

APPENDIX 9—TRAVEL MANAGEMENT/ROUTE DESIGNATION PROCESS

The Richfield Field Office (RFO) used the following process for route designation alternatives during the development of the Richfield Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This process included route inventory, interdisciplinary team assessment, and cooperating agency coordination.

ROUTE INVENTORY

The RFO conducted a route inventory beginning in 2002, to develop a route baseline for use in the planning process. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) used a variety of methods to inventory existing routes/ways within the RFO for consideration in the planning process, including Global Positioning System (GPS) (when available), data provided by the counties, map and orthophoto data, and staff/cooperator knowledge. BLM employees with GPS equipment digitized the routes while traveling on off-highway vehicles (OHV) and by foot. While inventorying the routes, staff collected surface type and primary and secondary usage associated with each route. The digitized route data was verified and prepared for interdisciplinary review. The counties provided route data in a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer. Data from the BLM inventory was overlaid with the county route data, and discrepancies were identified, reviewed, and resolved through interdisciplinary team review. In the more remote areas of the RFO for which GPS/GIS data was not available, map and orthophoto data was used.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ASSESSMENT

Team members, who included BLM staff specialists and county cooperators, reviewed the route inventory during a series of interdisciplinary team meetings. These meetings were held in each county to address the specific routes within that county. The following assumptions were applied:

- Prohibit motorized vehicle cross-country travel, except in designated open areas
- Designate existing routes for motorized use unless closed or restricted (permanently, seasonally, or by size) as appropriate to address specific resource concerns
- Evaluate parallel, duplicative, or redundant routes for potential closure
- Allow closed or non-designated routes to rehabilitate naturally unless a specific resource impact is occurring that warrants expedited rehabilitation of the route (e.g., soil erosion, water quality concerns, and/or continued illegal use)
- Prohibit motorized use of designated closed routes, except for BLM administrative and emergency use
- Sign and map designated routes as motorized or nonmotorized; travel maps should be user friendly and easily accessible
- May be changes in existing route designations pursuant to land management objectives.

The interdisciplinary team applied the following factors to the route inventory and used other BLM inventories and natural and cultural resource information to identify routes for designation. The team considered the following:

- Environmental sensitivity of the areas surrounding the route, including soil type/condition, riparian areas and their condition, wilderness study areas (WSA), and sensitive plant species

- Wildlife habitat sensitivity of the areas surrounding the route, including designated critical habitat, sensitive status species habitat, crucial habitat, and sensitive season
- Current and anticipated use levels, as well as travel and transportation needs and desires
- Management objectives for the area, as well as the potential for user and resource conflicts
- Access needs for BLM-permitted or -authorized activities (e.g., range permittees, recreation permittees, mineral developments)
- Access needs for non-BLM administered lands
- Cultural resources and specific sites that require protection.

PLAN MAINTENANCE AND CHANGES TO ROUTE DESIGNATIONS

The Proposed RMP includes criteria to be considered when conducting plan maintenance, amendments, or revisions related to OHV area designations or the approved road and trail system within “Limited” areas. Future conditions may require the designation or construction of new routes or closure of existing routes to better address resources and resource use conflicts. Actual route designations within the Limited category can be modified without completing a plan amendment, although compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (of 1969) (NEPA) is still required.

The RFO is aware that the current inventory of roads and trails being used for the route designation process is not 100 percent correct or complete. The RFO anticipates that in spite of intensive quality control and review, there will be errors. Some undesirable unintended consequences may result from the final configuration of the Travel Route Designations. Adjustments may be needed to make the travel designation compatible with adjacent landowners. For example, edge matching has occurred with adjacent BLM and United States Forest Service (USFS) jurisdictions, but continued review and coordination will be required as changes resulting from continued motorized travel planning occur in the future. Routes currently not in the inventory may need to be added and designated as part of the implementation process. An adaptive management process that will allow adjustments to the final decision and will maintain the validity and integrity of the analyses and public disclosure presented in the Final EIS is outlined below. This process includes pre-defining actions for the disposition of routes discovered after the decision date, adding new routes, correcting errors, and adjusting the route designations that lead to undesirable, unintended consequences.

As IM 2004-061 notes, plan maintenance can be accomplished through additional analysis and land use planning (e.g., activity-level planning). BLM will collaborate with affected and interested parties in evaluating the designated route network for suitability for active OHV management and envisioning potential changes in the existing system or adding new trails that would help meet current and future demands. In conducting such evaluations, the following factors would be considered:

- The travel management plan should be flexible to allow designating existing routes that were not identified in the baseline data.
- The travel management plan should be flexible about the location of new routes needed to provide access for new activities, to new areas, or to reduce resource and/or user conflicts.
- Route designations would be coordinated and made consistent with criteria and resource decisions identified in the Proposed RMP.
- Measures needed to meet the objectives stated in the Proposed RMP (e.g., cultural resources, soil resources, special status species, and recreation).

- Where and when appropriate, plan, develop, and designate (in cooperation with user groups and cooperating agencies) new routes and trails that enhance and expand recreational opportunities and encourage responsible use.
- Routes suitable for various categories of OHVs (e.g., motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles [ATVs], dune buggies, and 4-wheel drive touring vehicles) and opportunities for joint trail use.
- Needs for parking, trailheads, informational and directional signs, mapping and profiling, and development of brochures or other materials for public dissemination.
- Opportunities to tie into existing or planned route networks.
- Public land roads or trails determined to cause considerable adverse effects or to constitute a nuisance or threat to public safety would be considered for relocation or closure and rehabilitation after appropriate coordination with applicable agencies and partners.
- Those areas managed as closed will not be available for new motorized designation.

Regulations at 43 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) 8342.2 require BLM to monitor the effects of OHV use. Changes should be made to the Travel Plan based on the information obtained through monitoring. Site-specific NEPA documentation is required for changing the route designations in this Travel Plan.

COOPERATING AGENCY COORDINATION

Interdisciplinary route assessment meetings were held by county, with county representatives in attendance. BLM managers and planners also met with cooperating agency representatives to review the proposed RMP and discuss concerns. Specifically, Garfield County representatives raised concerns regarding routes they claimed under Revised Statute 2477 (R.S. 2477). In addition, concerns were raised regarding routes not included in the baseline data, and access to the counties' resources and state lands.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Implementation decisions are actions that BLM takes to implement land use plans and generally constitute BLM's final approval for allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. These types of decisions, which are based on site-specific planning and NEPA analyses, are subject to the administrative remedies set forth in the regulations that apply to each BLM resource management program. Implementation decisions are not subject to protest under the planning regulations; rather, they are subject to various administrative remedies. Where implementation decisions are made as part of the land use planning process, they are still subject to the appeals process or other administrative review as prescribed by specific resource program regulations after BLM resolves the protests to land use plan decisions and makes a decision to adopt or amend the Proposed RMP.

Travel planning and the implementation process include the following:

- The monitoring of the transportation system and modifying as appropriate
- A map of roads and trails for all travel modes
- Notations of any limitation for specific roads and trails
- Criteria to select or reject roads and trails in the final travel management network, add new roads or trails, and specify limitations
- Guidelines for management, monitoring, and maintenance of the transportation system
- Needed easements and rights-of-ways (to be issued to BLM or others) to maintain the existing road and trail network providing public land access.

The Proposed RMP completes the initial route designation component of the Travel Management Plan and implementation process. These routes would be the initial basis for signing and enforcement. The RFO will prioritize additional implementation actions, resources, and geographic areas based on RMP goals and objectives and the guidelines noted above.