

# PART II RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Purpose of the Plan

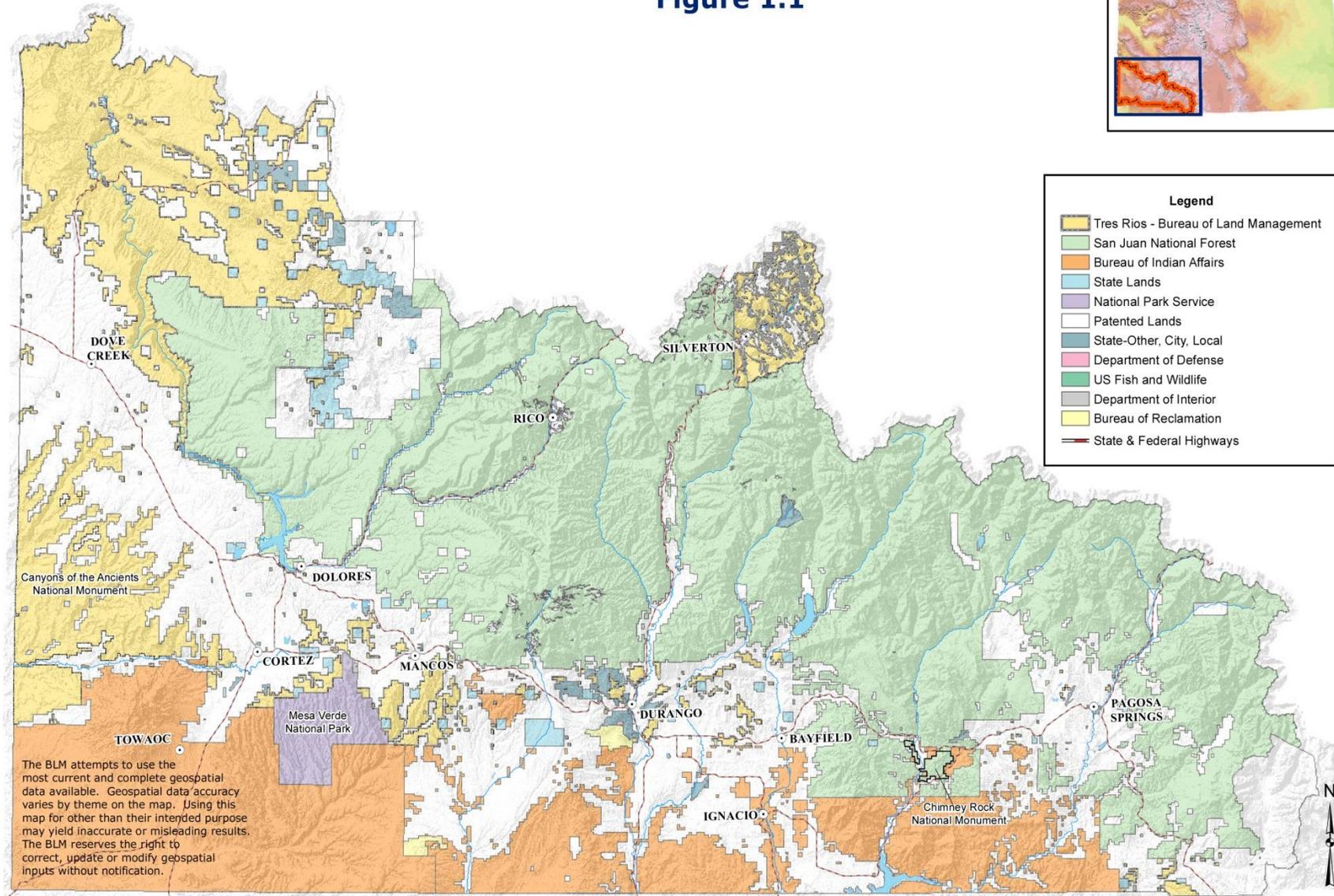
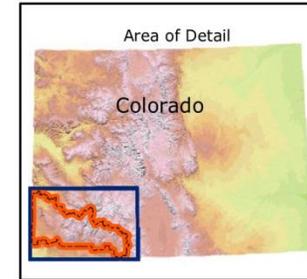
The purpose of this Resource Management Plan (RMP) is to provide strategic guidance for future management of all lands within the Tres Rios Field Office (TRFO) administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), except for those lands included in the proclaimed boundary of BLM's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. This RMP guides the restoration or maintenance of the health of these lands to promote a sustainable flow of uses, benefits, products, services, and visitor opportunities. It provides a framework for informed decision making, while guiding resource management programs, practices, uses, and projects. It does not include specific project and activity decisions. Those decisions are made later, after more detailed analysis and further public involvement. The RMP is adaptive in that it can be amended to update the management direction based on new knowledge and information.

This RMP is strategic in nature and does not attempt to prescribe detailed management direction to cover every possible situation. While all components necessary for resource protection and restoration are included, the RMP also provides flexibility needed to respond to uncertain or unknown future events and conditions such as fires, floods, climate change, changing economies, and social changes that may be important to consider at the time future decisions are made. Implementation of the RMP is contingent upon future funding and staffing levels.

The RMP has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the BLM's planning regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600. This RMP is also accompanied by a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) as required by the regulations used in its development (43 CFR 1601.0–1601.6 and 36 CFR 219.10).

The foundation of this RMP is the result of an extensive joint planning effort between the BLM and the USFS, as described in Part I, Chapter 4.0. The Approved RMP is applicable only to the BLM (See Figure 1.1), so language and actions pertinent only to the Forest Service have been removed subsequent to the publication of the Proposed LRMP. Additional changes between the Proposed LRMP and the Approved RMP are noted in Part I, Section 2.1.2.

# Tres Rios Field Office Figure 1.1



**Legend**

- Tres Rios - Bureau of Land Management
- San Juan National Forest
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- State Lands
- National Park Service
- Patented Lands
- State-Other, City, Local
- Department of Defense
- US Fish and Wildlife
- Department of Interior
- Bureau of Reclamation
- State & Federal Highways

The BLM attempts to use the most current and complete geospatial data available. Geospatial data accuracy varies by theme on the map. Using this map for other than their intended purpose may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The BLM reserves the right to correct, update or modify geospatial inputs without notification.

RMB  
NAD 83, Polyconic Projection  
August 25, 2014



Tres Rios Field Office  
Resource Management Plan

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### **1.1.1 Relationship of the RMP to Other Planning Documents**

This Approved RMP will replace the portions of the current San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan, approved in 1985 and amended seven times, that are currently within the jurisdiction of the TRFO (previously known as the San Juan Resource Area), with the exception of the lands within the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, which are managed under a plan approved in 2010. The BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office is in the initial stages of revising the plan for other lands covered by the 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan.

This RMP is one key document in a set of documents that integrates and displays information relevant to management of TRFO lands. Other documents that will form the administrative record for the RMP include the FEIS; appendices; the Record of Decision (ROD); social, economic, and ecological assessments; the Analysis of the Management Situation report; public participation documentation; objections and disposition record; administrative corrections; and other relevant material. Together these documents provide the background of information, comprehensive analyses, and public involvement that are being used to inform the final decisions for this RMP.

A number of designations and activities would not change under the Approved RMP, including existing current, valid mineral lease rights (lands leased prior to the date of this plan decision would be subject to valid existing rights under lease terms and may be conditioned to be in compliance with the RMP).

While this RMP will be the primary guide to management of TRFO lands, there are several federal, state, tribal, and local planning documents that influence management of nearby lands in southwest Colorado, which have been considered throughout this planning process and reviewed for consistency with this RMP. An analysis of these plans is provided in Appendix W of the Proposed LRMP.

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### **1.1.2 RMP Consistency**

All projects and activities authorized by the BLM must be consistent with the RMP (16 USC 1604(i), 43 CFR 1601.5-3). A project or activity will be considered consistent with this RMP if it is consistent with the desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, suitability determinations, allowable uses, and other management actions and decisions approved in the RMP.

If a project or activity as proposed would not be consistent with the RMP, the Responsible Official has the following options:

- modify the proposal so that the project or activity will be consistent;
- reject the proposal; or
- amend the RMP contemporaneously with the approval of the project or activity so that the project or activity is consistent with the RMP, as amended. The amendment may be limited to apply only to the project or activity or may apply more broadly.

This RMP does not grant, withhold, or modify any contract, permit, or other legal instrument, and does not authorize projects or activities, except where specifically noted. Decisions to approve or authorize specific projects are considered separately from the RMP during the appropriate time to make such decisions. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance is required for any project-level decision that may have an impact on the environment. Project-level decisions must be informed by site-specific analysis through an open, public process. This allows the latest science and public input to be employed at the time decision is to be made.

## **1.2 RMP Organization, Content, and Terminology**

The management direction and guidance presented in Chapter 2 is organized by resource and resource use, and applies across the entire TRFO landscape. Additional plan direction that applies only to specific areas within the TRFO is presented in Chapter 3. All of this direction is divided into three interrelated components: 1) *desired conditions*, which, when taken as a whole, make up the vision for management of the planning area; 2) *objectives, suitability, and allowable uses*, which comprise the plan strategy that will be used to achieve the vision; and 3) *standards and guidelines*, which are the criteria and controls used to

execute the strategy. This management direction and guidance should be followed in future implementation of projects and activities, and is also referred to as the *plan components*, or *RMP components*. The purpose of each of these plan components is described in greater detail below. The number of plan components under each resource or area varies due to the varying complexity of the resource, the extent of existing management direction already provided by law and policy, the need for action, and TRFO priorities. Some resources or areas may not include all types of plan components.

The Approved RMP incorporates by reference each of the appendices to the Proposed LRMP, with modifications to reflect updates included in the Approved RMP. Revised appendices are available online at [http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/sjplc/land\\_use\\_planning.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/sjplc/land_use_planning.html).

Finally, a monitoring plan has been developed to evaluate progress toward achieving desired conditions and objectives, and to determine how well management requirements, such as standards and guidelines, are being applied. Programmatic direction for monitoring and evaluation is included to provide a framework for subsequent monitoring.

All direction in this RMP applies to TRFO lands. The RMP makes no decisions applicable to other ownerships or jurisdictions. The ROD adopts the decision for USFS lands available for lease (See Section 2.2 of Part I, the ROD).

Because this RMP was originally developed by two different agencies, its format and some of its terminology vary from the BLM's conventional resource management plans. Table 1.2 shows the terminology used in this document as compared to that which the BLM typically uses to identify various types of plan decisions. Definitions for the terminology used in the RMP tie to the BLM's planning guidance, as described in Section 1.2.1.

**Table 1.2: Resource Management Plan Components and Bureau of Land Management Decision Types**

<b>RMP Component Terminology</b>	<b>Conventional BLM Plan Decision Terminology</b>
Desired Conditions	Goals
Objectives	Objectives
Suitability and Allowable Uses	Allowable Uses
Standards	Management Actions
Guidelines	Guidelines

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## **1.2.1 RMP Components**

### **Desired Conditions**

Desired conditions are broad-scale direction that guides future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. Desired conditions in this RMP are referred to as “goals” in conventional BLM resource management plans.

### **Objectives**

Objectives identify specific desired outcomes for resources. Objectives are usually quantifiable and measurable and may have established timeframes for achievement (as appropriate). As with desired conditions, they are aspirations, not commitments or final project decisions. Implementation and achievement would rely upon sufficient funding and staffing levels.

## Suitability and Allowable Uses

Allowable uses refer to those allocations that identify surface lands and/or subsurface mineral interests where uses are allowed, restricted, or prohibited to meet desired conditions or objectives.

## Standards

Standards are actions anticipated to achieve desired outcomes, including actions to maintain, restore, or improve land health. Actions include proactive measures, as well as measures or criteria that will be applied to guide day-to-day activities occurring on public land. Standards in this RMP are referred to as “management actions” in conventional BLM resource management plans.

## Guidelines

A guideline refers to a practice, method, or technique determined to be appropriate to meet or move towards a desired condition. Guidelines may be adapted or modified when monitoring or other information indicates the guideline is not effective.

## 1.3 Opportunities and Challenges

### Native American Rights and Interest

The TRFO works collaboratively with the 26 Native American tribes and pueblos that claim cultural affiliation with lands under each agency’s jurisdiction to ensure that management issues of concern to the tribes and pueblos are addressed. Below is a list of tribes and pueblos that claim cultural affiliation with TRFO lands. All applicable BLM policy addressing tribal treaty rights and federal trust responsibilities will continue to be followed. The TRFO recognizes the unique sovereign nation status that the Native American tribes and pueblos have with the United States government.

#### ***Tribes and Pueblos that Claim Cultural Affiliation with TRFO Lands***

- Jicarilla Apache Nation
- Kewa Pueblo (formerly Pueblo of Santo Domingo)
- Navajo Nation
- Ohkay Owingeh (formerly Pueblo of San Juan)
- Pueblo of Acoma
- Pueblo of Cochiti
- Pueblo of Isleta
- Pueblo of Jemez
- Pueblo of Laguna
- Pueblo of Nambe
- Pueblo of Picuris
- Pueblo of Pojoaque
- Pueblo of San Felipe
- Pueblo of San Ildefonso
- Pueblo of Sandia
- Pueblo of Santa Ana
- Pueblo of Santa Clara
- Pueblo of Taos
- Pueblo of Tesuque
- Pueblo of Zia
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- The Hopi Tribe
- Uintah and Ouray Ute Indian Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
- Zuni Tribe

The Ute Mountain Ute and the Southern Ute tribes are both major contributors to the area economy and are among the largest employers in Montezuma and La Plata Counties, respectively. Both tribes have diversified economies including gaming, oil and gas development, and natural resource development on tribal lands. The Southern Ute Tribe also plays a major role in land and housing development in La Plata County.

## The Brunot Agreement

The Brunot Agreement, ratified by Congress in 1874, withdrew over 5,000 square miles in the mountains of southwest Colorado from the 1868 Ute Reservation. The agreement, entered into between the United States (as represented by Felix Brunot) and the Ute Indians in Colorado, was passed into law (18 Stat., 36) by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the U.S. Congress on April 29, 1874 (after Congress decided in 1871 that the United States would no longer make treaties with Native American tribes, yet continued to interact with Native American tribes in much the same manner through executive orders and agreements enacted as statutes). Under the “reserved rights doctrine,” hunting rights on reservation lands relinquished by the Utes were retained; that is, the tribes retained such rights as part of their status as prior and continuing sovereigns. Article II of the Bruno Agreement specified that “the United States shall permit the Ute Indians to hunt upon said lands so long as the game lasts and the Indians are at peace with the white people.” The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe’s hunting rights were acknowledged when the tribe sued the State of Colorado for their historical hunting rights in 1978. The rights were granted to the tribe under a consent decree that gave enrolled members of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe the right to hunt deer and elk in the Brunot area for subsistence, religious, or ceremonial purposes. The consent decree specified that tribal members may hunt deer and elk without a state license year-round, providing that they obtain a tribal hunting permit. In 2013, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe re-negotiated this agreement with the State of Colorado to include the Tribe’s fishing rights and the right to hunt a certain number of black bears, moose, mountain goats, big horn sheep and mountain lions, in addition to the existing take of elk and mule deer within the Brunot area. Other game animals may be hunted without a license and without bag limits, but only during hunting seasons established by CPW. In 2008, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe signed an agreement with the State of Colorado which reinstated their hunting and fishing rights within the Brunot area. The TRFO will continue to ensure that the hunting and fishing rights of the 1873 Brunot Agreement are upheld on public lands under its management jurisdictions. In exercising their Brunot hunting rights, the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute tribal members are required to adhere to federal policy and regulations designed to protect natural and cultural resources.

The TRFO will continue to allow tribal members to collect botanical and other special forest products from public lands within the constraint of ecological sustainability. The TRFO will also coordinate and collaborate with tribal governments to increase awareness and knowledge of culturally significant plants, and will consider potential impacts on culturally significant plants in project design and implementation. Prescribed burn plans, noxious weed control, and other management projects should address and consider traditional uses and traditional management of culturally significant plants.

Important cultural areas and traditional cultural properties will be protected for current and future tribal use. The TRFO will continue to consult with tribes and pueblos, and knowledgeable individuals to identify important cultural areas and traditional cultural properties. If requested by the tribes, the TRFO will keep information on such localities and uses confidential.

The TRFO will maintain and strengthen the existing relationship of government-to-government consultation between the BLM and these 26 Native American tribes and pueblos. The TRFO will develop consultation protocols and other formal agreements between the BLM and Native American Indian Tribes with direct communication between the BLM line officer and tribal officials. The TRFO will provide opportunities for tribal participation and partnerships in educational, interpretive, social, and economic programs and will continue to work with the tribes and pueblos to educate the public on appropriate and respectful etiquette when visiting culturally sensitive sites.

## CHAPTER 2 – RESOURCE DIRECTION

### 2.1 Tres Rios Field Office Geographic Area

The TRFO geographic area consists of 503,589 acres of BLM public land in southwest Colorado and is scattered across eight counties: Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Montrose, San Juan, and San Miguel (See Figure 1.1 above). Public lands in this geographic area are incredibly diverse