

## AGENDA

Uncompahgre Working Group

Tuesday, August 20 Delta, Thurs. Aug. 22, Norwood

Facilitator/Moderator: Kathy Bond

Meeting Objective: To share perspectives between resource specialists, users and interest groups on roads and trails management and their relationship to achieving other desired conditions.

Registration

Welcome/Introductions

Review of agenda/meeting objectives

Panel introduction

Review of Handouts

Technical Presentation: Lew French, Ouray Ranger District, USFS

Q&A

Panel Presentations

Q&A

Wrap UP/Evaluation Form

Adjourn

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Uncompahgre Working Group is scheduled for Thursday, October 10 at the Montrose Pavilion, from 6:30–9:30 pm. This meeting will be the wrap –up for the Forest Plan Revision Landscape Working Group process.

Meeting Summary (8/20 and 8/22)

About 40 people attended the Delta meeting on August 20, while about 22 people attended the Norwood Meeting on August 22. Both meetings had the same agenda; however not all panelists were able to present at both meeting locations. ROS Presentation

Lew French, Ouray Ranger District Recreation Forester, gave a 30–minute overview of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), and how it is utilized in recreation management on the National Forest.

ROS recognizes and labels the spectrum of use and settings from pristine to urban.

Key points:

- A recreation experience equals the activity plus the setting
- Over time, settings change from pristine to urban (or more developed)
- Travel access is the key to ROS
- It is difficult to change, or go back, from Urban to Pristine

- Most of the current ROS settings are in response to things that have happened already, rather than a conscious management effort.
- Semi-primitive non-motorized (SPNM) areas are reduced by either being placed into wilderness or by encroachment of motorized trails.

### Panel Discussion

Panelists were each given 7 minutes to address their given issue or resource, relating that to the Desired Future Condition Statements (DFCs) that were generated by meeting participants in past meetings. See Desired Future Condition Statements.

The following statements reflect outcomes from previous Uncompahgre Working Group meetings which have been synthesized by the Forest Service Core Planning Team. The statements reflect what the participants would like the Uncompahgre Plateau to look like in the future.

### Desired Future Conditions

1. Decisions are made in a way that balances local input with a broader national input, and in a way that acknowledges and promotes local stewardship and collaboration.
2. Public land decisions will favor positive economic benefits to local communities.
3. A wide variety of opportunities, goods, and services are provided for public use while the land remains healthy and sustainable. Limits are placed on uses when it is shown that the land is unable to sustain itself.
4. Travel occurs on designated routes that have been well planned and safely accommodate the needs of the user for both general forest access and recreation travel systems.
5. Management of the Uncompahgre Plateau will favor less development of roads and facilities to foster its rustic character and to discourage the area from becoming a high profile recreation destination.
6. Areas exist that provide for quiet and solitude, where a primitive or remote experience is available without the restrictions of a wilderness designation.
7. Recommendations for special designation areas will only include small area blocks for specific objectives that can not be obtained under a multiple use management scheme.
8. Large blocks of habitat and connecting corridors are maintained on the landscape to provide habitat for those species that require this type of habitat.
9. Desired populations for deer and elk herds on this landscape are established and maintained within the carrying capacity of the land.

10. Populations of large predator species (bear, coyote, mountain lion) and their habitat will be maintained on the Uncompahgre Plateau. Panel

Discussions:

Margaret Howlett –Region 10

Margaret was not able to present at the Norwood meeting.

Margaret gave an overview of area demographics. She provided information showing that the retiree population is increasing on the Western Slope, and that tourism is increasing. Typically Delta County has a lower economic condition compared to state averages.

Tom Condos –GMUG Forest Transportation and Road Engineer

Tom gave an overview of road maintenance on the Uncompahgre Plateau, focusing on DFC, 1,2,4

Key Points:

- 6–10% traffic increase per year on Delta–Nucla Road .
- FS invests approx. \$150/mile/year on gravel roads; proper maintenance requires approx. \$800/mile/year – Leaves us with the question of what roads to focus on.
- The number one use of FS roads is driving for pleasure.
- Paving a road changes the ROS setting.
- Paving a road can lead to increased development in Forest inholdings (private lands)

Brian Wilson: Montrose County Transportation and Road Engineer

- Montrose County is physically divided and we need to connect people on the west end of the county to their government.
- Sees positive gain in paving a road corridor across the Plateau that would connect the West End to the East end of the county.
- It costs approximately \$100,000 per mile to pave a road, but that investment last 10 to 15 years.
- Gravel treatments are becoming more expensive

Bill Harris – Colorado Plateau Mountain Biking Association

Bill spoke to DFC statements 4,5 and 6.

Bill supports sustainable recreation routes and improved trail design where needed. He is concerned that the semi primitive non–motorized (SPNM) setting is being shifted into wilderness, where mountain bike use is legally excluded. The Forest needs to protect non wilderness SPNM settings. Sam Vasicko – Thunder Mountain Wheelers

Sam presented in Delta, but was unable to attend the Norwood meeting

Key Points:

- Thunder Mountain Wheelers help to maintain trails

- The current travel plans have decided travel management on the Uncompahgre and Grand Mesa, so for tonight, there is no reason to revisit those decisions.
- Thunder Mountain Wheelers are gaining support and cooperation from the community.

Reg Cridler – Citizen, background in forestry, farming and ranching  
 Reg presented in Delta, but was unable to attend the Norwood meeting  
 Key Points:

- In the 1960's the forest management was much different, there were no ATVs, no bikes, and less people recreating on the Forest
- We need to have proper maintenance of roads, they are a real asset
- The recent fires show us what decisions need to be made concerning roads, and their use and management

Jim Garner – Division of Wildlife (DOW) Biologist

Jim said that various management activities have an impact on wildlife, so it is difficult to just talk about one issue, such as access. By paving or upgrading roads, travel may be safer for people, but roads can fracture wildlife habitat.

Key Points:

Focusing on wildlife impacts:

Year round maintenance, or upgrading, of major roads across the Plateau:

- Improve access for hunting, photography and pleasure
- Increase mud in late fall/early spring
- Increase of poaching
- Disruption of winter habitat
- Increase in winter accidents
- Potential for more development of inholdings.

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Issue of closing roads and trails

Prevents fragmentation, provides refuges, limits wildlife disturbances

Reduces recreation activity, limits access for using hunting as a wildlife tool.

Dick Steele – Western Colorado Sportsman Council

Dick acknowledged that some impacts from hunters are detrimental to the Forest, such as moving game onto private lands or poor habitat, and hunters creating new routes on the Forest. However, hunting is an

effective and popular management tool that brings in revenue to the area and funds wildlife conservation

#### Key Points:

- Hunters probably use the roads more than other user groups
- If wildlife is not managed, hunters will be disappointed and not support the community
- Travel Management regulation without enforcement is useless, we need to have clear signs of where hunters can and cannot drive
- Large predator species need to be balanced with the prey species, including man
- Need enforcement of management restrictions
- Need to manage wildlife populations (ex. Limiting bull elk tags so the cows are limited in order to control the population)

#### Matt Sura – Western Colorado Congress

Matt presented in Delta, but was unable to attend the Norwood meeting. This presentation focused on road, and the use of restoration techniques on the Plateau. Matt have a variety of map overlays of the Plateau that were displayed on an overhead projector as he spoke. He showed overlays delineating roads on the Uncompahgre Plateau, in relation to the recent Uncompahgre Travel Plan

#### Key Points

- Need to focus on ecological forest restoration
- We should restore areas by first protecting areas of high ecological integrity
- The Forest should first use passive restoration by stopping ecologically degrading activities, and then use active restoration.
- Need to implement Unc. travel plan, clearly map out and mark travel areas, need to look at areas that need to be restored and utilize the necessary restoration method