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

Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO)

Transportation and Access Planning

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RAC meeting presentation 11/14/2024

Transportation and Access Planning

Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) Resource Management Plan (RMP) Final EIS/ROD signed Feb 27, 2015

- Identified **Open**, **Closed**, and **Limited** Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Areas (cannot be modified without an RMP amendment)
- Identified **priority areas** for Travel Management
- Listed **Desired Conditions**, **Standards**, and **Guidelines** for Travel Management
- Stated goal to transition management from a "limited to **existing** roads and trails" system to a "limited to **designated** roads and trails" system within 5 years of RMP approval

Transportation and Access Planning

RMP identified several data needs, including:

- establishment of rights-of-way (ROWs) and easements for transportation linear features;

- inventory of existing routes and constructed feature characteristics;

- needed route improvements to facilitate access to and across public lands;

- methods and volume of use on existing routes;

- modes of travel appropriate to specific routes; and,

- resource issues.
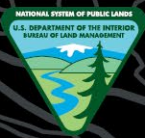
Transportation and Access Planning

These are the RMP identified priority areas for travel management.

Silverton is no longer in the TRFO field office.

Priority areas 1 and 3 were combined into Transportation Access Planning Area 1 (TAP1)

Priority Area 4 became TAP2.

Notice in TAP2 area, WSAs and Dolores SRMA are red-Closed to Motorized travel
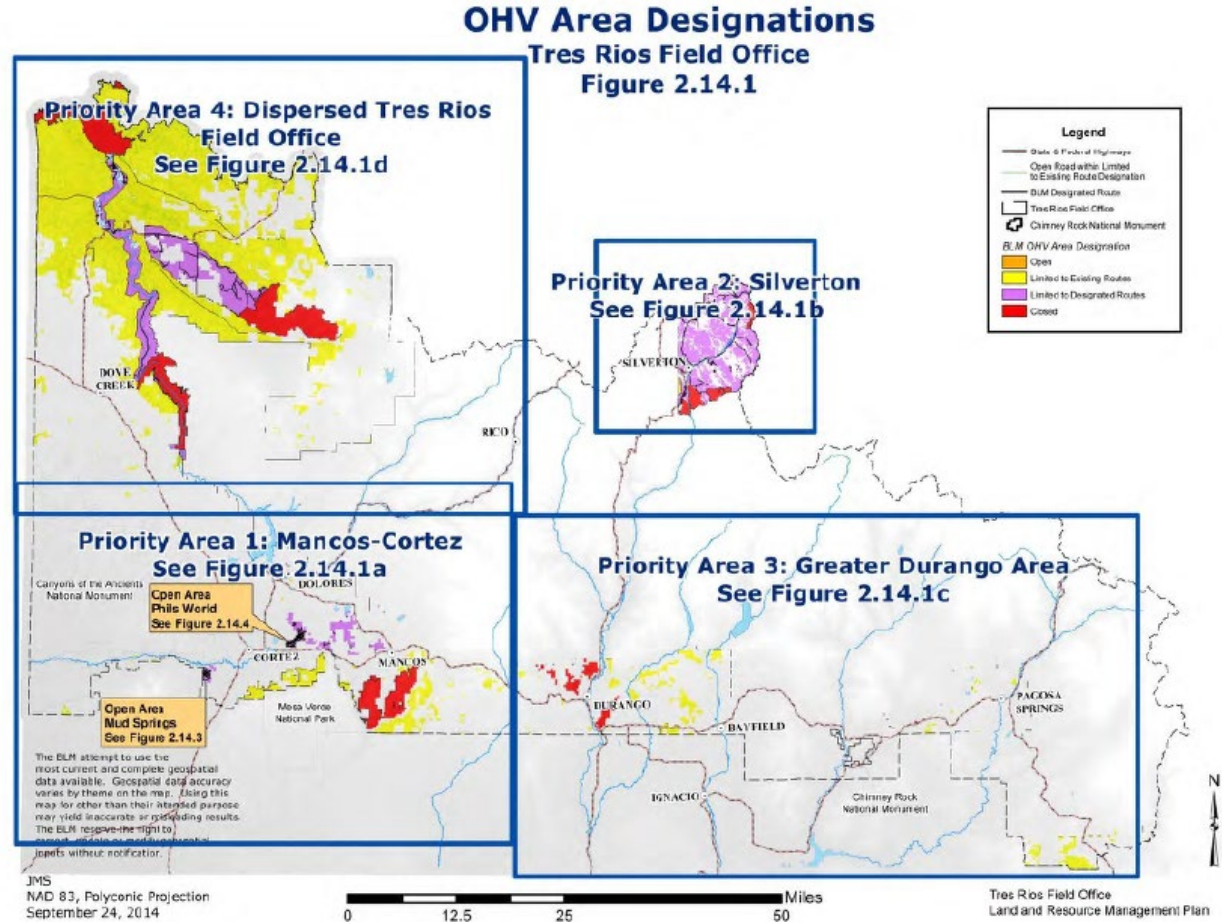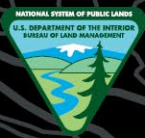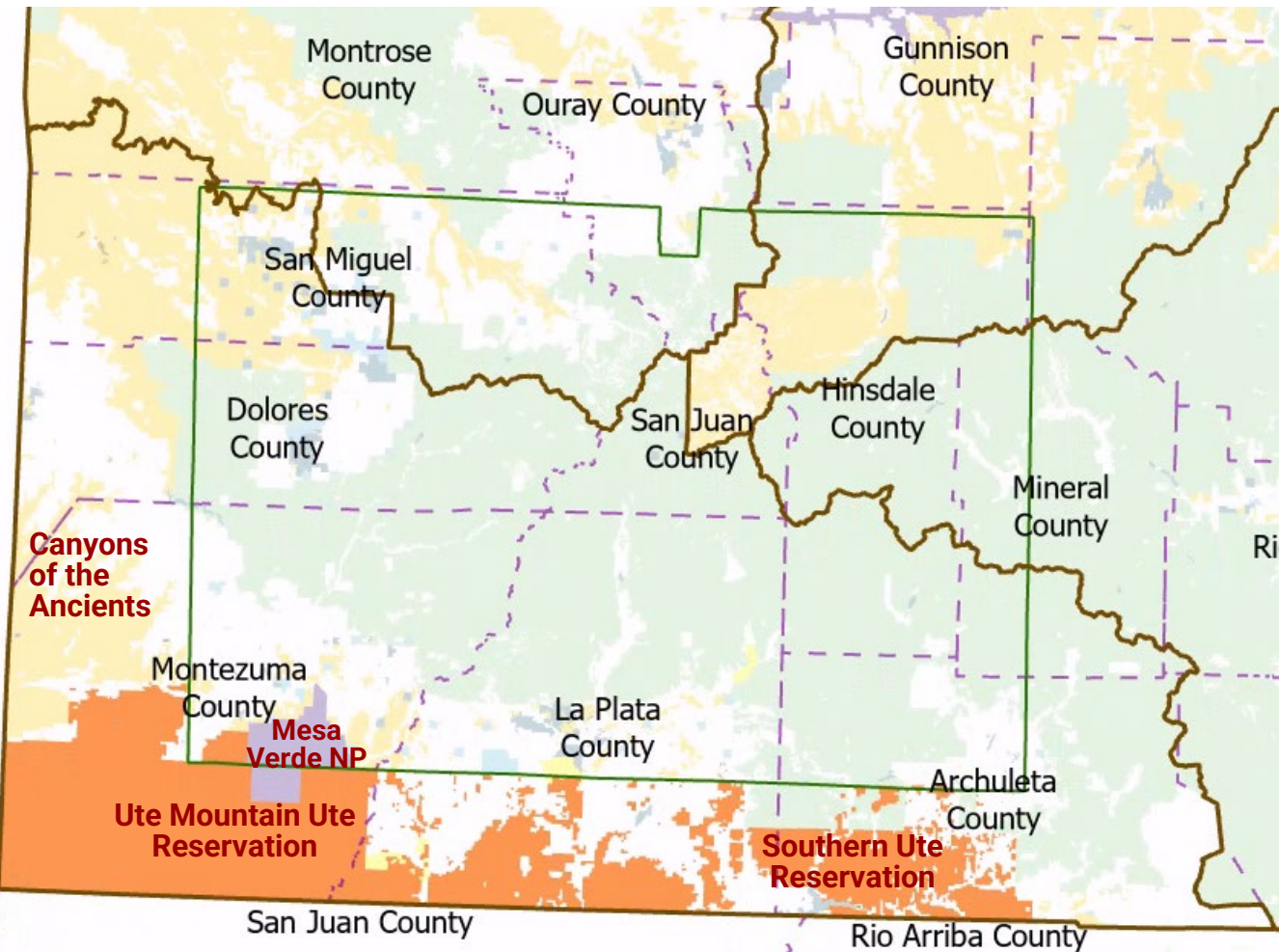

Figure 2.14.1 OHV Area Designations

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Tres Rios Field Office – Transportation and Access Plan
Area 1 (TAP1) / Completed in Dec 2020

BLM
Tres Rios Field Office
Manages:

503,589 surface acres
within 6 Counties:

TAP1: Archuleta
         La Plata
         Montezuma

TAP2: Dolores
         San Miguel
         Montrose

TAP2

Focus for remainer of this presentation

- o As previously mentioned, WSAs and Dolores SRMA were Closed to Motorized travel. There were a handful of designated routes, but motorized use was mostly limited to existing routes.

- o However, what was published in the RMP wasn't an inventory of routes, but mostly linear features (fence lines, dry washes, powerlines, cattle trails, user created routes) that were never intended to be part of the TRFO transportation network.

TAP2

Address the RMP list of requirements:

Phase 1 (complete)

- Create inventory of existing routes and characteristics
- Identify methods and volume of use on existing routes
- Identify modes of travel appropriate to specific routes
- Identify resource issues (evaluation criteria)

Phase 2 (incomplete)

- Identify rights-of-way (ROWs) and easement needs
- route improvements to facilitate access to and across public lands (including signage)

Project Timeline

2015-2016:   Route Inventory

2017:   Route Inventory Comment Period (to identify missing routes)

2019:   Stakeholder and Open House Meetings about inventory

2021:   Additional Route Inventory Comment Period

2022-2023:   Project paused- Lost most of the Interdisciplinary team (IDT)

Project Timeline

2024:

- New Project Lead and full IDT (minus Realty & Range)

- Updated the Inventory (3rd time) to include even more linear features

- posted maintenance map on ePlanning

- Identified Interfacing Resources (evaluation criteria): Soils and water; Wildlife; Cultural; Wilderness; Paleontology; T&E/sensitive species; Ohv/recreation; and Other

- Determined the purpose and need for TAP2

TAP2 Draft Purpose

The purpose of this transportation access plan is to explicitly designate linear features (i.e., routes) for ground transportation, including roads, primitive roads, primitive routes, trails, temporary routes, and linear disturbances, as per the requirements of CFR 8324.1, BLM Manual 1626, and BLM Handbook 8342-1.

Due to an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in the Travel Management Programmatic Agreement, TAP2 is a designation exercise. Any major ground disturbing activities (e.g., construction of new routes, parking lots, major reroutes) go beyond the scope of this project and will be addressed in future proposed actions.

TAP2 Draft Purpose

Route designations will determine:

- Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) limitations including *Open*, *Closed*, and *Limited* **route** access (not to be confused with OHV area access).

- Access restrictions on persons/organizations that can access/use each route.

- The primary mode of transportation for each route (e.g., non-mechanized, non-motorized, motorized)

- The primary route management objective as either *Access* - Where the primary objective of the route is admittance to a specific location (e.g., to a campground, to a wildlife water source, to an oil and gas pad, etc.), *Connectivity* - Where the primary objective of the route is travel between two or more other routes, or *Experience* - Where the primary objective of the route is to provide for recreational experience (e.g., technical challenge, scenic viewing, driving for pleasure, etc.).

TAP2 Draft Need

The BLM needs to designate routes to better manage travel and reduce impacts to vegetation, sensitive wildlife species and their habitat, soils, air and water quality, and cultural and visual resources (i.e., evaluation criteria).

Travel planning also provides an opportunity to increase access to, and improve recreation user experience on, public lands (43 CFR 8342).

Interim travel guidance did not distinguish between linear features (e.g., fence lines and roads) rendering it useless for travel purposes.

TAP2 is NOT...

- A one and done process. TAP2 will be our base, and it will never be "amended." We will update annually as new projects (e.g., routes, parking lots, campsites) are introduced (requiring additional NEPA)

- Building off existing designated routes (think of it as a clean slate)

- Proposing new routes or new ground disturbance

Project Timeline

2024: Strike team took the No Action alternative (inventoried linear features) and with that developed a proposed action alternative to address the purpose and need (spent more than half the year working on this)
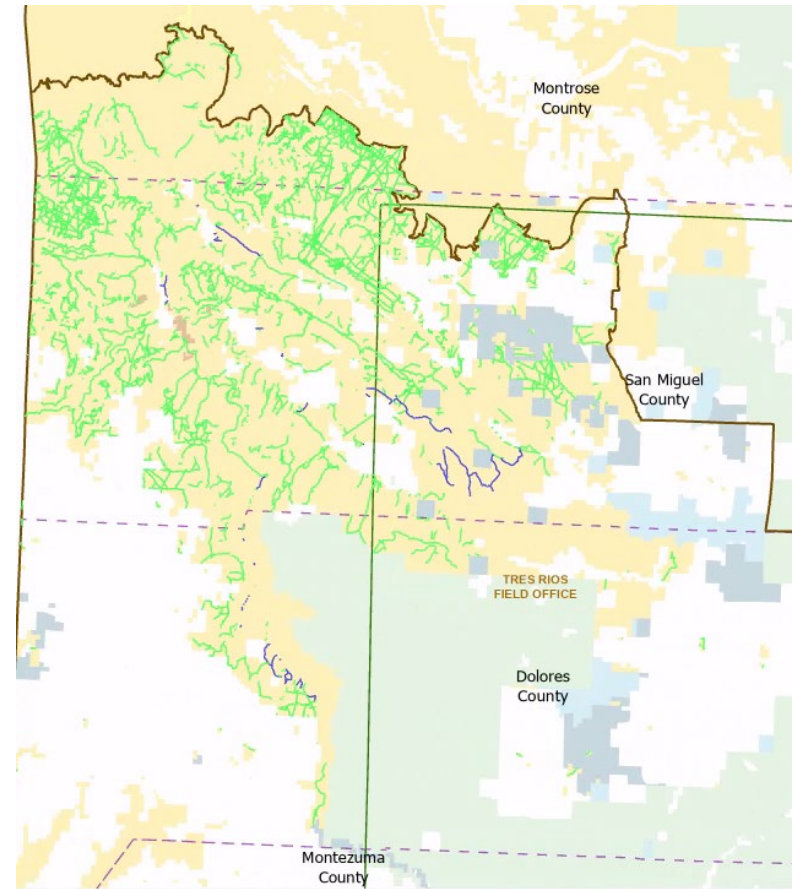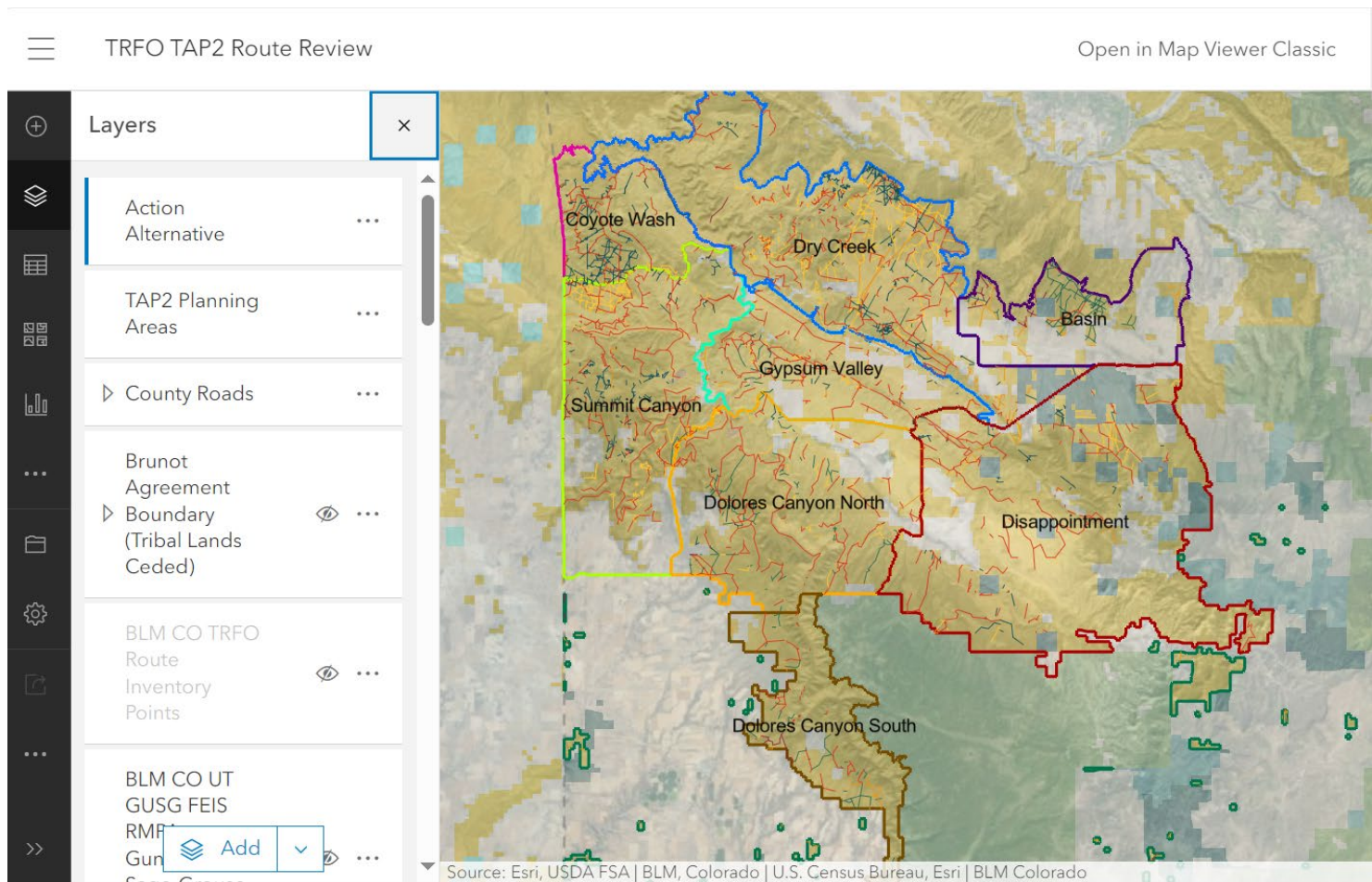
Project Timeline

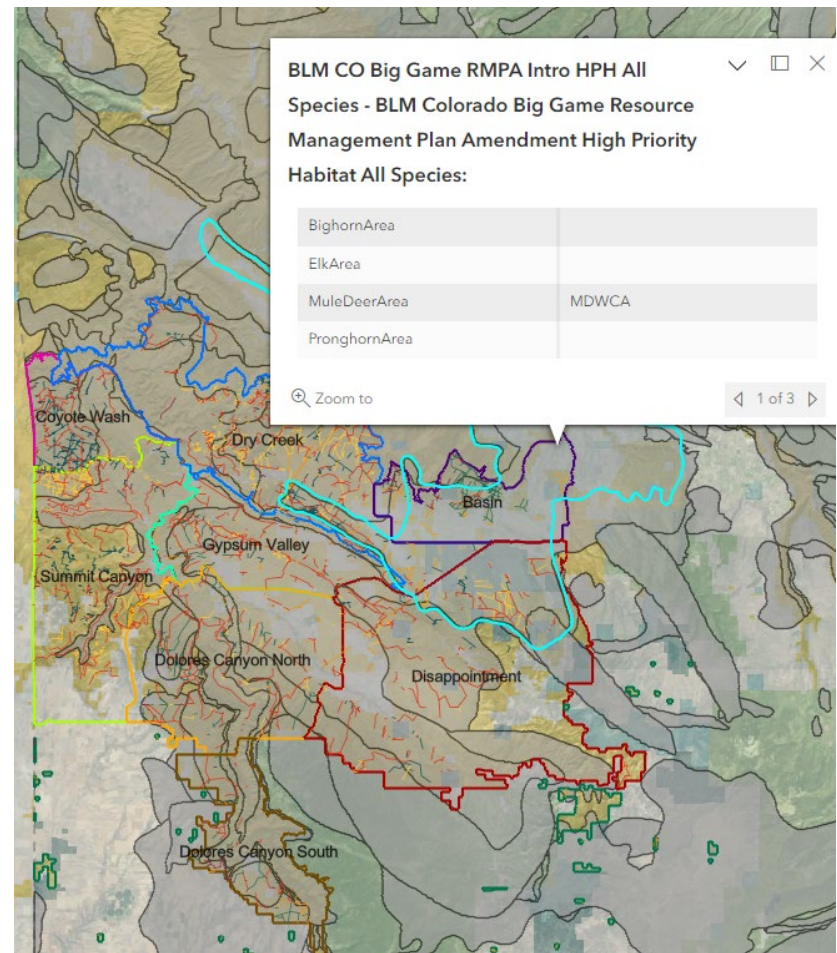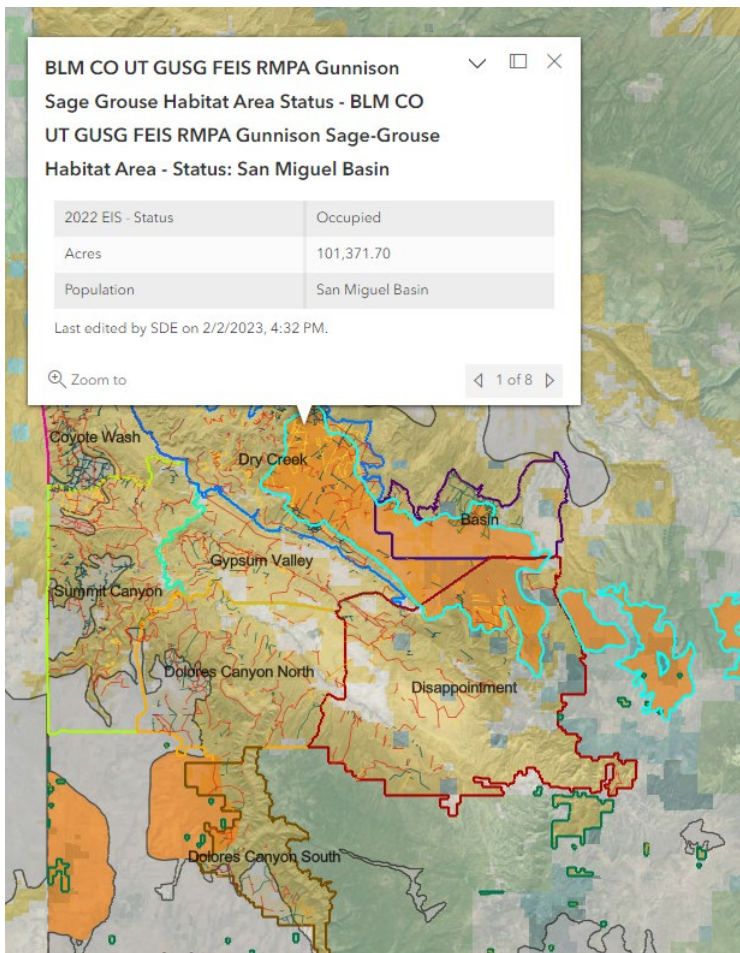## Currently: Alternative internal review & comment period

QAQC
process-
Field Office
comments
on routes
requiring
corrections

Example Evaluation Criteria Maps

Field Office can also review evaluation criteria with the layer feature

Project Timeline

2025:

February- Tribal and Cooperator Review

March/April- Public Scoping of Alternatives and Issues (EA)

TAP2 EA Schedule

Pre NEPA
- ✓ Complete surveys and data collection
- ✓ Identify Section 7 and Section 106 consultation needs
- ✓ Identify stakeholders, and cooperating agencies
- ✓ Cooperating agencies, draft MOUs
- ✓ Determine Tribal consultation needs
- ✓ Internal scoping (with ID Team) to start issues identification
- ✓ Adjust preliminary issues after data collection
- ✓ Consider alternatives to proposed action
- ✓ Begin preparing Chapters (purpose and need) 1 and 2 (Alternatives), and chapter 3 (affected environment, for identified issues and analysis)
- ✓ Internal review (field office) of proposed alternative (and EA/appendices for IDT) Oct 22 through Nov 19.
- ✓ Cooperator Agency & Tribal review Feb 3-March 3, 2025. Schedule agency meetings during this period.
- ✓ Refine alternatives based on internal scoping
- ✓ Coordinate with PAO for press release, if needed
- ✓ Prepare ePlanning page for start date

Background work to be ready before clock starts (current phase)

Phase	Task	Calendar Days	Work Days	Notes
Public Scoping	Announce EA on ePlanning and Press Release	1	1	EA Clock Starts. Planned for March 24, 2024
Scoping	**Public Scoping Period- Scope Alternatives and Issues** Develop Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 of Preliminary EA	**29**	20	Planned for March 25- April 22.

Project Timeline

2025:

Wrapped up by end of October

Scoping, Chapter 1 & 2	Refine Issues to be addressed (from public scoping) Fully Develop Chapter 2 to Develop Alternatives.	21	15	Work on these phases can be combined and timeframe reduced.
Chapter 3 and 4	Complete Chapter 3 – Issues based affected environment and analysis Develop Chapter 4 – Coordination	10	7	
Internal Prelim EA	Compile Prelim Draft EA for review	7	5	
Internal Prelim EA	ID Team and Manager Review of Prelim Draft EA	7	5	
Internal Prelim EA	Incorporate Changes; prepare Prelim Draft EA for publishing on ePlanning.	7	5	Can shorten to 2-5 days
Admin (internal) Prelim EA	Could add Cooperating agencies as necessary for review of administrative preliminary EA	**21**	15	Can reduce review time
Internal Prelim EA	COSO/SOL Review of Prelim Draft EA (if needed)	**7**	5	
Prelim EA	**30-day Public Comment Period on Preliminary EA + Public Meeting (these are not required)**	**30**	21	Assume 30 days here, but can vary
Final EA prep	Respond to & Incorporate Public Comments. Prepare Complete Prelim Proposed Final EA	21	15	Can reduce to 5-10 days
Final EA review	ID Team, Managers Review of Prelim Proposed Final EA	7	5	
Final EA review	Incorporate edits of Prelim Final EA/Prepare draft DR and FONSI	7	5	
Final EA review	COSO/SOL review (if needed) and finalize Proposed Final EA & FONSI	7	5	Can reduce to 2-3 days
Final revisions	Resolve Issues/Finalize Draft DR	14	10	
Final EA	Sign Final EA and FONSI	1	1	EA Clock Ends
Approved DR	ID Team (optional), P&EC, and Manager Review Draft DR	7	5	
Approved /DR	Incorporate Changes	14	10	
Approved DR	Issue DR	1	1	
Total through signing of FONSI		**255+/-**	**175+/-**	Tue, Oct 28, 2025

Thank you

QUESTIONS?

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EXTRA SLIDES

Travel Planning and RS 2477

A travel management plan is not intended to provide evidence bearing on or addressing the validity of any Revised Statutes 2477 (R.S. 2477) assertions. R.S. 2477 rights are determined through a process that is entirely independent of the BLM's planning process. Consequently, travel management planning should not take into consideration R.S. 2477 assertions or evidence. Travel management planning should be founded on an independently determined purpose and need that is based on resource uses and associated access to public lands and waters. At such time as decisions are made on R.S. 2477 assertions, the BLM will adjust its travel routes accordingly.