

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MCINNIS CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
MACK RIDGE TRAILS
DOI-BLM-CO-N034 2015-0001-EA**

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) §1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

BACKGROUND

The Kokopelli Trail System is a world renowned mountain biking destination within McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) near Fruita, Colorado. Management objectives for this area are focused on maintaining and enhancing this trail system for the use and enjoyment of mountain bikers and other recreationists. The 2004 resource management plan (RMP) for the NCA identified several conceptual trail connections in the Mack Ridge Recreation Management Zone (RMZ). Many of those trails have been completed. The Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), the City of Fruita, several Fruita area businesses and the BLM are partnering to complete the remaining trail proposals from the RMP, and to reroute and restore unsustainable portions of the existing trail system.

The Bureau of Land Management prepared an Environmental Assessment which analyzed the effects of constructing 6.4 miles of new singletrack trails and closing and restoring 0.75 mile of two-track trails in the Mack Ridge RMZ of McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, seven miles northwest of Fruita, Colorado. The EA considered a proposed action and a no action alternative.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity and severity of the impacts anticipated from the Mack Ridge Trails decision relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ). The following findings have been made with regard to each of the ten CEQ considerations:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

This project may have minor short term impacts to soils, water, vegetation, wildlife, and livestock management; however these impacts are not significant. This project will have a long term net benefit for non-motorized recreation (bike, foot and horse), and for soils and water by restoring sections of trail that are unsustainable.

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.*

The proposed action is expected to improve public safety by dispersing recreation use on trails and at trailheads, and by rerouting trail segments that do not meet trail management objectives (challenging steep, rutted sections of trails on intermediate level trails).

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

The project lies within the popular Mack Ridge/Kokopelli Loops portion of McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area where management is focused on providing high quality mountain biking opportunities and experiences. There are no significant impacts to riparian vegetation, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or cultural and historic resources within the project area. There are no municipal water supplies in the project area.

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The development and management of trails in the Mack Ridge Area has been widely supported for many years by local and out-of-town visitors alike. Trail construction and restoration is a common practice in management of recreation areas and the effects are well understood by the academic and practicing communities.

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

This area has a long history of trail-based recreation use. The effects of this use are well-known and pose no unique or unknown risks.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

This decision is like one of many that have previously been made and will continue to be made by BLM responsible officials regarding recreation trail development and management on public lands. The decision is within the scope of the Resource Management Plan and is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions. The decision does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

There are no significant cumulative effects on the environment, either when combined with the effects created by past and concurrent projects, or when combined with the effects from natural changes taking place in the environment or from reasonably foreseeable future projects.

New trail construction would produce small increases in soil erosion, sedimentation and stream channel alterations, but utilizing best management practices for sustainable trail design, construction, maintenance and closure/rehabilitation would minimize cumulative impacts to soil and water resources.

The ground disturbance created by the new trails and closure/rehab areas will increase the likelihood of weed introductions, but regular monitoring, and treatment when needed, will minimize the cumulative effects of the project.

Limiting travel to designated routes, and visitor education efforts (kiosk and map information, visitor contacts, etc.) will limit impacts to cultural and paleontological resources.

The new trails, in combination with other nearby trail developments will contribute to enhanced recreation opportunities, and associated economic benefits, in the communities of the Grand Valley.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

There would be no adverse impacts to the above resources.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

No impacts are expected to endangered or threatened species or their designated critical habitats.

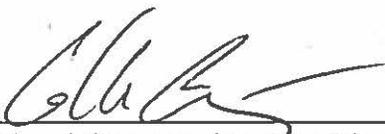
10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

This decision complies with other Federal, State, or local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," September 2004; (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's CEQ criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA.



National Conservation Area Manager
McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area

8/10/16

Date