

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011-EA

January 2016

Uncompahgre Riverway Trail Maintenance

Location: Ridgway Area along the Uncompahgre River

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401
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Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011 EA

PROJECT NAME: Uncompahgre Riverway Trail Maintenance

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T 45 N, R 8 W, Sec. 9

APPLICANT: Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office

BACKGROUND:

Efforts to build the Uncompahgre RiverWay Trail, which now connects Ridgway Town Park with Ridgway State Park, began in 1989. The original “rails to trails” idea to convert the old abandoned Denver and Rio Western railroad grade to a trail and greenbelt along the river was initially intended to extend the existing trail from Montrose to the south toward Ridgway.

The original concept was presented to the Montrose Chamber of Commerce “Blue Ribbon Committee on Recreation and Tourism” in 1989. The Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., a non-profit organization, was established to champion the idea. The mission of Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. was to connect Montrose’s existing trail along the Uncompahgre River and abandoned railroad grade to Ridgway State Park, which was just coming on-line with its state-of-the-art recreation facilities at the reservoir.

However, the proposal was met with little enthusiasm and enough resistance in Montrose that the group decided to change tactics and work from Ridgway, north to Ridgway State Park. The Town of Ridgway was very enthusiastic about the prospect of the trail and greenbelt and the group members were very encouraged by the cooperative attitude of private landowners adjacent to the proposed trail.

In 1994, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. implemented the first of two Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) enhancement awards, as well as a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Grant, a grant from the National Park Service Rivers, and construction assistance from the AmeriCorps program.

The RiverWay trail was constructed from Ridgway Town Park to a 20-acre parcel of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) north of Ridgway. A year later, in 1995, the BLM and a partnership consisting of the Town of Ridgway, Ouray County,

Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC), and numerous other donors and volunteers, worked together to construct the walk-in park and “watchable wildlife” area, located approximately one mile north of town. Additional funding through ISTEPA and GOCO allowed for completion of the trail connection to Ridgway State Park in 2000.

In the past, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. negotiated six separate easements with private land owners along the trail and raised approximately \$700,000 in actual-construction grant dollars for the project. All planning, negotiations, design, oversight, and maintenance required for the project was undertaken by Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc. Currently, the Town of Ridgway, BLM, Ouray County, and Delta Correction Center, Uncompahgre RiverWay, Inc., and various volunteers are working cooperatively to monitor and maintain the RiverWay Trail.

Uncompahgre Riverway Trail



Map produced by Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office, October 2015
 Projection: UTM Zone 13, Datum: NAD 1983
 Spatial data may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. No warranty is made on the accuracy, reliability, and completeness. This information may be updated without notification.

Bureau of Land Management Private

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION:

During spring runoff, the bank supporting the Riverway Trail eroded to a point that the trail is now in danger of being washed out. In order to protect the Uncompahgre Riverway Trail, which is a vital link from the Town of Ridgway to Ridgway State Park, the BLM needs to take action prior to the 2016 spring run-off due to anticipated high flows associated with the current El Nino weather event, to protect the east bank and trail from eroding and becoming a safety hazard for trail users.

Decision to be made: The BLM will decide whether to mitigate erosion to the east bank of the Uncompahgre River during a Bald Eagle crucial winter range timing limitation period to prevent the Uncompahgre Riverway Trail from being washed out.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to place boulders with heavy equipment such as a backhoe on the bank of the Uncompahgre River. The length of the bank to be protected is approximately 50 feet. Rocks will be placed beginning below the water surface and built in a stacked manner extending up the bank approximately 10 feet in height to exceed the ordinary high water mark. Less than 1 cubic yard of material will be placed below the ordinary high water mark per running foot along the bank. All work will be completed by April 2016.

Design Features:

1. To minimize impacts on breeding migratory birds, surface disturbing activities shall not occur from May 15 through July 15. This timeframe encompasses the core breeding period for the majority of migratory birds in the project area.
2. All heavy equipment used in the construction of the obstacle park would be power washed and free of debris before entering BLM lands. This is to prevent the spread of weed seed.
3. All seed used for rehabilitation efforts would be certified and free of noxious weeds.
4. Activities associated with the proposed action would not affect the natural and beneficial floodplain function both on site and downstream, and is in accordance with the Executive Order 11988, and BLM Manual 7221.
5. Rights-of-ways will be avoided to the extent possible. When they cannot be avoided, care will be given to ensure no harm or adverse impacts will be caused to the existing ROWs, and when necessary, the ROW holder will be contacted and coordinated with to ensure consideration and protection of the ROW.
6. All construction equipment oil and hydraulic leaks would be repaired before use. Any leaks developed during use would be repaired immediately. If leaks into the soil are possible, drip pans would be used to prevent soil contamination.
7. Fueling of construction equipment would occur on or adjacent to roads and away from drainages. During fueling operations the operator would ensure no fuel spillage occurs. Should a spill occur, it should be reported to the authorized officer and BLM's Hazardous

Materials Specialist immediately for proper response action. The contractor would be required to remove and properly dispose of any soil contaminated by spilled fuel or lubricants.

8. BLM will be onsite during all phases of the construction and any additional maintenance needed in the future.
9. To minimize impacts to roosting Bald eagles no work shall begin before 8 a.m. daily and shall stop one hour before sunset.

No Action Alternative: No action will be taken to help reduce the erosion to the bank of the Uncompahgre River.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5-3):

Name of Plan: Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 1989

Decision Language: Management Units 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 16 will be managed for extensive recreational use to meet public demands for dispersed recreation.

Standards for Public Land Health: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. A finding for each standard will be made in the environmental analysis (next section).

Standard	Definition/Statement
#1 Upland Soils	Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes. Adequate soil infiltration and permeability allows for the accumulation of soil moisture necessary for optimal plant growth and vigor, and minimizes surface runoff.
#2 Riparian Systems	Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water, function properly and have the ability to recover from major surface disturbances such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods. Riparian vegetation captures sediment, and provides forage, habitat and bio-diversity. Water quality is improved or maintained. Stable soils store and release water slowly.
#3 Plant and Animal Communities	Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential. Plants and animals at both the community and population level are productive, resilient, diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce and sustain natural fluctuations, and ecological processes.
#4 Threatened and Endangered Species	Special status, threatened and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by the BLM, and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy, native plant and animal communities.

#5 Water Quality	The water quality of all water bodies, including ground water where applicable, located on or influenced by BLM lands will achieve or exceed the Water Quality Standards established by the State of Colorado. Water Quality Standards for surface and ground waters include the designated beneficial uses, numeric criteria, narrative criteria, and anti-degradation requirements set forth under State law as found in (5 CCR 1002-8), as required by Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act.
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AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT and ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter provides a description of the human and environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action and presents comparative analyses of the direct, indirect and cumulative effects on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the Proposed Action.

Cumulative impacts of the proposed action are shown at the end of document. Past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions known to the BLM that may occur within the affected area are shown at the beginning of this section

Potential effects to the resources/concerns in the table (below) were evaluated to determine if detailed analysis is necessary. Consideration of some elements is to ensure compliance with laws, statutes, regulation or Executive Orders that impose certain requirements upon all Federal actions. Other items are relevant to the management of public lands in general or to the BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) in particular. Any element not affected by the proposed action will not be analyzed.

Determination of Staff (Choose one of the following options for the “Determination” column):

PR = present and requires further analysis because 1) analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) analysis of the issue is necessary to determine the significance of impacts. Provide a brief statement of the specific resource issue(s) to be analyzed in “Rationale for Determination”.

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NA = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required. Provide a brief statement why analysis is not required.

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section C of the DNA form.

Prior to Commencing Analysis				
Resource	Determ-ination	Rationale if NP/NA/NC, or Issue Statement if PR	Name of Specialist	Date

Prior to Commencing Analysis				
Resource	Determination	Rationale if NP/NA/NC, or Issue Statement if PR	Name of Specialist	Date
Land With Wilderness Characteristics (BLM Manual Section 6310)	NP		E. Franz	1/11/16
Wild and Scenic Rivers (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act)	NP		E. Franz	1/11/16
Cultural Resources (National Historic Preservation Act)	NP	The action affects lands that are situated entirely within previously disturbed ground, and is exempt from additional inventory requirements under the Colorado BLM/SHPO protocol agreement of 2015.	G. Hadden	1/11/16
Native American Religious Concerns (American Indian Religious Freedom Act)	NP		G. Hadden	1/11/16
Farmlands (Prime or Unique) (Farmland Protection Policy Act)	NP		J. Sondergard	12/17/15
Soils (includes Public Land Health Standard 1)	NA	Rocks will be placed on the bank to stabilize soils. No removal of soils will occur.	J. Sondergard	12/17/15
Upland Vegetation (includes Public Land Health Standard 3)	NA		L. Rogers	1/11/16
Invasive, Non-native Species (Federal Noxious Weed Act and EO 13112)	NA		L. Rogers	1/11/16
Threatened, Endangered (ESA), Sensitive Species (includes Public Land Health Standard 4)	PR	How will the project affect wintering Bald eagle that occupy the project area?	K. Holsinger	1/8/2016
Migratory Birds (EO 13186 and Migratory Bird Treaty Act)	NA	Due to design features, impacts to migratory birds will not be impacted from the project	M. Siders	1/11/16
Wildlife, Terrestrial (includes Public Land Health Standard 3)	NA	The project will not result in vegetation disturbance, and the small footprint coupled with the short duration of the project will not result in loss of habitat or force wintering species to seek alternate suboptimal habitats.	K. Holsinger	1/8/2016
Wildlife, Aquatic (includes Public Land Health Standard 3)	NA	The project will not result in sedimentation, loss of flow, and does not occur during reproductive periods therefore no impacts are anticipated.	K. Holsinger	1/8/2016
Riparian Zones and Wetlands (EO 11990) (includes Public Land Health Standard 2)	NA	The current stream bank consists of rock and debris below the sidewalk and no wetland habitat.	J. Sondergard	12/17/15

Prior to Commencing Analysis				
Resource	Determ-ination	Rationale if NP/NA/NC, or Issue Statement if PR	Name of Specialist	Date
Floodplains (EO11988)	NA	The scope of this project falls within the COE nationwide 13 permit and is not located in wetlands.	J. Sondergard	12/17/15
Water -- Surface (Clean Water Act and others) (includes Public Land Health Standard 5)	NA	Impacts to surface water will be minimal as rocks are placed on the bank. All work will be conducted from the sidewalk rather than in the stream channel.	J. Sondergard	12/17/15
Water -- Ground (Clean Water Act and others) (includes Public Land Health Standard 5)	NP	No impact to Groundwater.	J. Sondergard	12/17/15
Wastes (hazardous or solid) (RCRA and CERCLA)	NA	All equipment will remain on the banks of the Uncompahgre River.	A. Kraus	1/19/16
Environmental Justice (EO 12898)	NA		J. Sondergard	1/11/16
Socio-Economics	NA		J. Sondergard	1/11/16
Access	NP		J. Jackson	12/15/15
Transportation	NA	Transportation designations will not be impacted due to the proposed action	J. Jackson	12/15/15
Cadastral Survey	NP		S. Mullen	1/11/16
Realty Authorizations	NP		N. Szuch	1/11/16
Range Management	NP		L. Rogers	1/11/16
Forest Management	NP		J. Sondergard	1/11/16
Fire	NP		J. Sondergard	1/11/16
Noise	NP		J. Jackson	12/15/15
Recreation	NA	The proposed project will not impact recreation resources	J. Jackson	12/15/15
Visual Resources	NA	The proposed project will not change the VRM within the project area	J. Jackson	12/15/15
Geology and Minerals	NP		R. Ernst	1/11/16
Paleontology	NP		G. Hadden	1/11/16
Law Enforcement	NA	The proposed project will not impact law enforcement	T. Moe	1/11/16

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: As the project is scheduled to occur between January 1, 2016 and April 1, 2016 the only species that may be impacted by the proposed action during this time frame are Bald Eagles. As such Bald Eagle will be the only species analyzed in detail.

The riparian forest galleries along the Uncompahgre River in the project area between Ridgway reservoir and the town of Ridgway provide roosting and foraging opportunities to wintering Bald eagles. Colorado Parks and Wildlife considers the project area to be a communal roost site for wintering Bald eagle. Bald eagle communal night roosts are important winter habitat. Eagles use night roosts as protection from inclement weather and temperature extremes. Night roosts may also serve important social functions. On December 13, 2015 two eagles were observed, between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., either roosting or foraging in the riparian corridor between the town of Ridgway and the reservoir. On January 7, 2016 no eagles were observed, between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. in the riparian corridor between the town of Ridgway and the reservoir. Such observations are somewhat suggestive that eagle roosting in the project area may be dependent upon weather and/or foraging opportunity and that there may not be a strong roosting site fidelity at the project site.

Within 0.5 miles of the project area there are numerous residences, a gravel pit, a highway department storage facility, Colorado Highway 550 (440 feet from the project site), and the Uncompahgre Riverway trail system that does see walkers, runners, and cyclists daily during the winter occupation period. The presence of Bald Eagles in the project area with all these human related disturbances suggests that the eagles foraging and roosting in the project area and surrounding vicinity are to some degree tolerant of these human related disturbances.

All of the public lands within the project area currently contain a timing limitation that states the following:

To protect wintering bald eagles and crucial habitats, no surface disturbing activities shall occur from December 1 through April 30. Exceptions or variances to this restriction will be considered and evaluated according to UFO policies. Exceptions and variances to standard restrictions and protection measures must be requested in writing to the BLM authorized officer. Such requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be granted by authorized officer depending on animal or herd status, topographic characteristics, site context, weather severity, and other factors, provided species and habitats are adequately protected. Any modifications to prescribed restrictions, and the rationale behind those decisions, will be documented in the project case file(s). In some cases, site characteristics and/or conditions may warrant expanding buffer distances to ensure adequate protection of species.

Environmental Consequences:

Proposed Action –

Implementing the proposed action during the winter period when Bald eagles are utilizing the project area would result in eagles being flushed off of chosen roost sites once the equipment begins to work in the morning and may not return until work has been completed at the end of the day or until the work has been completed. Impacted birds would likely move up or down the

riparian corridor as far as necessary until the distance is sufficient for the impacted individual to no longer feel that the activity is a threat. In addition foraging opportunities would be lost between ¼-½ miles above and below the work area.

The project will not disturb vegetation or soils thus no direct impacts to riparian habitat are anticipated to occur. Since the proposed action would be new disruptive activity, it is likely that impacted eagles would avoid the project area and all suitable habitat within line of sight of the project area. A viewshed analysis of the project area suggests that approximately 45 acres of suitable eagle roosting habitat would be avoided during the project. The riparian habitat along the Uncompahgre River between Ridgway reservoir and the town of Ridgway totals approximately 214 acres meaning that approximately 79% of the suitable roosting habitat would remain available during project implementation.

Project engineers have determined that the work will last approximately 2.5 days; therefore the impacts to affected eagles will be very short in duration. Because of demonstrated tolerance by Bald eagles of rather substantial human activity and the short duration of impacts it is unlikely that eagles present in the project area would be forced to seek less optimal alternate winter habitats. Colorado Parks and Wildlife recommends that if disturbances must occur within seasonal restriction buffer zones, activity should be restricted to the period between 1000 and 1400 hours. Project engineers determined that less than 6 hour work days would extend the project out requiring as much as 4-5 days to complete resulting in longer term impacts to the eagles. BLM believes that it is the best interest to the eagles that the project be completed as quickly as possible, therefore a design feature has been added that restricts work activity between 8 a.m. and 1 hour before sunset to minimize impacts to birds that have either roosted in the project area or are seeking roosting sites prior to sunset and still provide enough work hours to complete the project in 2.5 days or less.

Given the short duration of the impacts, the relatively minor caloric demands to eagles that may be flushed from roost sites, and the close proximity of high quality habitat that will be unaffected by the proposed action, it is unlikely that implementing the proposed action will result in Bald eagle mortality or force eagles to seek less optimal alternative habitats as a result of project implementation.

No Action Alternative – There would be no impacts to wintering Bald Eagles from the proposed action.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: The public lands within the project area currently meet land health standards for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species as evidenced by the number of eagles that occupy the area and the high avian species diversity that occupy the area seasonally. The project will not disturb riparian habitat or disrupt river function therefore the proposed action will not influence land health findings.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are the environmental impacts that could result from the implementation of the Proposed Action, when added to the impacts from all other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities, regardless of who is conducting such activities. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time. The cumulative effects analysis considers the geographic scope of the cumulative effects and past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions.

Analysis Area

The area includes the area analyzed for bald eagles since this is the only resource analyzed. The table below shows the impact areas.

Resource	Cumulative Impact Analysis Area	Indicator (i.e. acres, AUMs, miles, # of sites)	Timeframe
Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive Species	The riparian corridor from the Hwy 62 bridge across the Uncompahgre River in Ridgway downstream to Ridgway reservoir.	214 Acres	Remaining portion of wintering bald eagle season; December 1 – April 30, 2016

Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions (RFFA)

The table below summarizes all the known past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. The actions are listed by activity and grouped by the cumulative impact analysis area depending on the resource.

Activities	Past Development	Present	RFFA
BLM roads	0.3 miles		
County Roads (Dirt and Paved)	0.4 miles		
State Highways	3.0 miles		Highway rock mitigation, Snow plowing, Moving of heavy equipment
Rights of Way (Roads, Power and Pipelines)	1.1 miles		
Recreation Developments	5 acres		
Uncompahgre Riverway Trail (paved on Public and private lands)	1.5miles	Rock Placement for trail stabilization, Snow plowing	

Activities	Past Development	Present	RFFA
Public Land Trails (native surface on BLM and State land)	1.5 miles		
Private residential	164 acres		

Threatened, Endangered, and sensitive species

Past and present actions on BLM-managed land within the CIAA area include: a major highway, bridge crossings of the river, residential development, recreation trails and bathroom facilities, a gravel pit, and the Ridgway reservoir. Past and current human uses of other lands in the CIAA area include primarily agriculture, both cropland and rangeland, and industrial or residential development. Factors contributing to the status of Bald eagle include the removal or alteration of wildlife habitat and temporary (or in the case of some roads, permanent) disruption and disturbance to wildlife species, or direct impacts to individuals from vehicular collisions, shootings, poisonings, and increases in scavenging opportunities from big game highway collisions and increased fishing opportunities from the presence of the reservoir and the associated stocking of the reservoir by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. These anthropogenic and natural factors have undoubtedly contributed to changes in the distribution and abundance of the Bald eagle and altered important habitat characteristics both positively and negatively.

The reasonably foreseeable future actions, in addition to the proposed action, include snow plowing along the highway, highway maintenance and improvements, trail snow plowing, and continued housing development to the immediate west of the project area. The reasonably foreseeable actions identified are unlikely to result in additional loss of critical Bald eagle wintering habitat, however human use of the riparian habitat is likely to steadily increase as development continues. The reasonably foreseeable future actions are anticipated to be a continuation of the current level of human related disturbance already present in the environmental baseline to which wintering eagles have demonstrated to this point a level of tolerance for such human related activity.

Impacts from the proposed action would have minimal short term negative impacts to wintering Bald eagle present in the project area, when combined with the past, present and RFFA actions in the cumulative impact analysis area. Such minimal short term impacts when combined with the RFFA are unlikely to result in Bald eagle mortality, or result in eagles seeking less optimal habitats that could result in mortality. The no action alternative would have neither positive nor negative impacts to wintering Bald eagle due to the current high level of human presence and use of the project area.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED

Corps of Engineers

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: The following BLM personnel have contributed to and have reviewed this environmental assessment.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
Ken Holsinger	Biologist	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species; Wildlife
Missy Siders	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds
Jedd Sondergard	Hydrologist and Environmental Coordinator	Water and Soils
Glade Hadden	Archeologist	Cultural and Native American Religious Concerns
Lynae Rogers	Range Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Range Management and Vegetation
Julie Jackson	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Transportation, Visual Resources, Access, Noise

**U.S. Department of the Interior
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2505 S. Townsend Ave.
Montrose, CO 81401**

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011 EA

Location: Township 45 North, Range 8 West, Section 9 in Ouray County, Colorado.

Project Name: Uncompahgre Riverway Trail Maintenance

Applicant: BLM

Background

The BLM Uncompahgre Field Office has completed an Environment Assessment (EA) # DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011 which analyses the effects of placing boulders with heavy equipment such as a backhoe on the bank of the Uncompahgre River. During spring runoff, the bank supporting the Riverway Trail eroded to a point that the trail is now in danger of being washed out. In order to protect the Uncompahgre Riverway Trail, which is a vital link from the Town of Ridgway to Ridgway State Park, the BLM needs to take action prior to the 2016 spring run-off due to anticipated high flows associated with the current El Nino event, to protect the east bank and trail from eroding and becoming a safety hazard for trail users.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011 EA, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

Rationale

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

Context

The proposed action is in Ouray County, CO, north of the Town of Ridgway. Boulders will be placed with heavy equipment such as a backhoe on the bank of the Uncompahgre River. The length of the bank to be protected is approximately 50 feet. Rocks will be placed beginning below the water surface and built in a stacked manner extending up the bank approximately 10 feet in height to exceed the ordinary high water mark. Less than 1 cubic yard of material will be placed below the ordinary high water mark per running foot along the bank. All work will be completed by April 2016.

Intensity

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

Beneficial impacts of this project would be the stabilization of the Uncompahgre Riverway trail which is a vital part of the Ridgway Trail System. Adverse impacts include temporary, short term impacts to wildlife habitat and increased surface disturbance.

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

Mitigation would reduce the potential impacts to public health and safety to a level that is not significant. The scale of this project, and the short-term duration of construction results in a low risk to public health and safety.

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

No historic or cultural resources are present within the project area. There are no identified parklands, prime farmlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers in proximity to the project area. Any wetland impacts would be minor and would comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act and Corps of Engineers.

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

The quality and use of the human environment in the project area is understood, has been analyzed, and is not highly controversial from a scientific standpoint.

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

The proposed action is not unique for this area, as trail projects have been previously approved. The BLM has experience in implementing and monitoring similar projects, the effects of which have been found to be reasonably predictable. Effects from the proposed action would not be classified as highly uncertain or involving 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.

Consenting to trail maintenance activities would not create a precedent for future trail work. The BLM administers other trail construction/maintenance activities in the general area. Any future proposals would have to be evaluated on their own merits based on the issues and impacts related to the location, timing, and intensity of each action. The proposed action does not set a precedent for a future consideration.

7) Consideration of the action in relation to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Other projects are foreseeable, but it is not anticipated that cumulative impacts of any significance would occur. The limited scale of activity creates minimal individual effects, as well as minimal cumulative effects when added to the existing situation and other potential activities.

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.*

No cultural or historic sites would be affected by this decision. If any unidentified sites are discovered during implementation, they would be avoided or mitigated so that they would not be impacted.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.*

No endangered, threatened, candidate or proposed species would be adversely affected by the project. All listed species occurring within the Uncompahgre Field Office were considered.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed action does not threaten violation of any laws or regulations imposed for the protection of the environment.

Determination

This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the information contained in the EA and my consideration of criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27). It is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant environmental impacts; 2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan; and 3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

Approved:



Sara Dawson
Acting Field Manager
BLM, Uncompahgre Field Office

1/28/16

Date

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
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Decision Record

(DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011 EA)

DECISION: It is my decision to implement the proposed action, as described in EA # DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016-0011. The proposed action entails placing boulders with heavy equipment such as a backhoe on the bank of the Uncompahgre River. The length of the bank to be protected is approximately 50 feet. Rocks will be placed beginning below the water surface and built in a stacked manner extending up the bank approximately 10 feet in height to exceed the ordinary high water mark. Less than 1 cubic yard of material will be placed below the ordinary high water mark per running foot along the bank. All work will be completed by April 2016.

Design Features:

1. To minimize impacts on breeding migratory birds, surface disturbing activities shall not occur from May 15 through July 15. This timeframe encompasses the core breeding period for the majority of migratory birds in the project area.
2. All heavy equipment used in the construction of the obstacle park would be power washed and free of debris before entering BLM lands. This is to prevent the spread of weed seed.
3. All seed used for rehabilitation efforts would be certified and free of noxious weeds.
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5. Rights-of-ways will be avoided to the extent possible. When they cannot be avoided, care will be given to ensure no harm or adverse impacts will be caused to the existing ROWs, and when necessary, the ROW holder will be contacted and coordinated with to ensure consideration and protection of the ROW.
6. All construction equipment oil and hydraulic leaks would be repaired before use. Any leaks developed during use would be repaired immediately. If leaks into the soil are possible, drip pans would be used to prevent soil contamination.
7. Fueling of construction equipment would occur on or adjacent to roads and away from drainages. During fueling operations the operator would ensure no fuel spillage occurs. Should a spill occur, it should be reported to the authorized officer and BLM's Hazardous Materials Specialist immediately for proper response action. The contractor would be required to remove and properly dispose of any soil contaminated by spilled fuel or lubricants.

8. BLM will be onsite during all phases of the construction and any additional maintenance needed in the future.
9. To minimize impacts to roosting Bald eagles no work shall begin before 8 a.m. daily and shall stop one hour before sunset.

RATIONALE:

The analysis of the proposed action did not identify any impacts that would be significant in nature either in context or intensity. The project will greatly reduce the risk of losing a heavily used trail. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan. The Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment.

COMPLIANCE WITH MAJOR LAWS:

This decision is in compliance with the Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan (1989), and applicable laws, regulations and policy, including the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (P.L. 94-325); Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703-712); Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 (Clean Water Act), as amended (33 U.S.C. Chap. 26); The Wild and Scenic Act (WSRA) of 1968 (P.L. 90-542; 16 U.S.C. 1271 *et seq*); Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended (P.L. 88-206); Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-629, 7 U.S.C. 2801 *et seq*); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (P.L. 89-665); Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (P.L. 86-253); Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (P.L. 96-95); and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-601).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICAN IMPACT:

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was prepared, based on the information contained in the EA and my consideration of criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27). It is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant environmental impacts; 2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan; and 3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

APPEALS:

Within 30 days of receipt of this decision, you have the right of appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at 43 CFR 4.400. Appeal and stay procedures are outlined in Form CO-050-1842-1.

NAME OF PREPARER: Julie Jackson



NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Jedd Sondergard

DATE 1/13/16

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL



Sara Dawson
Acting Field Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office

DATE SIGNED 1/28/16

ATTACHMENTS: Map

Uncompahgre Riverway Trail



 Bureau of Land Management  Private

Map produced by Bureau of Land Management,
Uncompahgre Field Office, October 2005
Projection: UTM, Zone 13; Datum: NAD 1983

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