# DECISION RECORD

# CO-200-2006-0086 EA

To
Amend Certain Off-Highway Vehicle Designations
in the
Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan

**USDI Bureau of Land Management**
**Royal Gorge Field Office**

**Fremont, Chaffee, and Custer Counties, Colorado**

**INTRODUCTION**: This document describes my decision and rationale for the Arkansas River Travel Management Plan-Environmental Assessment (ARTMP-EA) and plan amendment to the Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan (RMP). My decision is based on the ARTMP-EA, subsequent finding of no significant impact (FONSI), and the goals and objectives of the Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan (RMP). The ARTMP-EA utilized the goals and objectives of the RMP to analyze reasonable travel management alternatives on public lands along the Arkansas River in Fremont, Chaffee and Custer counties, Colorado.

In accordance with BLM policy, decisions pertaining to OHV area designations require an amendment of the RMP. Such decisions are subject to a 30-day public protest period and 60-day governor's consistency review. BLM submitted a proposed decision on OHV Area Designation changes covered in the ARTMP-EA for a 30-day public protest period from December 27, 2007 to January 28, 2008. No public protests were received by BLM. BLM also submitted a proposed decision on OHV Area Designations to the Colorado Office of Policy and Initiatives for a 60-day governor's consistency review. BLM's proposed decision for OHV Area Designation changes were reviewed by Colorado State Parks and Colorado Division of Wildlife for the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. No protests or modifications pertaining to OHV Area Designation changes were received by BLM from state review.

The Administrative Record, including the EA that discusses and analyzes the Proposed Action and alternatives, is available for review at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Royal Gorge Field Office, 3170 E. Main Street, Canon City, CO.
The EA is available at the following web address:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/rgfo/travel_mgmt/arkansas_river_travel0.html

Please direct questions about this Proposed Decision Record, EA, or FONSI to John Dow, Environmental Coordinator, at (719) 269-8559, or by submitting your questions to rgfo_comments@co.blm.gov.

**BACKGROUND**: The 531,736-acre planning area extends along the Arkansas River corridor between the cities of Canon City, and Buena Vista, Colorado, and the northern half of Custer County to the town of Westcliff. Of the total 531,736 acres in the planning area, 240,555 acres are BLM-administered Public Lands with the following open area designations:

- 9,338 acres designated as OHV Open in the Texas Creek area
- 2,016 acres designated as OHV Open in the Grand Canyon Hills area
- 866 acres designated as OHV Open in the Sand Gulch area

Four **OHV Closed** areas currently exist in the ARTMP-EA planning area: the Browns Canyon, McIntyre Hills, Upper Grape Creek, and Lower Grape Creek Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). A fifth area with WSA status, High Mesa Grassland RNA/ISA, is currently designated **OHV Limited**.

Under the Proposed Action all three **OHV Open** Areas would be changed to **OHV Limited to designated roads.** The Proposed Action would also establish a small (52 acres) area at Turkey Rock as **OHV Limited to Vehicle Type** for riding trials bike; a specialized class of motorcycle.

Under the Proposed Action all four WSAs that are currently **OHV Closed** would continue to be designated and managed as **OHV Closed** areas. The **OHV Limited** designation, for the 680 acres in the High Mesa Grassland Research Natural Area/Instant Study Area (RNA/ISA), would be changed to **OHV Closed**. The RNA/ISA closure assures BLM consistency with the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review.

**DECISION**: Based upon public input, I have decided to make no changes to the **OHV area designation** proposals from that identified in the Proposed Action of the EA. It is my decision to change the OHV Open area designations to that of OHV Limited for the Texas Creek, Grand Canyon Hills, and Sand Gulch areas and to designate 56 acres at Turkey Rock as OHV Limited to Vehicle Type. It is also my Decision to change the OHV Limited designation for the High Mesa Grassland RNA/ISA to that of OHV Closed.

**RATIONALE**: The change in OHV area designations, found in the Proposed Action (Alternative C) for the ARTMP-EA, will best balance the recreational demands with resource needs, RMP goals, compliance with Public Land Health Standards and the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP). My decision is based on the findings and analysis in the EA, including supporting documentation and reports, and public participation and involvement in this project.

**SIGNATURE OF RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL**:

Roy L. Masinton
Field Manager
Royal Gorge Field Office

4-29-08
Date

**DECISION**

It is my decision to amend certain travel management designations in the Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan as described above.

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL**:

Sally Wisely, State Director

4/29/08
Date