

# BLM SOUTHWEST DISTRICT Field Manager Reports



**NOVEMBER 2024**





U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Field Manager Report

November 2024

## Gunnison Field Office (GFO)

**Note:** Topics below are labeled either “**Status Update**” or “**New Update**” to help identify items that have changed from the previous report.

### ***Field Office Staffing Update***

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After a vacancy of over a year and a half, GFO hired Brian Brown to fill the Assistant Field Manager (AFM) position in Gunnison. Brian served a 120-day detail as the AFM in 2022 and has been with the Gunnison Field Office since August 2009 as our Forester, taking on several collateral roles including Contracting Officer’s Representative and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Coordinator. Of note, Brian served for over two years as the project manager representing BLM’s interests during construction of the new Gunnison Field Office building. Prior to the BLM, Brian served in various forestry and wildlife habitat roles for the State of Idaho Department of Lands.

One of Brian’s first projects will be to lead the hiring of two vacant Rangeland Management Specialist positions. GFO has been without range staff since the March retirement of one and the recent move to another BLM office of the other.

### ***Natural and Cultural Resources***

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#### **Domestic Sheep Grazing EIS Proposed Decisions - Status Update**

On August 27, 2021, the BLM Southwest District Office released two proposed decisions for the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Domestic Sheep Grazing Permit Renewals. Both decisions were protested by multiple groups and individuals for a variety of reasons. The project area is located in Gunnison, Hinsdale, and Ouray counties and includes nine grazing allotments on 65,710 acres of public land.

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, the Southwest Resource Advisory Council voted on September 8, 2022 to create a subcommittee to analyze domestic sheep grazing in bighorn sheep habitat on BLM-managed high alpine allotments outside of Silverton, Colorado. The Sheep Grazing Subcommittee held six public meetings at the Uncompahgre Field Office from March through August 2023, and presented their recommendations to the BLM on October 11, 2023. Staff are considering those recommendations in light of the protests received and working with SWD Planning and Environmental Specialist Katerina Hardegen to identify a path forward.

#### **North Powderhorn Fuels Reduction Project - Status Update**

GFO is currently evaluating a programmatic hazardous fuels reduction project on public lands

managed by the BLM near Powderhorn, CO. The total project area consists of 90,725 acres, which includes 53,877 acres within the Powderhorn Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area. GFO would implement the project over 15 years, with a total treatment target of 20,000 acres, targeting bark beetle outbreaks, including numerous portions of the project area suffering 100% spruce mortality. Site-specific NEPA would follow for individual projects within the project area.

The programmatic portion of the North Powderhorn effort was completed in July 2024, with the signing of a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact. Planning for treatments can now begin in earnest and crews are already out marking transects for data collection for the purpose of establishing a baseline of conditions before treatments are carried out.

### **Gunnison Weeds Treatment Project - Status Update**

GFO is nearing completion of an environmental assessment (EA) to consider using integrated noxious and invasive plant management within the Gunnison Resource Area to reduce adverse impacts associated with increases in noxious and invasive plants. The EA will tier to the “Biological Assessment for Vegetation Treatments Using Aminopyralid, Fluroxypyr, Rimsulfuron on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement” (PEIS)(BLM 2015), which analyzed the impacts of using the herbicides (chemical control methods) to treat terrestrial noxious and invasive plants on public lands.

The BLM is approving seven herbicide active ingredients to control noxious weeds and invasive species on public lands. The decision was published in the Federal Register on July 12, 2024. BLM field and district offices can now begin considering the use of these tools in efforts to control and eradicate noxious weeds and invasive plant species on the public lands they manage. This would add greater flexibility and additional effectiveness to BLM’s vegetation treatment program to combat the rapid expansion of noxious and invasive weeds. The BLM has begun consultation with the USFWS on the Biological Assessment (BA) for Gunnison sage-grouse and anticipates a letter of concurrence from the USFWS with additional herbicides in critical Gunnison sage-grouse habitat.

### **Lake San Cristobal Fuels EA – Status Update**

The performance period for this contract EA was recently extended. The BLM ID Team is currently working with the contractor, EMPSi, to refine treatment areas, alternatives, and issues for analysis. The GFO Wildlife Biologist, members of the fuels staff, and students from Western Colorado University are currently conducting snowshoe hare studies.

This past winter, BLM recreation and fuels staff members spent field time in the project area to determine the feasibility of incorporating backcountry ski runs as potential fuels treatments. The areas identified for joint fuels-recreation treatments are viable for backcountry skiing. The BLM received the drafts of chapters 1, 2, and 3 and recently completed internal reviews.

The BLM is currently working with Hinsdale County, the Colorado State Forest Service, and West Region Wildfire Council to create a flyer about the Lake San Cristobal fuels project and potential funding to treat private lands directly adjacent to the project area. This flyer would be mailed out in late spring or early summer.

## ***Recreation***

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### **Alpine Loop - Status Update**

GFO saw significant increases in visitor use on the Alpine Loop in the past year, particularly in July and August. Since 2018, there has been over 20% increase in visitation, with close to 400,000 people visiting the Alpine Loop annually. This has led to parking congestion at popular trailheads and stress on existing campsites and facilities. GFO is working closely with Hinsdale and San Juan counties to address these issues. We have financial agreements in place with both counties to provide law enforcement support and we piloted a wag-bag station at American Basin.

2024 will see continued work toward improving and designating dispersed campsites, modernizing the Mill Creek Campground, adding additional toilets, working with partner groups on outreach and education, and working with the counties to supplement and define parking areas. The BLM evaluated approximately 250 "ad hoc" dispersed campsites along the Alpine Loop as described in the 2010 Alpine Triangle Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) to determine which sites were appropriate to designate. Many inventoried sites were impactful to riparian areas or too close to cultural sites. Sites deemed appropriate to designate had signage and metal fire rings installed, with about 100 sites at this time. GFO is working with partners to adopt and improve an existing route from the Mill Creek Campground to access Sunshine Peak, a 14'er on BLM-managed lands in Hinsdale County.

The BLM is also moving forward (with the support of Hinsdale County) to acquire up to 30 patented mining claims in Hinsdale County. These private lands are adjacent to, or within the boundaries of wilderness study areas and these acquisitions would improve access to public lands and reduce the potential for development in and around our treasured lands on the Alpine Loop.

### **Developed Campgrounds - Status Update**

Now that the necessary consultation and analysis has been completed, GFO has made fee campsites in the GFO reservable through Recreation.gov. GFO analyzed existing user fees at four campgrounds in the Gunnison area for consistency with criteria found in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. This analysis led to the preparation of a business plan recommending regular fee increases in pace with fees charged at area campgrounds. The business plan was presented at the Southwest RAC meeting in Gunnison in October 2023. All four fee campgrounds can now take payment through the "Scan and Pay" App which interfaces with Recreation.gov. Campers with cell service can use this e-commerce solution to make their reservations while on vacation or at any other time with a computer or smartphone.

***Mill Creek Campground expansion:*** GFO has entered the planning phase for expansion of the campground (between Lake City and Cinnamon Pass on the Alpine Loop) and has received preliminary blueprints to start developing our consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

***Hartman's Rocks Campground infrastructure improvement:*** Crews are busy placing boulders for campsite protection and to keep vehicles on trails. A longer-term project is underway to address significant head cuts and erosion in an ephemeral drainage.

### **Supplementary Rule - Status Update**

On February 28, 2024, the BLM published a Federal Register notice announcing a proposed supplementary rule for public lands addressed in five planning efforts in the Tres Rios and Gunnison field offices, along with a 60-day public comment period running through April 29, 2024. The proposed supplementary rule would implement decisions related to motorized and non-motorized vehicles, day use areas, seasonal wildlife habitat protection, camping, and campfires.

Among other things, these rules would implement camping and fire restrictions within the Alpine Triangle, as determined in the TRFO RMP and the Alpine Triangle RAMP, such as providing protections for cultural sites (no camping within 150 feet and no fires within 100 feet of historic structures), limiting camping to below 12,000 feet in the Redcloud Wilderness Study Area to protect Uncompahgre Fritillary Butterfly habitat, and requiring domestic animals (e.g. dogs) to be on a leash or under voice control within the Silverton Special Recreation Management Area.

### **Pause on New Special Recreation Permit Issuance - Status Update**

GFO has temporarily paused the issuance of new Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) while we conduct a programmatic EA for the administration and issuance of SRPs. Existing permit authorization will be maintained and unimpacted during this planning action. Complimentary to the GUSG RMP Amendment, Alpine Triangle RAMP, and Hartman Rocks RAMP, this programmatic EA will allow the BLM to balance resource impacts with increasing demand for services. This process will:

- Provide data to assist the BLM with identifying where we are over-permitted or have opportunities to increase permitting
- Assist the BLM with processing applications and unique permitting requests
- Provide consistency in defining authorized use areas and guidance for permit stipulations in critical wildlife areas and designated wilderness lands
- Help define the necessary “guard rails” to ensure we have compliance with regulations and resource needs while continuing to provide opportunities to support our communities and public land visitors.

### **Reasonable modification for use of e-bikes – New Update**

Following the issuance of BLM National Headquarters Information Bulletin 2023-050, the GFO has developed a process to consider and authorize the use of e-bikes on our non-motorized trails as a “reasonable modification” under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. GFO has now processed over ten applications submitted by individuals with stated disabilities that, when approved, allows them to operate an e-bike on our non-motorized trail systems. In the meantime, as other planning activities wrap up, GFO will launch an environmental assessment designed to consider allowing unqualified e-bike use on any of our non-motorized trail systems. The process will communicate our intentions far and wide to ensure all user groups and conveyances (hikers, horseback, bicycles, e-bikes, and single-track motorized) have a voice and will be heard.

## ***Lands and Minerals***

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### **Mineral Point Water Right Purchase - Status Update**

The purpose of the acquisition of the Mineral Point Ditch is to return the historically diverted water to Burrows Creek to maintain instream flows on Burrows Creek and the upper Animas River. The BLM’s acquisition of the property rights associated with Mineral Point Ditch would benefit Burrows Creek by maintaining water supplies for wetlands adjacent to Burrows Creek, diluting heavy metals in Burrows Creek, and facilitating successful implementation of remediation actions taken by BLM’s Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program within the Burrows Creek watershed. The appraisal has been completed and offers to the two holders have been accepted. Work in conjunction with partners will begin soon to monitor the effects on the environment from the reintroduction of this water. GFO has provided the EPA and the Colorado State Dept. Of Public Health and Environment with the action plan to decommission the ditch diversion and reconnect the water with his historical watershed. GFO expects work to begin in late July or early August with the decommissioning work and restoration of

the fen that will once again receive waters from Burrows Creek.

### **Bonita Peak Mining District - Status Update**

The Bonita Peak Mining District (BPMD) consists of historic mines and mining-related sources where ongoing releases of metal-laden water and sediments are occurring within the Mineral Creek, Cement Creek, and Upper Animas river drainages in San Juan County, CO. Many of these historic mines are located on public lands managed by the BLM, and 80% of the watershed is managed by the BLM.

The BLM, USFS, and EPA signed a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) in July 2022 clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency. The goal of the MOU is improved cooperation between the agencies with respect to obligations of the EPA under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and BLM obligations under NEPA. The EPA is the lead agency for response actions on the private sites and the BLM is the lead for response actions on BLM-managed public lands.

Cleanup actions within the BPMD are ongoing by multiple agencies. BLM priority actions continue to focus on remediation, characterization of sites for remedy development, and operations and maintenance throughout BPMD. The majority of these sites are in the Cement Creek drainage and the Upper Animas River near its headwaters. The BLM completed work on the Wynona and the Joe and John mine sites this summer. Work on the Lark Mine in Prospect Gulch is ongoing and will likely be completed in the 2024 field season.

The EPA is working to install three monitoring wells in the Sunnyside Gold mine workings in the Lake Emma area. Each of the three wells will target narrow mine workings approximately 800 to 1,000 feet below the ground surface. This drilling effort is estimated to take all summer and into the fall. As part of the mobilization, the EPA will need to temporarily close County Road 25 while the drill rig is driven up to Lake Emma.

These characterization activities are important to EPA's understanding of water quality and movement of groundwater within the workings and throughout the BPMD groundwater system. Specifically, they will help determine hydraulic gradient, flow direction, and potential surface expression of the groundwater. The EPA is also constructing a site-wide repository located on top of the large historic tailings piles north of the town of Silverton. They plan to complete work by the end of the 2024 field season and use the repository to store solid waste material derived from the water treatment plant.

### **Proposed Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Conveyance for Kendall Mountain Recreation Area - Status Update**

The Town of Silverton applied to the BLM to acquire public lands managed as part of the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area, under authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926 (44 Stat. 741), as amended and supplemented (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq) (R&PP Act). The purpose of the Act is to authorize acquisition or use of public lands by states, counties, municipalities, or nonprofit organizations for recreational or other public purposes.

The BLM portion of the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area, located on public lands just east of Silverton, has been operated as a community ski area and recreation area under a BLM R&PP lease since 2001. The Kendall Mountain Recreation Area includes the BLM land and the adjacent town-owned Kendall Mountain Placer and Lackawanna Placer. In March 2001, the BLM classified and withdrew the subject public lands for lease and conveyance under the R&PP Act. The purpose of the

classification and application for R&PP lease and potential conveyance was to allow for construction and operation of the Kendall Mountain Recreation Area.

GFO accepted and approved a Plan of Development from the Town of Silverton in summer 2020. The proposed action is to convey approximately 93 acres of public lands to the Town of Silverton. Currently the BLM is awaiting concurrence on potential impacts to Canada lynx habitat, and expects this to be received during Spring 2024. Once concurrence is received and snow has melted off, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment will be completed. Because an Environmental Site Assessment report is only good for six months before an update is required, timing is essential.





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## Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM)

**Note:** Topics below are labeled either “**Status Update**” or “**New Update**” to help identify items that have changed from the previous report.

### ***Planning***

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#### **Transportation and Access Plan (TAP2) - Status Update**

The second TAP addresses BLM lands in Dolores, San Miguel, and Montrose counties. A resource management plan maintenance map, which established all inventoried routes for the TAP2 planning area, was published on December 5, 2023. Using this inventory as a baseline for designations, the BLM interdisciplinary team (IDT) is beginning an internal route-by-route review and the development of alternatives. Our target is to share this preliminary analysis with the public in fall/winter 2024.

Public scoping, including meetings, will be planned to coincide with the issuance of the preliminary analysis.

### ***Fuels and Timber***

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#### **West Rim Timber Sale - Status Update**

To keep ponderosa pine forests healthy, the BLM has completed the logging pile burn for 495 acres in the East Pines area. All logging piles have been seeded this spring. The BLM will complete an additional 110 acres of skidding on previously thinned areas in North Pines.

#### **Dawson**

Dawson Research project was designed by Colorado State University, the University of Reno Nevada, and the University of California Berkeley in conjunction with the BLM. The overarching goal is to create more research and literature on the pinyon and juniper vegetation types. Implementation of the prescription is complete. The BLM burned some piles this winter and plans to burn the rest in winter of 2024-25. All areas where piles were burned have been seeded.

#### **Yellow Jacket Noxious Tree/Brush Removal - Status Update**

The piles created from a previously completed cut, pile, and spray of 100 acres of tamarisk and Russian olive along Yellow Jacket Creek were burned by the BLM and the pile areas were seeded in FY24. The BLM also sprayed 40 acres of previously cut Russian olive and tamarisk in the Yellow Jacket area.

#### **Dawson Draw Prescribed Fire - Status Update**

New Dawson units have been developed in the project area. The prep and burning of 990 acres could

begin next year.

### **West Rim Prescribed Fire - Status Update**

The BLM accomplished 1,555 acres with help from cooperators in FY24 so far. We plan to burn up to another 1,536 acres this fall and up to 3,091 acres in total in FY24.

### **Summit Lake**

Pile and mastication will continue this year in the Summit Lake area. The 28-acre project area is in an important Wildland Urban Interface area.

### **Durango Area Hazardous Fuels Projects (signed January 2021)**

This project reduces hazards associated with vegetation near and around the Durango area. It addresses a long-term need to manage vegetation adjacent to critical infrastructure, which includes reducing tree and shrub densities and fuel loads and protecting ecosystem heterogeneity. The BLM implements various treatments, including prescribed fire, manual tree removal/felling, pile burning, understory burning, and vegetative mastication.

### **Grassy Mountain Project - New Update**

In Durango, most of our efforts will focus on the Grassy Mountain Project, which involves 411 acres of BLM land. This Shared Stewardship Project with the National Forest Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and Colorado State Forest Service involves thinning stands and minimizing ladder fuels to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, which in turn reduces potential harm to watersheds and protects recreational opportunities. The project went out to bid in early July, additional changes will be made to the contract and it will be put out to bid again in August.

### **Grandview - Status Update**

The BLM burned 247 acres of piles this past winter. Seeding has occurred on all but three of the units. Additional thinning around ponderosa stands in the area will occur next summer.

### **Rabbit Mountain EA**

Work may begin on Rabbit Mountain this fall. The BLM plans to prep/burn previously burnt units from 2016-2019.

## ***Wildlife***

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### **Gunnison Sage Grouse**

The GUSG RMP Amendment Record of Decision was signed in October 2024.

### **Summit Point Habitat Restoration Project**

The TRFO Wildlife Program has coordinated with CPW on a 1,200-acre habitat improvement project for pinyon jays and big game. The project aims to improve habitat for pinyon jays, using various treatment methods for thinning pinyon and juniper to provide multiple age classes. The EA was signed and posted on July 15, 2024.

### **Zeedyke Structures, Dry Creek Basin**

To improve wildlife habitat in Dry Creek Basin, in June 2024 the TRFO wildlife staff coordinated a Colorado Youth Corps Association crew to install ten "rock dam" features (zeedykes) with the aim of

improving water infiltration and habitat quality for local wildlife. These features were put to the test almost immediately with a series of high energy storms which have been increasingly common the last several years. The structures functioned exactly as planned and facilitated the “healing” of head cuts. Similar structures are being employed by volunteers in the Aqueduct trail system to address erosion and trail loss in the severely erodible Mancos Shale.



***Zeedyke features constructed to improve wildlife habitat in Dry Creek Basin.***

**Canyons of the Ancients NM Big Game Habitat Management**

In 2019, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) updated big game critical winter range mapping, adding over 100,000 acres of critical winter range to CANM. The BLM is still working to determine how to adapt management in these areas, primarily through an RMP amendment process presently underway to incorporate these mapping updates.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>FY 19 Acres</b>	<b>CPW Update Acres</b>	<b>Increase in Acres</b>
TRFO	181,984	230,985	49,001
CANM	0	100,846	100,846



## ***Range and Weeds Management***

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### **General Permit Administration**

At present, one of the TRFO/CANM Range Specialist positions is vacant. Our latest hiring effort resulted in two job offers that being accepted. Fiscal year 2025 will continue to see our Range workload dialed back as we onboard and train two brand new RMSs and work toward full capacity.

### **Weeds**

The local BLM weeds crew directly treats approximately 300 acres of BLM-managed lands in TRFO and CANM annually. These acres are treated strategically to benefit functioning ecosystems and prevent new outbreaks from spreading, particularly in critical and potential habitat for Gunnison sage-grouse.

### **Spring Creek Basin Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA)**

The current wild horse population is 68, which is within the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the HMA. In 2024, PZP (porcine zona pellucida vaccine) contraceptive efforts focused on retreating 19 mares that were not vaccinated last season. One new foal joined the herd this spring.



### **Gypsum Valley Grazing Decision**

The final grazing decision was signed in August 2021 and appealed shortly thereafter by Western Watersheds Project. A petition to stay the decision was denied and the new permit was issued. The appeal is presently before the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

## **Recreation**

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### **Dolores River**

No boatable spill in 2024...fingers crossed for 2025!

### **Erosion**

An uptick in erosion has been occurring on roads and trails across the board, due to an increase in high energy storms over the last several years. For example, the Dolores River Road was closed due to a land slide this spring and reopened using BLM funds. Another land slide closed the road within approximately six weeks, and it remains impassable due to funding availability. Repairing and maintaining roads and trails is an increasing workload that is met largely by a volunteer workforce (trails) and an annual roads maintenance budget of \$15k for approximately 1,800 miles of road.

### **Road 41 Parking**

Implementation of the TAP1 decision to develop a parking area providing cross country non-mechanized access to both Weber and Menefee Wilderness Study Areas is complete. This parking area south of Mancos on Road 41 provides three pull-through trailer parking spots and six passenger vehicle parking spots.

### **Mud Springs**

Approximately \$34k was spent contracting improvements at Mud Springs, south of Cortez, authorized under the TAP1 decision. Fencing installed under this contract will delineate a new OHV play area as well as mitigate illegal cross country damage to cultural resources caused by dirt bikes. Additional funding from CPW will continue building out this developed recreation area.

### **Aqueduct**

2024 saw the finishing touches on the main Aqueduct parking area, northwest of Mancos. This work was implemented under the TAP1 decision authority. A new shade shelter was purchased and installed by our partners, the Mancos Trails Group, with support from the LOR Foundation. A local welder also created a custom "rustic" bike rack. The BLM contributed a picnic table, the material and labor to build an adjacent changing room, and funding to locate a port-o-let at the trail head seasonally.





*The Aqueduct parking area benefitted from improvements driven by local partners.*

## **Cultural Resources**

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### **Uravan Mineral Belt Interpretation Loop**

The TRFO archaeologist is working on route designation of an existing driving loop, accompanied by interpretive materials at select locations, that would be known as the Yellowcake Trail. The intent of the historic interpretive loop would be to preserve and share the history of uranium mining around Radium and Wedding Bell Mountains.

### **National Register Nominations**

Burro Mine, nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, is anticipated to be officially listed by summer 2025.

### **Travel Planning and Implementation PA**

In this BLM multi-office agreement, TRFO will continue to systematically complete cultural resource inventory of travel routes in the TAP2 planning area, and work towards revisitation of 183 historic properties with travel routes in their boundary and assess those sites for travel-related effects.

## **Minerals (Fluid)**

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### **American Helium, Former Paradox Resources Assets- Status Update**

TRFO has been working with BLM Utah and the Colorado State Office to work with the current operator American Helium, who is now the record title holder of 5 federal units that were formerly known as the Paradox Assets. American Helium is facing financial peril, the company was unable to pay the bonds required by the State of Utah and is un-bonded for the Utah assets. They were unable to come up with the bond for the State of Colorado and have been given until December 28, 2025 to comply with recent orders to gain bonding or face a state regulation. BLM Colorado conducted a necessary bond review, and recently increased the bonded quantity required for American Helium to operate by more than \$500K. The demand letter will come into full effect December 15, 2025.

### **Recent History:**

TRFO has been working in conjunction with the BLM Colorado State Office, Utah State Office, and Office of Natural Resource Revenue (ONRR) on a long-running compliance issue regarding royalty payment from federal units existing in both Colorado and Utah. Shut-in requests were received from ONRR in January, and the orders were translated into Incidents of Non-Compliance (INCs) and issued to Paradox in early March. 42 wells within the Andy's Mesa Unit (San Miguel County, Colorado) were issued and executed, with potential civil penalties in excess of \$38,000,000.00 to begin on June 1, 2023.

In May 2023, Paradox filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and is currently working with BLM solicitors, bankruptcy courts, and ONRR solicitors on a resolution that may or may not result in a lifting of the shut-in order. BLM Colorado submitted a proof of claim in October for \$157,916,000 for remediation and reclamation of all of Paradox and Four Corner's assets and federal interests.

On November 7, 2023, the bankruptcy court approved a proposed sale of all of Paradox and Four Corner's assets, including its federal interests. As part of the proposed plan of sale, GNG Partners agreed to pay all of the outstanding royalties and rentals to ONRR quarterly over 5 years. This comes to approximately 3 million dollars. The payment plan is backloaded with larger payments due in 2025. Typically, this is something that DOI would object to, but a decision was made by Interior leadership to not object to the sale based on the payment plan.

### **Oil and Gas Development Projects - Status Update**

Fluid mineral development recently has focused on tribal interests, with nearly all current activity within the TRFO taking place on Southern Ute Indian Reservation surface in the northern portion of the San Juan Basin, targeting primarily Mancos Shale methane gas and Fruitland Coal Bed Methane. The one exception is Kimber Morgan's well targeting carbon dioxide.

### **Summary of FY24 Approvals – New Notice**

<b>Operator</b>	<b>Well Name/Well Number</b>	<b>Disposition Date</b>	<b>Disposition</b>
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	REDTAIL BB 33-6/27-3	8-Jul-2024	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	REDTAIL BB 33-6/27-2	8-Jul-2024	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	REDTAIL HS 32-6/2-1	11-Mar-2024	APPROVED

Operator	Well Name/Well Number	Disposition Date	Disposition
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	REDTAIL HS 32-6/#2- 2	11-Mar-2024	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE 32-9/#23-7H	20-May-2024	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	REDTAIL HS 32-6/#2-3	7-Mar-2024	APPROVED
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	REDTAIL BB 33-6/#27-1	13-Feb-2024	APPROVED
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE/705H	16-Oct-2023	APPROVED
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE/703H	16-Oct-2023	APPROVED
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE/701H	16-Oct-2023	APPROVED
KINDER MORGAN C02 COMPANY LLC	DOE CANYON/DW-1	15-Jul-2024	APPROVED
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE /706H	12-Sep-2024	Approved
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE /707H	12-Sep-2024	Approved
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	SOUTHERN UTE /704H	12-Sep-2024	Approved
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	OSPREY 32-5 / 5-2	15-Aug-2024	Approved
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	OSPREY 32-5 / 5-3	15-Aug-2024	Approved
RED WILLOW PRODUCTION COMPANY	OSPREY 32-5 / 5-1	15-Aug-2024	Approved
HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY	Southern Ute 704H	12-Sep-2024	Approved

**Inspection and Enforcement**  
**Results for FY 24**

**PET/PAT Workload:**

Indian Production/Drilling Inspections: 463  
Federal Production/Drilling Inspections:268

**Surface Workload:**

Indian Surface Inspections: 130  
Federal Surface Inspections 140

**Coordination – Re-occurring Notice**

TRFO continues to hold quarterly meetings with the Southern Ute Tribe, as well as the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, to ensure our relationships and communication pathways remain open and collaborative. Quarterly meetings are also regularly held with Kinder Morgan, which is our largest federal fluid mineral producer actively pursuing APDs.

**NSJB Stakeholder Meetings**

TRFO is once again participating in the Northern San Juan Basin Stakeholder meetings organized by the San Juan National Forest (SJNF). These meetings serve as coordination on fluid mineral issues between the BLM, Columbine Ranger District of the SJNF, ECMC, and LaPlata and Archuleta counties,



as well as representatives from local industry groups.

## Minerals (Solid)

### Locatable Minerals Projects

#### 43 CFR 3809 Claims Under General Mining Law

**Summary:** TRFO has active uranium/vanadium and copper notices, as well as one plan of operations update.

#### Plans of Operation

##### Sunday Mines Plan of Operations - Status Update

TRFO has not had any new operations or communications with the proponent, Piñon Ridge resources since canceling NEPA action earlier this summer to re-evaluate the Plan of Operations. Currently Piñon Ridge can produce material from 4 out of 5 shafts, but will be forced to reclaim the Topaz shaft in 2025 if an updated plan of operations is not approved for that portion of the operation.

#### Plans - 3809

Project	Operator	COC	Accepted	Acreage	Inspection
Sunday	Piñon Ridge	CO106029180	1981	57.6	4/10/2024
West Sunday	Piñon Ridge	CO105952325	1981	12.3	4/10/2024

**Latest update note:** During April inspection, PRM mentioned that they would be reclaiming the Topaz and that Energy Fuels has requested they begin shipping ore in June.

#### Notices-3809

Project	Operator	Accepted	Acreage	Mineral	Last Inspection
Topaz	Piñon Ridge	2006	10.9	U/V	4/10/2024
Blue Streak	Nuvmco	3/28/2023	4.98	U/V	5/29/2024
Stateline	Alianza	5/2/2022	1.79	Cu	7/9/2024
Klondike	Alianza	6/1/2022	3.13	Cu	5/29/2024 07/01/2024 09/17/2024
Radium Hill	Thor	2/15/2024	1.74	U/V	6/5/2024
Sec 23	Thor	7/13/2023	0.94	U/V	6/5/2024
Groundhog	Thor	7/13/2023	0.7	U/V	6/5/2024
Rimrock	Thor	7/13/2023	0.88	U/V	6/5/2024
Slick Rock	Highbury	1/17/2024	0.46	U/V	2/14/2024

#### 43 CFR 3600 Mineral Materials

**Summary:** Multiple active Free Use Permits (FUPs) as well as one recently released competitive (COMP) pit.

#### FUPs and COMP - 3600

Project	Operator	COC	Accepted	Acreage
Tozer	Montezuma Co.	CO105877629	9/27/2021	31
Disappointment	Dolores Co.	CO105849458	21-Jan	5

Black Snag	Dolores Co.	CO106189023	11/21/2017	8
Klondike	San Miguel Co.	CO105845398	9/10/2020	15
Dry Creek	TJH Stone	CO105883751	6/12/2023	32
Montoya	C&J	CO105856886	11/22/2021	95.48

**43 CFR 3500 Solid Leasable Materials**

**Summary:** Recent submission of potash project identical to one previously analyzed (10 years ago), currently under analysis and review at the Colorado State Office BLM.

**Prospecting Permits - 3500**

Operator	Project	Disposition	Status
Ranahan	CO106326175	Received	Authorized
Ranahan	CO106326177	Received	Authorized
Ranahan	CO106326178	Received	Authorized
Ranahan	CO106326179	Received	Authorized
Ranahan	CO106326181	Received	Authorized

**43 CFR 3400 Coal Management**

**Summary:** The King Coal Lease boundary modification was finalized in Summer 2023.

**Exploration Permits - 3400**

Operator	Project	Disposition	Status
GCC	CO106100173	Approved	Active
GCC	CO106052020	Approved	Active
GCC	CO106093503	Approved	Active

**43 CFR 3601 Mineral Materials Disposal Discussion**

**Disappointment Pit Expansion**

TRFO completed this expansion of the Disappointment Gravel Pit by 4.6 Acres in August of 2024, mining an additional 50,000 cubic yards of material.

**Montoya Pit**

TRFO conducted an inspection of the currently operating Montoya Pit in LaPlata County. The continued production of gravel for the Four Corners Region is reliant on this pit. An additional quantity of disturbance (exact size unknown) is expected to be proposed in later 2023, recognizing the current production area will be mined out within the next 24 months. TRFO anticipates an EA for this likely beginning spring 2024.

**Coordination**

**Western Small Miners Association**

TRFO participated in regular meetings that most recently met in October 2023. The purpose of the meetings is round table discussion with regulators, industry representatives, and interested public related to federal and state permitting processes as well as the future of mining on the western slope of Colorado. Field and District office staff will attend the next regular meeting of this association in April 2024.

**Abandoned Mine Lands**

ULP						
Project	Operator	Acreage	Inspection	Location	Status	
JD9	DOE		10/03/2024	38°12'26.67"N, 108°47'18.80"W		
SR11	DOE		3/6/2024 10/03/2024	37°59'24.23"N, 108°59'46.97"W		
SR13	DOE		10/03/2024			
Radium Hill 10	DOE					
AML (Freeport)						
Project	Adits	Features	Acreage	Anticipated Closure	Inspection	Notes
Little Gyp	17	26	0.552	2023	07/03/2024 08/12/2024	
Spud Patch						
AML (DRUM)						
Project	Adits	Features	Acreage	Closure	Inspection	Notes
Bull Canyon						
Spud Patch						
<b>Mexico Group/ Gyp Gap</b>	16	29	8.874	2025	7/3/2024 09/24/2024 10/09/2024	
Bachelor Camp	1				5/29/2024	
Sun Cup	1				1/23/2024	
Centennial	1				1/23/2024	
Radium Hill 10		1				
AML (V&V)						
Mine	Lat	Long	Date	Feature	Closure	Notes
Roberta Jean	37.566187	-108.974118	5/9/2024	Adit	2025?	V&V in Aug/Sept

**TRFO AML Program Update**

For 2025 and the big focus for this closure is to have a specialist on site during closures and to do immediate follow up inspections of the closures after the work has been completed. All but one site of the 29 have been visited by Cultural/Wildlife/Geology. Cultural and Wildlife have provided specific closure methods tailored to each individual site to facilitate our proposed closure method being followed.

**DOE-DRUM - Status Update**

DOE survey work is almost completed on Cold War-era defense-related uranium mines (DRUM) in San Miguel, Dolores, and Montezuma counties. DOE/DRMS completed construction of approximately 145 hazardous abandoned mine openings in Spring and Fall 2023. TRFO expects to receive a draft proposed action in February 2024 for additional closures to be performed by DOE and DRMS in 2025.

### **Freeport McMoRan - Status Update**

Freeport completed construction on a portion of what was approved in Fall 2023 (~30 features), and have additional closures pending for Spring or Fall 2024(~5-10). Freeport is almost complete with new feature closures in TRFO, and will be working with the office to address sites which were put on a wait list due to difficult conditions and continue monitoring closures which were already performed.

## ***Lands and Reality***

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### **Program Update**

TRFO is in the process of filling a critical vacancy; our realty program has been without a full-time Realty Specialist for over two years. A vacancy announcement closed in mid-November and interviews were completed; unfortunately no candidates were selected. This has been an issue for several positions in TRFO and throughout the state. A new approach was undertaken and TRFO now anticipates having a full-time Realty Specialist in place by spring of 2025.

### **Tri-State Vegetation Management**

TRFO is working on one priority realty project, Tri-State operates 30 miles of critical energy infrastructure rights-of-way (ROW) within the TRFO, bisecting parts of the TRFO management area. A 1.5 Acre log decked landing temporary use area is being permitted to help Tri-State manage hazard trees threatening aspects of a small chunk of forested ROW. The current plan includes utilizing previously authorized management techniques and access routes, while proposing the use of a helicopter to move cut timber resources to the decked location, thereby eliminating or reducing extra surface disturbance. This project is planned for Spring of 2025.

## ***Canyons of the Ancients National Monument Visitor Center and Museum***

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### **Status Update**

The Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum is open for normal winter scheduled days and hours from 10-4, Wednesday through Sunday.

#### Upcoming Events

- Luminaria Night. December 6
- Monthly lectures and indigenous art demonstrations.

### **Yellow Jacket and Flodine Park Grazing Allotments - Status Update**

CANM initiated Section 106 consultation for a proposal to reissue permits for livestock grazing on the vacant Yellow Jacket and Flodine Park allotments. Staff have developed a programmatic agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to identify potential adverse effects to cultural resources and associated mitigations. The final document is ready for signature and signatures from the three parties are anticipated in November. Once the agreement is complete, CANM will go through the NEPA process, with input from tribes and other interested parties to analyze other potential impacts from the proposal. Both field office/monument range specialist positions have been vacant. We anticipate that there will be a delay initiating the NEPA process as new employees are onboarded and familiarized with their positions.

### **Painted Hand Pueblo**

An accessible trail was constructed with help from a trail crew from Saguaro National Park trail crew



in August. Interpretive signs, including images from students from the Maryland Institute College of Art, are currently being fabricated and will be installed in the spring of 2025.



*Saguaro NP Trail Crew Constructing a new accessible trail from the parking lot to the first overlook at Painted Hand Pueblo.*

### **Trespass Horses**

Trespass horses, primarily coming from adjoining tribal reservations, have been an issue on the monument for decades. For a variety of reasons, including the vacant Yellow Jacket and Flodine Park grazing allotments, the issue has increased in recent years leading to concerns with potential damage to cultural and natural resources. Censuses completed by staff over the last three years have led to an estimate of 200 horses currently on monument lands.

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's Natural Resources Department obtained a grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to round up horses on tribal lands adjacent to the monument. The BLM was able to transfer funds to the BIA this fall with the goal of adding those funds to an anticipated contract allowing the contractor to also capture horses on monument lands. Those horses will be claimed by the tribe. Work is expected to be completed over the next several months.

**Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)**

NAGPRA was signed into law in 1990. Due to concerns that museums, universities, and other institutions were not fulfilling their responsibilities under the law, new regulations were promulgated by the Department of Interior in the spring of 2024. The emphasis of the new regulations is to empower tribal governments to make claims on individuals and grave objects in more timely and reasonable manner.

CANM staff have held multiple meetings with tribal representatives over the last couple of months to provide summaries of the monument's collections and encourage them to move forward in the claim process. Those meetings will continue in the spring.



# Field Manager Report

November 2024

## Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) including Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA) and the UFO portion of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (D-E NCA)

**Note:** Topics below are all Status Updates, unless noted otherwise.

### *Planning*

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#### **UFO Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc (EMPSi) was awarded the UFO RMP Amendment contract in August 2023. The settlement agreements to the 2020 Approved RMP required a Notice of Intent (NOI) formally initiating the project to be published within 60 days of publication of the Notice of Availability for the Draft RMP Amendment for Gunnison sage-grouse, or big game, in the Federal Register, whichever came later. The NOI for the UFO RMP Amendment was published January 5, 2024, opening a 45-day public scoping period that ran through February 20. The BLM hosted two virtual public meetings on January 23 and 24 and one in-person open house at the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose on February 1.

The EIS includes an alternative that has more acres subject to No Leasing for oil and gas compared to the most conservative alternative (Alt. B.1) in the 2019 Proposed RMP. The RMP Amendment must also carry forward for further consideration Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and management of lands with wilderness characteristics. A Draft RMP Amendment/Draft EIS is expected to be published and available for public comment in early December. Information and documents are posted on the ePlanning project website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2026528/510>

### *Personnel*

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We recently hired Jessica Hull-Jones to fill our vacant Rangeland Management Specialist position. Jessica has been part of the field office Range program since 2020, serving as a Range Technician. She is also a PhD candidate with the University of Idaho, studying rangeland health right here in the Uncompahgre Field Office.

The Field Office recently announced a Realty Specialist position, open through late November, and hope to fill this key role by early winter.

Sadly, longtime GGNCA Manager Edd Franz will be retiring at the end of the year. Edd will surely be missed.

## ***Grazing and Natural Resources***

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### **Grazing Permit Renewals**

Meanwhile, we continue to chip away at the following complex and high visibility permits:

- ***Crawford Area Allotments*** - The UFO has finished collecting supplemental land health data on the Green Mountain, Grizzly Gulch, Iron Springs, Poison Spring, and Gould Reservoir allotments in the Crawford area needed to complete the land health assessment for these allotments. Once revisions are completed, the land health assessment and evaluation, along with a draft determination document, will be sent to the interested public for comment. These allotments contain habitat for the Crawford satellite population of Gunnison sage-grouse and bighorn sheep.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on a three-year interim grazing plan for both sheep and cattle grazing in the Green Mountain Allotment has been completed. In the interim management plan, the BLM committed to monitoring utilization during and after the grazing season to ensure compliance with the plan. Utilization was collected for cattle grazing in the allotment this year and although monitored utilization levels have not been summarized to date, we are confident that observed levels of use were below agreed upon rates. A report of observed utilization levels will be sent to the USFWS in the coming weeks.

- ***Cactus Park & Lower Escalante Allotments*** - UFO is working with new permittees on sheep to cattle conversions for overlapping bighorn habitat in the Cactus Park and Lower Escalante allotments in Dominguez-Escalante NCA. The National Wildlife Federation is spearheading the installation of water catchments in support of the livestock conversion. The UFO is working on initiating NEPA analysis for the catchments; as well as reaching out to CO Department of Transportation to explore installing fencing along Highway 50 to prevent livestock and vehicle conflicts on the highway. We are working with National Wildlife Federation on the purchase of virtual fence towers to facilitate livestock management in these allotments utilizing virtual fences.

### **Texas A&M Corvid Surveying Project**

The BLM is partnering with Texas A&M University and Cal-Poly Humboldt State University to determine raven presence, habitat selection, and density in occupied Gunnison sage-grouse habitat for the Crawford population. BLM Colorado natural resource managers need comprehensive information about the impacts of predators in general, and ravens in particular, on Gunnison sage-grouse populations. A 36-month project was recently funded to include a fully funded MS graduate student hired to begin work in fall 2024.

### **BLM/CPW Bighorn Sheep Population Estimation**

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) periodically conducts research to better understand the nature of bighorn sheep populations including, but not limited to, interactions with domestic livestock, habitat selection and use, general population information, and population dynamics. This information is critical to CPW achieving its mandate of managing and conserving bighorn sheep populations. The information is also necessary for BLM to work with CPW to manage and maintain the S-80 bighorn sheep herd within the Gunnison Gorge NCA. Information collected during this effort will estimate and refine maps of seasonal habitats, including core herd home range, and refine density estimates for the S-80 herd utilizing Mark-Resight Density estimation. To this end, the BLM and CPW will be conducting camera resight surveys on marked bighorn sheep in the GGNCA during summer and fall



2024.

## **Recreation**

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### **Regional Partnership Initiatives**

CPW and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) have collaborated to fund new and existing coalitions to join a statewide initiative working to ensure that Colorado's land, water, and wildlife thrive while also providing for equitable and quality outdoor recreation experiences. UFO participates in two southwest Colorado initiative groups. You can view the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative story map online at: [storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/393237b131b2455e9ff2fc3692c4226f](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/393237b131b2455e9ff2fc3692c4226f)

- The Ouray Regional Recreation and Conservation Alliance (ORRCA) is generally focused in the Ouray County area. Most of the federal lands in that area are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, so most of the group's focus thus far has been on National Forest lands.
- The Western Slope Outdoors Alliance (WSOA) is focused on Montrose, Delta, and Mesa counties within the watersheds of the Uncompahgre, Gunnison, and Colorado rivers. The group is just over a year into the process. UFO staff are on the steering committee for the alliance, and actively involved in the group's work on its focus and goals. The three counties, various user groups, and members of the public are actively engaged. The group recently hired a dedicated a coordinator, Meghan Kent.

### **Jumbo Mountain Trails**

BLM secured funding for a youth corps crew for one week. The crew and BLM staff diligently worked to install seven lockable wildlife closure gates in support of upcoming seasonal wildlife closures. BLM recreation and wildlife staff, along with our GIS specialist, developed excellent signage for Apple Valley Park (the town's official Jumbo Mountain Trailhead, the BLM entrance to the trail system, and the gates. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at Apple Valley Park in October.



### **West End Trails**

The West End Trails Alliance, along with the towns of Nucla and Naturita, have been developing proposals for trail systems on BLM-managed lands in Montrose County’s West End. Feeling the pain of a local economic downturn in the area following the closure of the New Horizon coal mine and Nucla Station power plant, the West End communities have been looking at ways to bolster the local economy and improve recreational amenities at the same time. While in the early stages of the process, the UFO is taking this on as our next travel management planning project. UFO staff updated kiosks in the area, and are currently conducting a route inventory.

### **UFO Business Plan**

The public comment period for the UFO Draft Business Plan ended in mid-September. BLM received just over 100 comments. Most commenters were in favor of charging fees at campgrounds and river access facilities but were opposed to day-use fees at trailheads. Many of those comments indicated that people did not understand the structure of the proposed day-use fees. Staff are developing ideas for how to proceed.

## ***Lands and Minerals***

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### **Defense Related Uranium Mines (DRUM) Program**

The Department of Energy’s DRUM Program is a collaborative effort between the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety and the BLM to physically close abandoned mine features on BLM-managed lands. DRUM program goals are to reconcile and improve abandoned mine lands (AML) data, conduct, and assess condition inventories, and determine physical safety hazards to both

human health and environment.

The program's current focus is on abandoned uranium mines within Uncompahgre, Tres Rios, and Grand Junction field offices. The proposed closures would obstruct and block access into adits, shafts, stopes, breakdown portals, subsidence portals, and unstable historical mining structures related to the uranium mining production era between the 1930s and 1970s. This work is needed to protect public safety by eliminating or reducing risks posed by abandoned mines while conserving wildlife habitat and preserving cultural resources.

### **North Fork Mancos Master Development Plan Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

The Colorado River Valley Field Office, with support from the Colorado State Office Air Program, UFO, and the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, prepared a [supplemental EA](#) in response to a remand of the North Fork Mancos Master Development Plan (MPD) by the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. The supplemental EA addresses deficiencies cited by the Court, including an updated analysis of greenhouse emissions from construction, production, compression, transportation, and end-use (primarily combustion) of federal oil and gas produced by the project and the potential effects on air quality and climate change.

The updated proposed action provides new estimates of air emissions, conforms with 2021 State of Colorado air quality regulations for oil and gas activities, and includes operator-committed measures to reduce air emissions further and ensure compliance with regulatory standards. The final supplemental EA incorporates changes and clarifications in response to substantive public comments.

The BLM issued a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for portions of the MDP involving private and BLM surface September 29, 2023. The USFS issued a Decision Notice on Surface Use Plans of Operations for five wells in the Trail Gulch Unit in March, and the BLM issued a second decision May 3, 2024 approving three well pads proposed to be built or expanded on National Forest System lands subject to approval by the USFS.

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## ***Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (GGNCA)***

### **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and Gunnison Gorge Wilderness**

Gunnison Gorge NCA was established on October 21, 1999 through an act of Congress. The NCA was recognized for offering exceptional multiple use opportunities, natural, cultural, scenic, wilderness, and recreational resources and being worthy of additional protection, and was expanded to its current size of 62,844 acres in 2003.

NCA staff (both current and former), the Colorado Canyons Association, Delta County, and other partners celebrated the 25th anniversary of the NCA with special events on October 18 and 19.

### **Cottonwood Days Education Program**

The BLM and CCA conducted the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Cottonwood Days Education event in September. The Delta County road crew maintained South River Road just before the event so that it was in good condition for the school busses. Other partners contributing to the success of the program included CPW, Gunnison Gorge Anglers (Trout Unlimited), and the Ute Indian Museum.

About 400 sixth grade students from Delta and Olathe County schools attend learning sessions along the scenic Gunnison River within Gunnison Gorge NCA. Learning focuses on the cultural importance



of the river corridor, water use and conservation, fish of the Gunnison River, aquatic invertebrates and the importance of water quality, and how artificial flies imitate various aquatic species.



*At Cottonwood Days, sixth grade students learn firsthand about the fish of the Gunnison River.*

## **UFO (southern) portion of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area**

### **Escalante Ranch Acquisition**

This past July, the 4,000-acre Escalante Ranch inholding within D-E NCA was purchased by The Conservation Fund. The BLM has secured funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire the property, which is anticipated sometime later 2025. The BLM is working with community partners to gain a greater understanding of resources present on the parcels and will begin community visioning in early 2025 to inform future management.