

# Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan Implementation Review Action Plan



**December 2010**



## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Utah State Office

P.O. Box 45155

Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155

<http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en.html>



In Reply To:  
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(UT910) I

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#### Memorandum

To: Director, WO-100 (MIB Room 5665)

From: State Director

Subject: GSENM Plan Implementation Review

The Washington Office NLCS Directorate conducted a review of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) from February to April 2010 to determine the nature and scope of the implementation of the Monument Management Plan (MMP). In August 2010, the GSENM Management Plan Implementation Review assessment report detailing the team's findings and recommendations was provided to the BLM Utah State Director. The enclosed action plan, developed in coordination with the NLCS Directorate, details 137 action items to address the report's 82 findings and recommendations.

GSENM management is already implementing several of these action items. In addition, we are all working together to explore a range of ideas encompassing everything from our approach to budgeting to the ways we engage residents and visitors in collaboratively managing and protecting the Monument.

During the onsite portion of the GSENM Management Plan Implementation Review, the Washington Office assessment team offered to conduct a separate GSENM Plan Implementation Workshop to help Monument staff develop a strategic plan. This relatively new process, designed to help new NLCS units implement their management plan, was not available when GSENM was created in 1996. The GSENM Plan Implementation Workshop was conducted in November 2010. Early results from the workshop helped GSENM management prioritize the response to the GSENM Management Plan Implementation Review.

Monument staff is currently working on identifying priority tasks and estimating budget needs for the resulting Plan Implementation Framework. This draft will also be forwarded to the NLCS Directorate in December 2010 for review and comment. As GSENM staff move forward with the implementation planning process in conjunction with the various interested publics, local elected officials, special interest groups, and other internal and external stakeholders, we will be developing a collaborative Strategic Plan, separate from the enclosed action plan. I look forward to the results of this continuing process of enhancing the Monument's role in highlighting the value of our public lands.

/s/ Juan Palma

## *Executive Summary*

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) was created in 1996 under the authority of the 1906 Antiquities Act and was the first national monument to be managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument predates the creation of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) which was established in 2000. The 1.9 million-acre Monument's landscape embraces a spectacular array of scientific and historic resources and significant socioeconomic values. This natural area remains a frontier, a quality that greatly enhances the Monument's value for scientific study by geologists, paleontologists, archeologists, historians and biologists from around the world.

### **Purpose and Vision**

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument was established for the purpose of protecting the objects of geology, paleontology, archaeology and human history located within the Monument's boundaries.

The vision for the Monument is to collaboratively manage and protect the Monument for the purposes articulated in the Presidential Proclamation so that it will serve as an outdoor laboratory where current and future generations can study biological and earth sciences, prehistoric life and environments, and pioneer history.

### **Background**

The Washington Office NLCS Directorate conducted a review from February to April 2010 to determine the nature and scope of the implementation of the GSENM Monument Management Plan, with particular attention to travel management, rangeland management, and vegetation management. They provided the BLM Utah State Director with an assessment report which presents the team's findings and recommendations.

The Washington Office Assessment Report is broken into *seven broad categories* of findings with 82 distinct recommendations. Implementing all 82 recommendations would require additional resources.

GSENM has identified 137 action steps to address these recommendations which are attached and articulated in the enclosed Action Plan Framework. This action plan is the road map for implementing the shared vision of those who care for, enjoy, and are responsible for the Monument, and provides opportunities to invest in the Monument's abundant opportunities.

### **Findings and Recommendations**

#### **1. *Organization & Staffing; Communication & Coordination; Budget; Visitor Center Funding & Operations***

GSENM has revised their organizational structure (Table of Organization) to a functional alignment to improve coordination and cooperation and alleviate internal conflict and inconsistency in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the team.

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BLM Utah is establishing an NLCS Action Team comprised of State office, GSENM, and Washington County NCA members to pursue more strategic funding strategies for the future.

### *2. Land Use Planning*

The team found that GSENM could do a better job in informing interested public about the Plan, its nature and scope, and how it is the document that guides management actions at the GSENM.

As a result of the WO NLCS Implementation Strategy Workshop conducted in November 2010, GSENM is currently working on establishing the strategic direction the Monument will take in the next 3 to 5 years to meet its management objective to manage the Monument for the values and objects for which it was set aside. This strategy will be made available to all interested publics.

The team also recommended that GSENM hire a dedicated, full-time Planning and Environmental Coordinator, which has since been approved by the BLM Utah Personnel Management Committee (PMC).

### *3. Science*

The Proclamation makes science a central part of the GSENM's mission. The team found that funding for science had lapsed in recent years and recommended that a Science Program Administrator position be reconstituted. This position has since been approved by the BLM Utah PMC.

The team recommended that GSENM complete a Science Plan, in accordance with the NLCS Science Strategy. One of the first tasks of our new Science Program Administrator will be to develop a Science Plan to outline the scientific mission for the GSENM, identify science needs and the strategy for meeting these needs, specify how science will be integrated into management decisions, and describe how scientific findings will be delivered to the public.

### *4. Travel and Transportation Management*

The team felt that the Monument should renew its efforts to move forward with implementation and potential refinement of the travel management plan and reach out to the stakeholders. But the team recognizes that travel management will likely remain a complicated and at times contentious issue for the GSENM.

GSENM will continue to implement the travel management plan and work closely with all constituents.

### *5. Rangeland Health EIS and Vegetation Treatments*

Since 2000, the Monument has been working on a Monument Management Plan Amendment to standardize vegetative treatments and Rangeland Health Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

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The document has been through several iterations, and sections of the EIS specific to vegetative treatment and the use of native plants continue to be highly contentious. The current strategy of the Monument is to move forward with the Grazing EIS.

### 6. *Grazing Administration*

There are 82 separate grazing allotments within the GSENM. According to the Draft Rangeland Health EIS issued in 2008 about 21% of the allotments have a downward trend, 35% have a static trend, and 35% have an upward trend. Nine allotments, or about 19% of the GSENM, were found to not meet one or more Rangeland Health Standards due to existing livestock grazing. The Draft EIS determined that existing livestock management needed to be changed on the nine allotments in order for them to meet Standards in the future. Since the Draft EIS was issued, according to GSENM staff three more allotments are now meeting Standards, leaving only six that do not.

### 7. *Current Management, Public Relations, and Partnerships*

The team found that overall, current management is working to improve internal and external communication to more effectively accomplish work and achieve Plan decisions while also improving relations with the public. GSENM is working closely with partners and community members to create opportunities for science, outreach, and restoration.

As cited in the findings for *Land Use Planning*, GSENM is currently working on the strategic direction the Monument will take in the next 3 to 5 years to meet its management objective to manage the Monument for the values and objects for which it was set aside. This strategic direction will be made available to all interested publics.

There are some additional recommendations, annotated as *Additional Findings and Recommendation*, which are articulated in the enclosed Action Plan Framework. The most significant is the need for a Realty Specialist and GSENM is repurposing an existing position to meet this need.



***Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's Gryposaurus monumentensis***