



# DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN & FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



## ❖ WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT ❖

### **What is Wilderness?**

The Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-577) defined wilderness as follows:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 designated the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness, 66,280 acres in the heart of the Dominguez-Escalante NCA, to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

### **How would the Proposed Plan Alternative manage Dominguez Canyon Wilderness?**

In the Proposed Plan Alternative, the wilderness would be divided into zones, with each zone having different management emphasis and corresponding management activities. Zone 1 would manage recreation to support and protect supplemental values. For example, Zone 1 management would not allow for overnight camping in order to protect sensitive cultural and natural resources. Wilderness Zone 2 would manage recreation to protect outstanding opportunities for solitude, while Zone 3 would be managed to provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Camping would not be restricted in Zones 2 and 3 except along the Gunnison River corridor, where camping would be limited to designated sites. In all zones, and in accordance with the Wilderness Act, the BLM would only authorize the actions and projects inside the wilderness that are determined to be the minimum necessary to preserve the wilderness character of the area, including up to 11 livestock water facilities. Any non-emergency actions or projects inside the wilderness would be evaluated using the minimum requirements decision guide.

In response to public comments, changes have been made to the Proposed Plan Alternative. Group size in Zone 1 would be restricted to 25 or fewer people, and 12 or fewer in Zones 2 and 3. Travel in Zone 1 would be limited to existing routes for horses, and open to cross country foot travel, except where closures are necessary to protect sensitive resources. Allowable wilderness uses that are contributing to degradation of wilderness resources would be

restricted as part of any management strategy. Vegetation treatments inside the wilderness are considered “trammeling” and would only be authorized if needed to maintain or improve naturalness, where indicators for Priority Species and Vegetation are determined to be “poor” or “fair.” Except for emergencies and special provisions (livestock grazing), no prohibited uses outlined in the Wilderness Act would be authorized unless indicators for Priority Species and Vegetation are determined to be “poor” or “fair.”

**Where in the PRMP/FEIS should I look if I’m interested in Wilderness?**

Wilderness management information can be found starting on line 263 of the Alternatives Matrix in Chapter 2, Volume 1 of the Proposed RMP. Appendix G contains information regarding the process the BLM used for planning for naturalness within Dominguez Canyon Wilderness.