasing Recreation Opportunities through the use of Electric Bikes and BLM Information Bulletin (IB) 2020-003. The final rule took effect on December 2, 2020. Under the new rule, any decision to exempt e-bikes or to allow e-bikes on designated trails closed to motorized use will require a formal planning process. Currently, BLM is considering expanding access to e-bikes to trails within the North Fruita Desert (NFD) Special Recreation Management Area. GJFO developed a draft NFD Master Trails Plan, including 32 miles of additional trails and trail reroutes. The public had an opportunity to comment on the draft EA, with a formal 30-day comment period starting at the end of January 2022.

**North Fruita Desert (18 Rd) Campground and Event Staging Area:** GJFO implemented a campground fee increase in the fall of 2020. The BLM awarded a contract to start construction at the new event and camping area and work began during the summer of 2020. A new access road, event parking, and 53 new campsites have been constructed. Beginning October 4, 2021, advance reservations for all developed camping in the North Fruita Desert Campgrounds can be made through Recreation.gov. At the Upper Campground, reservations can be made up to six months in advance of their stay or using a mobile device once they arrive at the campground. Campsites in the lower campground and event area will be available on a first-come first-serve basis.

**Palisade Plunge Singletrack Trail:** The entire 32-mile trail is open. A ribbon cutting and event was held on July 23, 2021. This project is an exceptional addition to the Grand Valley recreational opportunities and will continue supporting economic development for the area. The Palisade Plunge is an exciting outdoor experience for locals and visitors. Project partners include Mesa County, the Town of Palisade, City of Grand Junction, Grand Junction Economic Partnership, U.S Forest Service, Powderhorn Ski area, and the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association. The partners were recently honored with a "Great Places in Colorado" designation from the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association.

**Zone L Salinity Project and Travel management:** GJFO completed travel management route designations for the majority of the field office in 2015. Route designations for Zone L (North Desert) were deferred to enable the BLM to gather missing data and to allow for closer collaboration with the public in designing the future route system. Erosion data collection was completed in 2020. These data were used to determine the amount of erosion occurring in areas without roads and trails, and erosion occurring from roads. Additionally, areas were





evaluated to determine where erosion was more likely to be occurring within Zone L. This analysis will help determine the proper route density to achieve an erosion rate in Zone L that are within one standard deviation of the upland erosion rate. The analysis will help identify areas where routes will produce the least amount of erosion and sediment delivery to the waterways.

The primary benefit of this project will be to quantitatively measure and calculate soil erosion rates on 114 square miles, determine appropriate road densities, and calculate sediment reduction rates from reducing, maintaining, or rerouting roads and trails in the area north of Interstate 70. Now that the data collection is complete, appropriate management actions can be taken. The BLM can use this information, along with public input, to design a route system that meets resource and recreation interests in the Zone L area.

In 2021 data analysis was completed. The final report and presentation will be developed in 2022. This will allow for route identification and designation to begin in late 2022.

#### **Land Tenure:**

**Hallock Homestead (D-E NCA):** In partnership with Western Rivers Conservancy, BLM acquired an approximately 135-acre inholding in October of 2020. Located along the Gunnison River and within the Dominguez-Escalante NCA, the Hallock Homestead parcel improved public access to some unique bottomlands just upstream from Grand Junction. The property boasts significant river frontage, water rights, and beautiful cottonwood galleries.

**Crow Bottom (MCNCA):** In partnership with The Conservation Fund, BLM acquired the Crow Bottom parcel in June of 2021. An approximately 177-acre inholding along the Colorado River and within McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area that boast some remarkable cottonwood galleries and enormous potential for riparian and bottomland restoration.

**Meridian Junction (D-E NCA):** In partnership with Western Rivers Conservancy, BLM is working to acquire a 26-acre inholding along the Gunnison River within the Dominguez-Escalante NCA to improve the management of riparian habitat and public access.

**Cheney (Grand Mesa Slopes):** In partnership with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, BLM is working to acquire a 480-acre inholding along Highway 50 between Grand Junction and Olathe that will secure public access to Cheney Reservoir and other public lands in the Kannah Creek area.

**Latham Property:** The Conservation Fund is working in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to acquire the 1,600-acre Latham property, within and on the edge of the South Shale Ridge ACEC. Accessible by a county road, BLM's acquisition would improve and secure public access, expand recreation opportunities, protect wildlife habitat, and preserve historic sites. Most of this land is in Mesa County.



**County Road 200:** High Lonesome Ranch (HLR), a large ranching operation in Garfield County, locked a gate on their property boundary on Garfield County Road 200 (CR200), which blocked motorized public access to large tracts of BLM-administered public lands.

In 2015, Garfield County requested HLR to remove the gate to allow public access. A dispute ensued and HLR filed a lawsuit against the county to acquire quiet title to the road. Garfield County filed a counterclaim, which alleged the road is a Revised Statute 2477 right-of-way, arguing that they hold prescriptive rights to the road from the gate to the BLM tracts.

In 2020 a federal judge ruled in favor of Garfield County and ordered HLR to remove its lock and gate, allowing public access to the BLM administered lands. The road currently remains open. BLM roads not included in the court decision remain closed to public motorized use pending an appeal. The new access that CR 200 provides allows for expanded foot and horse access on the administrative routes. An appeal to this case was held on January 18, 2022.

## **McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area**

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**Rabbit Valley Campgrounds:** The Federal Register Notice for charging fees for camping, which will provide maintenance funds, is under review at BLM Headquarters and is expected to be published soon. The BLM continues constructions of campsites and facilities throughout Rabbit Valley. Construction to improve and expand the Knowles Overlook Campground began in November 2021 and is expected to be complete by March 31st. The new equestrian campground has been designed by engineering and the contract will go out for bid this winter. Construction time is yet to be determined. RV and Trailer Group Use Campground is going to be doubled in size (2.4 acres to 5 acres) with a doubling of the current number of amenities (from 6 to 12). Additionally, 60' delineators will be added to each set of amenities, mirroring the layouts seen in the event area at 18 Road in the North Fruita Desert. Additional grading and gravelling of access roads and existing satellite campsites is expected. We will be using Great American Outdoors Act funding for improvements to the OHV training track parking area and I-70 staging area, engineering has developed a design. This will include improvements to the road as it passes Group-Use satellite sites 1 and 2. The rails of the fence surrounding the track will be replaced as well.

**The Future of the Kokopelli trail system:** The 2004 Resource Management Plan for McInnis Canyons NCA called for additional future mountain bike trail development in the Kokopelli/Mack Ridge zone. Community partners from the Fruita trails initiative have developed a preliminary proposal for approximately 30 miles of additional trail, including conceptual trail alignments. The Fruita Trails initiative and Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association held a public meeting at Over the Edge Sports bike shop to get community feedback prior to



refining their proposal to the BLM. Timing of the environmental review for this project will depend on the ability of the community partners to fund sensitive resource surveys, as well as other GJFO interdisciplinary team priorities.

## **Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA)**

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**Gunnison River Campsite Designation and Permit System:** The BLM implemented a decision from the 2017 D-E NCA RMP to require overnight boaters on the Lower Gunnison River, from Delta to Whitewater, to obtain a permit. BLM staff updated signage and conducted outreach regarding the change with places like Mountain Buzz and American Whitewater. For now, the BLM has implemented a free, self-issued, permit that is filled out on-site. We estimate compliance at 50-70% and expect compliance to increase with additional education and outreach.

Moving forward, the BLM will refine the permit system, implement a reservation system, designate river campsites, and develop an allocation for permitted outfitters. Staff spent over 50 days in the field conducting outreach to the public on input to the planning process. Staff also contacted river outfitters and collaborated with partners like Colorado Canyons Association to outreach through social media. BLM drafted a proposed action for campsites along the Gunnison River and conducted public scoping on the proposal during the fall of 2021. We received over 100 comments which are currently under reviewing. BLM plans to write an environmental assessment and make it available for a 30-day public comment period in the spring of 2022.

**Gunnison River Camping Fees Business Plan:** BLM has begun drafting a business plan that explores charging fees for camping in developed campgrounds and for camping permits on the Gunnison River. We hope to be ready to brief the RAC(s) and seek RAC input in the fall of 2022 and will eventually be seeking a RAC resolution. We are still interested in seeking solutions to make RAC input into this process efficient given that D-E NCA is partly in the areas covered by both the Southwest and Northwest RACs as discussed at the October 2021 RAC meeting.

**Cactus Park Special Recreation Management Area:** The 2017 D-E NCA RMP designated the Cactus Park Area as a Special Recreation Management Area targeting family friendly motorized trail riding and associated camping. The BLM is currently working with Western Slope ATV Association (WSATVA) on projects to improve recreation opportunities and protect sensitive resources in the area. WSATVA received a motorized trail grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to conduct archaeological surveys on the proposed new Ponderosa Loop Trail. In addition, the BLM is working on layout and design of the Farmers Canyon Trail reroute. This will reroute users outside the mule deer winter range that is closed to travel during the winter to



protect mule deer. The BLM will be completing biological surveys and finishing the archaeological surveys in the spring of 2022. The Gibbler Gulch Trail Crossings Environmental Assessment analyzed several reroutes of the popular Gibbler Gulch ATV Trail. The reroutes will decrease sediment contributions to an intermittent creek and improve trail access during higher water levels. In addition, the project designates approximately one mile of trail as open to ATV, motorcycle, bicycle, equestrian and foot travel. The newly designated trail is on lands BLM recently acquired through purchase using the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The new trail ends at a historic cabin on the acquired public land that will be available for heritage tourism and interpretation. The BLM anticipates implementation, in partnership with Western Slope ATV Association, in the spring of 2022.

## Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO – Silt)

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### Resources:

**Virtual Vence Network:** Last year, the CRVFO invested in a 6-tower virtual fence network that covers over 356,000 acres. As part of the first pilot project Pat Luark collared 130 cattle, used virtual fences to rest 620 acres in his allotment, and flash grazed a 100-acre pinyon-juniper mastication treatment for six days and then excluded cattle for the rest of the year. Despite exceptional drought conditions, we observed knee-high regrowth of native bunchgrasses in the treatment, and this winter vast amounts of deer, elk, and pronghorn are using the rested areas and treatment. Pat plans to collar 320 head this year.

Lloyd Gerrard plans to collar approximately 400 head this year. The White River National Forest plans to purchase two towers to extend the existing BLM network, which means Lloyd will be able to use the technology on his BLM and Forest Service allotments as well as his private land. We will rest a long-term weed treatment, address an ongoing boundary issue, and reduce conflicts in an area that receives heavy recreational use. The proposed East Divide project will involve at least eight livestock producers, 800-1200 collared cattle, and address multiple boundary fence issues.

Virtual fencing allows us to implement rest rotation in ways that have never been possible, improve soils, increase forage, and increase resiliency during ongoing drought. Cattle producers benefit from having more options in how they use their allotments, improved forage conditions, knowing exactly where their cattle are, knowing if an animal is not moving as expected due to injuries or illness, reduced fence maintenance, fewer concerns about gates being left open, and more. This work continues to be a collaboration between our range, wildlife, and fuels programs.



**CRVFO New and Expanded Trails:** Consolidated Reservoir Trail - BLM is working with the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council to build a four-mile foot and horse trail that will provide spectacular views for all levels of riders and horses. Once the EA is completed, the horse council plans to hire a Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crew to help with trail construction summer/fall 2022. The trail will include some existing trail as well as new hand-built sections. Crown SRMA - BLM is working with the Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association (RFMBA) to develop approximately 11 miles of single track on the Crown. This would build out the SRMA guidance described in the Resource Management Plan. Grand Hogback Trails - The BLM, City of Rifle, and RFMBA recently presented a grant request to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife non-motorized subcommittee. If awarded, it will fund the construction of eight additional miles of trails and a vault toilet for the parking lot.

#### **Lands and Realty:**

**Xcel Energy multiyear transmission powerline rebuild projects:** The CRVFO is completing NEPA to authorize two Xcel Energy rebuilds. The first line runs from Glenwood to Cameo through several substations. This line is currently operating at 69kV but will be built out with upgraded infrastructure to accommodate the future needs of 115kV. The larger voltage results in taller structures and a greater right-of-way. The second rebuild is a 115kV line and originates in Leadville, snakes down the Frying Pan, and turns northwest at Basalt and terminates at the Fischer Creek substation. Both projects are complete rebuilds with all new structures and wire. Xcel has a current targeted construction start in late 2022.

**Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Right-of-way:** The CRVFO is completing NEPA to authorize a right-of-way for a 12.6-acre material storage area just east of Dotsero and north of I-70 for 30 years. The storage area will be used during emergency removal of rock and sediment from debris flows in Glenwood Canyon, which are exacerbated by the Grizzly Creek Fire and resulted in extended I-70 closures in 2021. The proposed site would provide a nearby location to store material during rapid responses to clear debris and reopen I-70 to traffic as quickly as possible. Reducing the time needed to safely reopen the interstate would diminish impacts to alternate routes that are not designed to handle the volume and size of vehicle traffic on I-70, would help meet the demand for interstate commerce, and decrease the impacts of rerouted interstate traffic to local communities.

#### **Land Tenure:**

**Eagle River Sanitation District (ERSD) Direct Sale:** In 2010, ERSD received a land patent pursuant to the Recreation and Public Purpose Act (R&PP) for 25 acres near the Eagle County Landfill to be used for wastewater drying purposes. ERSD is proposing to have a third party develop a Solar PV array in and around the existing facilities to sell and provide renewable power for Eagle County facilities. The R&PP Act disposal provisions do not provide for third





party uses or revenue generation over and above the operating costs of the facility. Therefore, ERSD has proposed to purchase the property at fair market value. BLM is working to get the appraisals complete to prepare for the direct sale.

**Anderson Camp Direct Sale:** The CRVFO is developing a Notice of Realty Action (NORA) to propose a noncompetitive sale of 7.55 acres of public land in Eagle County, Colorado, to Sweetwater Rydev LLC, to resolve an unauthorized use of public lands. The proposed direct sale would be for no less than fair market value and would resolve a trespass on public land dating back more than 100 years. Some buildings and improvements in Anderson Summer Camp were built on public land, the oldest being a cabin from 1914. The current owners of Anderson Camp purchased the property and associated infrastructure in 1979. They discovered the trespass through a 2014 survey and then contacted the BLM about resolving this long-standing, inadvertent trespass. The camp serves numerous non-profit groups including the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, school groups, church groups, foster kids, and Court Appointed Special Advocates.

**Remediation of Marijuana Grow Sites:** A contractor is expected to commence cleanup efforts for marijuana grow sites located on the Colorado River Valley and White River Field Offices in the spring/early summer of 2022. The efforts will remove an estimated 320 cubic yards of solid waste from the 12 grow sites. Due to the remoteness and limited access most of the effort will be completed through air operations with the use of helicopters.

#### **Oil & Gas:**

**Terra Energy Partner's (TEP) Coreline Project:** BLM completed the NEPA and right-of-way issuance for TEP's project to replace an aging 21-mile produced water pipeline between their water treatment facilities near Rulison and Parachute. Coreline is a new type of pipeline with a plastic interior sleeve to reduce corrosion. Only 1.36 miles of the 11-mile length of the pipeline is on BLM surface.

**TEP's Rig Plans:** TEP is currently drilling and completing wells on the RWF 43-9 well pad on the slopes below the Roan Cliffs west of Rulison and will then move the rig to the NR 23-3 well pad, located about one mile to the northeast. TEP is drilling and completing wells on the WMC 24-17 well pad, located on Flatiron Mesa south of Rifle, through Sept 2022, and will then move the rig to White River Field Office. The WMC 24-17 wells will access Federal minerals beneath the White River National Forest (WRNF).

**TEP's Upper Beaver Creek Project:** TEP is planning to submit APDs in early February, with CRVFO's EA and APD completion planned for spring 2022. If the APDs are approved, pad expansion work would begin in summer 2022, with drilling and completions tentatively planned for January-August 2023. The project site is located along County Road 317 (Beaver Creek Road), southwest of Rifle and a short distance north of the WRNF.



**TEP's Allen Point Master Development Plan:** TEP acquired leases on the Roan Plateau and is considering developing the fee and Federal leases atop the plateau in coming year(s).

**CPX's "Tepee Park Ranch" Project:** Scheduled for 2023 at the earliest, federal bottomholes would be developed from one existing fee/fee pad and one new fee/fee pad. The existing fee/fee pad and a second existing fee/fee pad currently support multiple fee wells. The project area is on private land within the WRNF at the southern (upper) terminus of Beaver Creek Road southwest of Rifle. Access to the proposed new pad would require a new spur road and the pipeline alignments are undetermined. NEPA preparation, pending completion of resource surveys and more detailed site planning, could occur in late 2022. Interagency onsite review of the project has not yet occurred. CPX is a new operator in our area – at least for Federal wells – but is staffed by personnel who previously worked for other operators in our area.

**Laramie Energy's Cascade Creek Projects (GJFO, but in Garfield County):** CRVFO recently approved a DNA and will soon approve APDs for four Federal wells on the fee/fee CC 0697-03-07 well pad -- four of eight APDs previously analyzed by the CRVFO but undrilled due to COVID-and other delays. Similarly, the COGCC approved APDs for three of 16 fee wells previously approved but undrilled. The pad is at approximately 8,525 feet in elevation and 16 miles northeast of De Beque, Colorado, on the divide between Parachute and Roan Creeks. CRVFO is also nearing completion on an EA for three new Federal wells on the proposed fee/fee CC 0697-15-08 well pad. The pad would also support 15 new fee wells approved by the COGCC. Drilling on these projects would occur in March 2022 and February 2023, respectively.