

CANYON CLARION

DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA & DOMINGUEZ CANYON WILDERNESS PLANNING NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 8-- October 2011

www.blm.gov/co/st/en/nca/denca/denca_rmp.html

BLM



Members of the Advisory Council will tour Cactus Park on Nov. 19.

Education theme emerges at socio-economic workshop

The Bureau of Land Management hosted socio-economic workshops in Grand Junction and Delta in mid-October. The workshops focused on how the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area fits into the regional economy – past, present and future.

At both workshops, participants liked the idea of using the NCA for its educational opportunities and expressed concerns that publicity or marketing about the NCA could lead to too much visitation or “loving the resource to death.”

Two federal agency economists -- Henry Eichman (U.S. Forest Service) and Josh Sidon (BLM) – presented socio-economic data to local audiences and then facilitated wide-ranging discussions about the NCA.

Data

Demographically, between 1970 and 2010, the population in Delta, Mesa and Montrose counties combined grew from 88,134 to 218,827 or 148 percent (57 percent of which was between 1990 and 2010). The Colorado

State Demography Office predicts that the tri-county population will reach approximately 342,172 by 2030.

From 1970 to 2009, earnings per job in the three-county area increased from \$32,642 to \$37,936 or 16 percent (inflation-adjusted). Over the same period, per capita income increased from \$18,309 to \$33,705 or 84 percent (inflation-adjusted). The economists emphasized that much of the increase in per capita income is attributable to non-labor income – pensions, investments, dividends and transfer payments (e.g., retirement income, Social Security and Medicare).

The economists also noted that in 1970, non-labor income accounted for 29 percent of total personal income. By 2009, non-labor income accounted for 40 percent of total personal income.

The significance of non-labor income, audience members explained, is that retirees (especially baby-boomers) are moving to the Western Slope, attracted in part by outdoor recreation opportunities and by outdoor

Continued on page 2

Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area • COLORADO



Continued from page 1
scenery found on public lands.

Grand Junction discussions

The two-dozen members of the Grand Junction audience spent most of their time discussing the need to conserve and protect the resources of the NCA. Feedback from the audience indicated a desire to see that cultural, paleontological, geological and historical features of the NCA be preserved and used to enhance local educational opportunities. Education should be focused on the legislative purposes of the NCA, including livestock grazing. In addition to protecting and conserving resources, education was seen by many participants as a priority in NCA.

Audience participants seemed to agree that the NCA will attract more and more visitation, regardless of what marketing plan, if any, is pursued. With two other NCAs and two national monuments nearby, the entire region will inevitably

Two contractors step into NCA planning process

Planning staff for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area will be working with two Colorado contractors on a Class I cultural resource overview report and planning alternative impact analysis in 2012.

A Class I report is broad in nature. Alpine Archeological Consultants, Inc., of Montrose, has already conducted a Class I compilation and analysis of baseline cultural resource data for the BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office. That encompasses much of the Uncompahgre Plateau and a large surrounding area extending from the West Elk Mountains on the east to the Utah state line on the west, and from the Grand Mesa on the north to the San Juan Mountains on the south.

Rand Greubel, an Alpine consultant, will merge all archeological records and surveys about the the NCA area, from the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices, and make recommendations about future research. He will also build a GIS model to identify low, medium and high potential cultural areas in the NCA. A final report and cultural density maps are

attract more visitor traffic.

Other ideas from Grand Junction participants included:

- Develop and market an identity brand for the NCA.
- Work to fit the NCA management plan in with regional plans.
- Provide handicapped access to the NCA.
- Provide area(s) for regular school group visits.
- Identify triggers or thresholds for management changes when visitor numbers reach a certain level.

Delta discussions

Although the Delta workshop attracted only about a dozen participants, planning and economic development groups were strongly represented.

Delta County tourism efforts are playing on the region's diverse recreation opportunities and are using targeted marketing to

draw visitors to wineries, organic farms, wildlife viewing and cultural tourism opportunities. While marketing won't be specifically addressed in the NCA plan, the administrative objectives can provide guidance for what sort of marketing should be done in the future.

The participants support the opportunity to teach tourists and local students about the area's history, resources and public land stewardship. The workshop also identified the Delta visitor center as a potential gateway to the NCA by providing information about public lands.

Please visit <http://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/eps-hdt> for more information about the economies of Mesa, Delta and Montrose counties provided by the Headwaters Economics, a non-profit economics analysis shop located in Bozeman, Montana.

due next summer. A native of Montrose, Greubel has hiked and visited cultural sites in the NCA for years.

Environmental Management and Planning Services, Inc. of Boulder, has been working with the Uncompahgre and Grand Junction field offices on their respective resource management plans/environmental impact statements. EMPSI

will write the NCA's impact analysis of the range of management alternatives for the Dominguez-Escalante NCA RMP/EIS.

EMPSI Deputy Project Managers Drew Vankat and Kate Wynant have worked with both the Grand Junction and Uncompahgre field offices. They have a team of 10 specialists to help with the NCA's impact analysis.

D-E NCA by the numbers

209,610 acres

66,280-acre Dominguez Canyon Wilderness

4,700 feet to over **8,200** feet above sea level in elevation

25 by 100 miles: Uncompahgre Plateau

1.7 billion years old: Precambrian rocks underlying D-E NCA

33 miles: length of Gunnison River through D-E NCA

54 species: BLM special species of interest and ESA's threatened and endangered species

107 miles of perennial¹ streams

53 percent of the NCA drained by intermittent² and ephemeral³ streams

22 streams

71 miles sports fishery

115 miles fish-bearing streams

923 total stream miles¹²³

103 wildfires, 1980-2009

1,779 acres burned, 1980-2009

1,388 known archeological sites

977 acres: Paleo inventory

204,493 acres grazing allotments within DENCA