

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2014-0076 EA

February 2014

Special Recreation Permit for Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center

Location: Designated roads, mountain bike trails and paved pathways within the Moab Field Office - Amasa Back/ Pothole/ Rockstacker/ Ahab, Bar M and Klondike Mountain Bike Focus Areas, Bartlett Slickrock, Gemini Bridges/ Magnificent Seven trails/ Gold Bar Rim, Hunter Canyon Rim, Jackson trail, Jedi slickrock, Klonzo trails, Kokopelli Long Canyon, Monitor & Merrimac, Pipedream, Poison Spider, Porcupine Rim, Lazy Man's, Lower Porcupine Singletrack (LPS), Seven Up, Shafer Trail, Slickrock, Sovereign (BLM portion), Blue Hills Road, BLM portion of Moab Canyon bike path Highway 128, State Route 279, Mineral Bottom, Kane Creek/ Hurrah Pass, Onion Creek Road, Sand Flats Road

Applicant/Address: Justin Dayley, 921 S. 8th Ave., Stop 8128, Pocatello, ID 83209

Moab Field Office
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BLM



Special Recreation Permit for Idaho State University

DOI-BLM-UTY010-2014-0076

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Justin Dayley, on behalf of Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center seeks authorization through a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to conduct an annual commercial mountain bike trip on designated roads and trails managed by the Moab BLM. This EA analyzes permitted use of the designated mountain bike trails as well as permitted use of designated roads and paved paths.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Justin Dayley, on behalf of Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center, seeks authorization through a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to conduct an annual commercial mountain bike trip on designated roads and trails managed by the Moab BLM. As required by 43 CFR 2930, Davis is required to obtain an event SRP to conduct the proposed activity.

CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLAN(S)

The proposed action has been determined to be in conformance with the terms and conditions of the Moab Resource Management Plan (approved in October, 2008) as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

Moab's RMP states the following:

- **REC-46** "Special Recreation Permits are issued as a discretionary action as a means to: help meet management objectives, provide opportunities for economic activity, facilitate recreational use of public lands, control visitor use, protect recreational and natural resources, and provide for the health and safety of visitors." (page 97)
and
- **REC-47** "All SRPs will contain standard stipulations appropriate for the type of activity and may include stipulations necessary to protect lands or resources, reduce user conflicts, or minimize health and safety concerns....Issue and manage recreation permits for a wide variety of uses to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities, provide opportunities for private enterprise, manage user-group interaction, and limit the impacts to such uses upon natural and cultural resources." (page 98).
- The Moab Resource Management Plan (RMP), Final Environmental Impact Statement, signed October 31, 2008, identified lands with wilderness characteristics. The proposed use does not include any areas determined to have wilderness characteristics. The proposed activity would not result in any changes in the impacts that were analyzed in the FEIS for the RMP.

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

The proposed action is consistent with the Grand County General Plan (2012, pages 38-59), which calls for ‘maintaining and enhancing the recreational, scenic, and cultural amenities unique to Grand County to attract and sustain economic activity’. The Grand County General Plan states “Tourism continues to contribute significantly to the economic base. The landscape, scenic resources, recreational amenities, special events and local businesses continue to attract and accommodate visitor”. The Plan seeks to ‘promote cooperation with federal and state agencies to identify and implement appropriate management of high-use and special-value areas, including areas such as: Sand Flats, Mill Creek, Potato Salad Hill, the Highway 128 corridor, the Kane Creek corridor, and Moab Rim Trail’

CHAPTER 2 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This EA focuses on the Proposed and No Action alternatives. No other alternatives were considered. The No Action alternative is considered and analyzed to provide a baseline for comparison of the impacts of the proposed action.

PROPOSED ACTION

Justin Dayley, on behalf of Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center, has requested authorization through a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to conduct an annual trip to mountain bike on designated mountain bike trails and roads administered by the Moab Field Office. The proposed action is to permit this activity in March annually. The maximum group size would be thirty students but the typical group size is likely to be a maximum of 15 students. This trip has previously taken place but not under an SRP. The proposed activity is similar to many requests. As a result, this EA will analyze permitted use of designated mountain bike trails and roads, as well as paved bike paths.

NO ACTION

The No Action Alternative is to deny the SRP to Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center.

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL SETTING

The affected environment was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist. The checklist indicates which resources of concern are either not present in the project area or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis, see appendix A. Resources which could be impacted to a level requiring further analysis are described in Chapter 3 and impacts on these resources are analyzed in Chapter 4 below.

Recreation

Group mountain bike rides are a popular recreation activity in and around Moab. The designated roads, mountain bike trails and paved paths that surround Moab are world famous. The annual trip would provide a recreation opportunity for the participants.

Fish and Wildlife

All trails travel through habitats that offer potential nesting and year round habitats for a variety of raptors, migratory birds and other local wildlife residents including coyotes, bobcats, fox, medium to small mammals, bats, rodents , lizards and snakes.

Trails in the Amasa Back area have suitable MSO habitat, suitable bighorn habitats, though not in areas known for lambing, migration, rutting or consistent year-round use and known peregrine activities.

Trails in the Bar M area have suitable bighorn habitats, though not in areas known for lambing, migration or rutting consistent year-round use by bighorn.

Trails in the Klondike & Klonzo areas do not offer habitats for MSO, bighorn, deer or elk.

Trails in the Magnificent 7 area have suitable MSO habitat, suitable bighorn habitats and habitats known to be occupied during sensitive lambing, migration, rutting periods and high use year-round, and known peregrine activities.

Trails in the Moab East area travel through deer winter range.

Trails in the Moab North area have suitable bighorn habitats and habitats known to be occupied during sensitive lambing, migration, rutting periods and high use year-round and offer potential nesting habitat for a variety of raptors.

Trails in the Moab South area have suitable MSO habitat, suitable bighorn habitats, though not in areas known for lambing, migration, rutting or consistent year-round use, known peregrine activities and offer potential nesting habitat for a variety of raptors.

Trails in the Whole Enchilada area have suitable MSO habitat, travel through deer winter range , in areas where there are known peregrine and bald eagle activities and offer potential nesting habitat for a variety of raptors.

Summary Table

	MSO	Deer/ Elk	BHS- NSO	BHS Habitat	Bald Eagle	Peregrine
AMASA BACK	x			x		x
Bar M				x		
Klondike						
Klonzo						
Magnificent 7	x		x	x		x
Moab East		X				

Moab North			x	x		
Moab South	x			x		x
The Whole Enchilada	x	x			x	x

Bighorn

The Amasa Back, Bar M, Magnificent 7, Moab North and South trail systems traverses though habitat identified by the Utah Division of Wildlife (UDWR) as suitable desert bighorn sheep habitat though only trails in the Magnification 7 and Moab North areas are occupied year-round by the Potash Bighorn Sheep Herd. The Potash Bighorn Sheep Herd and the adjacent Island in the Sky Herd are the only remaining native self-supporting desert bighorn sheep herds in Utah. The Potash Bighorn Sheep Herd has remained healthy and disease-free and is expanding both its range and its population size.

The desert bighorn sheep is a major wildlife species in this area. Within the Moab Field Office, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) recognizes approximately 305,000 acres of habitat for the Potash herd; the Division estimates that approximately 250 desert bighorn sheep inhabit this area. Several recent GPS collar studies (2003-2010) as well as modeling exercises have determined these sheep consistently utilize approximately 110,000 acres of BLM lands within this range that offering lambing, rearing and migration routes. Ewes especially utilize very specific areas that are crucial to lambing and rearing of their young typical from April 1 through June 15th. These areas are also utilized during the rutting season (October 1 through December 15th) These lamb rearing and rutting areas generally consist of steep talus slopes along canyons bottoms and/or along rims in more remote areas where ewes can forage and rear their young. Steep talus slopes typically offer escape terrain to which animals can flee, avoiding human disturbances, livestock conflicts and predators.

The 2008 Moab RMP has protective stipulation measures in place that preclude activities that could degrade the majority of this habitat used for lambing, rearing and migration routes. (BLM, 2008; BLM, 2008a).

Mule Deer

Portions of the Whole Enchilada, Moab East and South trail systems traverses though habitats identified by the Utah Division of Wildlife (UDWR) as crucial mule deer winter range. The BLM uses UDWR crucial habitat boundaries as management tools because UDWR is the entity with jurisdiction and expertise over wildlife in Utah. Crucial habitat is defined by the UDWR as "habitat on which the local population of a wildlife species depends for survival because there are no alternative ranges or habitats available... Degradation or loss of crucial habitat will lead to significant declines in the wildlife population in question (UDWR, 2008)." Deer crucial winter habitat is protected by the BLM by applying a timing limitation for surface disturbing activities from November 15 through April 15. (BLM, 2008; BLM, 2008a).

Migratory Birds

Raptors

Much of the canyon areas that these trail traverse through offers habitat suitable for various species of raptors to nest. Currently there are no known active nesting sites near any of the existing single track trails. Active raptor nest sites are given protection by the BLM by applying a seasonal and spatial buffer that restricts surface disturbing activities during the critical time as discussed in Appendix R (Best Management Practices for Raptors and their Associated Habitats in Utah) of the RMP . (BLM, 2008; BLM, 2008a)

Threatened and Endangered Species

Portions of the Amasa Back, Bar M, Magnificent 7, Moab South and East and The Whole Enchilada trail systems pass through suitable nesting habitats for Mexican spotted owls.

Multiple MSO protocol surveys have been performed and maintained in all suitable habitats in the vicinity of these trails systems. Some dating back to 2001 and have been repeated according to the Services requirements. Currently there is no nesting MSOs within 0.5 miles of any of these designated trails. Trails that were in existence during the development of the RMP were included in formal consultation with the Service prior to the implementation of the RMP. All appropriate consultation measures with the Service have been completed on all trails that have been developed since the 2008 RMP implementation.

MSO habitats are given protection by the BLM by applying conservation measures identified in Appendix Q (Conservation Measures for T&E Species of Utah from the Use Plan Programmatic BAS & Section 7 Consultation) of the RMP . (BLM, 2008; BLM, 2008a)

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

PROPOSED ACTION

This section analyzes the impacts of the proposed action to those potentially impacting resources described in the affected environment, Chapter 3, above.

Recreation

The proposed annual trip, and permitted recreational use, would provide a recreation benefit to the community, as well as to the participants. There would not be displacement of other recreation visitors.

Fish and Wildlife

The single track bike trails traverse through a variety of habitats that offer year-round and seasonal habitats to many local and migratory wildlife species. Disturbances to most local wildlife residents during commercial use and events would likely be temporarily as animals move to other undisturbed areas in the vicinity of the trails where forage and cover is abundant. Commercial use and events on these designated trails would not add additional fragmentation

through these habitats but as use increases over time impacts from human disturbance may result in the reduction of use by local wildlife in the vicinity of these trails.

Bighorn sheep:

Though the Amasa Back, Bar M, Magnificent 7, Moab North and South systems traverses though bighorn habitats, only trails in the Magnification 7 and Moab North systems are in areas where there is consistent bighorn occupancy. The southern portion of the Bartlett Mountain Bike Focus Areas and Tusher/Jedi Mountain Bike Focus Areas are also in areas consistently occupied by bighorn.

Within the Magnificent 7 and Moab North systems local bighorn are known to utilize areas near the existing trails. Portions of these trails traverse migration, rutting and lambing areas for bighorn. Several of these trails were designated in the 2008 Moab RMP and impacts of these trails on desert bighorn sheep were analyzed in the EIS accompanying that RMP. Potential impacts to bighorn and their habitats on trails developed post RMP were analyzed in the EA documents that were written prior to trail development. Activity on these trails typically cause bighorn to experience localized disturbances. Escape terrain in the areas of most of these trails may provide bighorn the ability to avoid disturbances that occur along designated trails.

Permitted activities and events, along with private use during the lambing and rutting seasons may cause bighorn to avoid habitats near these trails or chose alternative areas to use as they migrate through to their rutting grounds. As activity increases from commercial permits, events and private use along the designated trails bighorn flight and avoidance behaviors may also increase and habitat abandonment may occur in these areas.

The northern portion of the Gemini Bridges trail is located in high value lambing grounds and the northern half of 7-up, short segments of Navajo Rocks and the most southern tip of Monitor and Merrimack trails are also located in areas where GPS data indicated concentrations of ewe activity and potential lambing areas.

Permitted activities and events along with private use during lambing and rutting season may increase flight and avoidance behaviors that may lead to habitat abandonment, negatively impacting breeding success and lamb survival in these areas.

Habitat abandonment may also occur by ewe groups that typically utilize areas near designated trails on a year-round base. Commercial use and events on these existing trails would not add additional fragmentation through bighorn sheep habitat but as use increases over time impacts from human disturbance may result in the reduction of migration, breeding and lambing success in these areas and the abandonment of portions of currently occupied habitats could occur.

Mule Deer

The more southeastern portion of the Kokopelli and Porcupine Rim Trails and LPS (Whole Enchilada), the Fisher Mesa Trail (Moab East) and the Upper Spanish Valley Mountain Biking Area (Moab South) trail systems traverses though habitat identified by the Utah Division of Wildlife (UDWR) as crucial mule deer winter range. These trails were designated in the 2008 Moab RMP and impacts of these trails on mule deer were analyzed in the EIS accompanying that

RMP. Commercial use on and in itself on these designated trails would not add additional fragmentation to mule deer habitat.

Typically commercial use on these trails is expected to be minimal during winter range use by mule deer (November 15 through April 15), but as this use increases over time, impacts from human disturbance may result in the reduction of mule deer use in these areas adjacent to the trails and the abandonment of portions of winter range habitats could occur. Habitat abandonment would lead to additional habitat fragmentation and decreased forage availability. Additionally, if commercial use were to occur during hunting season human safety issues may occur.

Migratory Birds

Raptors

Several of these trails were designated in the 2008 Moab RMP and impacts of these trails to nesting raptors were analyzed in the EIS accompanying that RMP. Potential impacts to nesting raptors on trails developed post RMP were analyzed in the EA documents that were written prior to trail development. If it is determined that there is an active nest within 0.5 miles of a portion of any of the single track trails, the BLM may implement the seasonal and spatial buffers developed in Appendix R of the RMP to restrict surface disturbing activities during the nesting period or until the chicks have fledged the nest. These stipulations would lessen the impacts to nesting raptors in the back country. This would mean that a portion of the single track trail may be closed to commercial use and events for the duration of the nesting period or until the chicks have fledged the nest. These stipulations would lessen the impacts to nesting raptors in the back country.

Commercial use on these existing trails would not add additional fragmentation through raptor habitats but as use increases over time impacts from human disturbance may result in habitats near trails becoming unsuitable for nesting occupancy, therefore reducing nesting habitat availability.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Portions of the Amasa Back, Bar M, Magnificent 7, Moab South and East and The Whole Enchilada trail systems pass through suitable habitats for Mexican spotted owls. Several of these trails were designated in the 2008 Moab RMP and impacts from these trails to MSO habitats were analyzed in the EIS accompanying that RMP. Potential direct and indirect impacts to MSO habitat and nesting on trails developed post RMP were analyzed in the EA documents that were written prior to trail development.

If it is determined that there is an active MSO nest within 0.5 miles of a portion of any of the single track trails, the BLM would re-initiate consultation with the USFWS and that portion of the single track trail may be closed to use, including commercial use for the duration of the nesting period or until the owlets have fledged the nest. These stipulations would lessen the impacts to nesting MSOs in the vicinity of the trail.

Commercial use on these existing trails would not add additional fragmentation through MSO habitats but as use increases over time impacts from human disturbance may result in habitats

near trails becoming unsuitable for MSO nesting occupancy, therefore reducing nesting habitat availability.

Mitigation Measures

- 1) If Mexican spotted owls move into and inhabit the area, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be re-consulted as provided in 50 CFR 402.16. Should the Service conclude that the trail must be closed to protect Mexican spotted owls, that action would be undertaken by the BLM. In order to determine future occupancy status, protocol surveys will be maintained as funding allows.
- 2) The trail may be disallowed on a limited portion of the new single track if a raptor nest is in use within a certain specified distance from the nest (time and distance varies by species). A portion of single-track could be signed as closed for the duration of the nesting period and the route would be rerouted onto a nearby-designated road for the duration of the nesting.

NO ACTION

The No Action alternative would not meet the need for the proposed action; the benefits of issuing an SRP to Idaho State University would be foregone. There would be no environmental impacts from the proposed action because the action would be denied.

Recreation

The recreation benefit of permitted use and the proposed trip would be foregone because it would not occur.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The proposed action is not expected to have a cumulative impact on past, present or future actions in the affected areas within the Moab Field Office.

CHAPTER 5 PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

During preparation of the EA, the public was notified of the proposed action by posting on the ENBB on January 1, 2014. No one has contacted the BLM in response to the notice. A public comment period was not offered because very little interest in the proposal has been expressed.

List of BLM Preparers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s)
Ann Marie Aubry	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Floodplains, Soils, Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Water Resources
Katie Stevens	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Areas of Critical Environmental concern, Visual Resources, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Recreation
Aron King	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns
Becky Doolittle	Geologist	Wastes, Geology, Paleontology

Jan Denney	Realty Specialist	Lands/Access
Bill Stevens	Outdoor Recreation Planner	BLM Natural Areas, Socioeconomics, Wilderness/WSA, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics, Environmental Justice
Pam Riddle	Biologist	Fish and Wildlife, T&E Animal Species, Migratory Birds, Utah Sensitive Species
Jordan Davis	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive Species, Woodland/Forestry
Kim Allison	Rangeland Management Specialist	Rangeland Health Standards, Livestock Grazing, Vegetation
Dave Williams	Rangeland Management Specialist	T&E Plants

REFERENCES

Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2008. Record of Decision and Final Resource Management Plan. Moab Field Office. Moab, Utah. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2008a. Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement. Moab Field Office. Moab, Utah.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). 2008. Statewide Management Plan for Mule Deer. Salt Lake City, Utah. Query site accessed on 6-30-11 from http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/hunting/biggame/pdf/mule_deer_plan.pdf

Appendices

Appendix A: Interdisciplinary Team Checklist

Appendix B: WSA Analysis

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CHECKLIST

Project Title: Special Recreation Permit for Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2014-0076 EA

File/Serial Number: MFO-Y010-14-043R

Project Leader: Jennifer Jones

DETERMINATION OF STAFF: (Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)

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

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section D of the DNA form. The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.

The following elements are not present in the Moab Field Office and have been removed from the checklist:
Farmlands (Prime or Unique), Wild Horses and Burros.

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)				
NI	Air Quality Greenhouse Gas Emissions		Ann Marie Aubry AMA	2.4.14
NI	Floodplains	Trails are maintained to reduce erosion in flood plains, to soils, to riparian areas + near water resources. Changes may occur to trails to reduce erosion at these areas. These are all existing trails & local Trail mix is a local group active at trail maintenance	Ann Marie Aubry AMA	2.4.14
NI	Soils		Ann Marie Aubry AMA	2.4.14
NI	Water Resources/Quality (drinking/surface/ground)		Ann Marie Aubry AMA	2.4.14
NI	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	↓	Ann Marie Aubry AMA	2.4.14
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	see 2008 RMP	Katie Stevens KS	2/4/14
PI	Recreation	would provide rec. benefit	Katie Stevens KS	2/4/14
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	see 2008 RMP	Katie Stevens KS	2/4/14
NI	Visual Resources	no impact	Katie Stevens KS	2/4/14
NP	Wild Lands (BLM Natural Areas)	see 2008 RMP	Bill Stevens MS	2-4-14
NI	Socio-Economics		Bill Stevens BS	2-4-14
NI	Wilderness/WSA	1M4	Bill Stevens BS	2-4-14
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics		Bill Stevens BS	2-4-14

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*	Signature	Date
NI	Cultural Resources	email to Aron	Aron King AK	2/28/14
NI	Native American Religious Concerns	email to Aron	Aron King AK	3/28/14
NI	Environmental Justice		Bill Stevens BS	2-4-14
NP	Wastes (hazardous or solid)		Rebecca Doolittle	2/4/2014
PA	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species		Pam Riddle	2/4/14
PA	Migratory Birds		Pam Riddle	2/4/14
PA	Utah BLM Sensitive Species		Pam Riddle	2/4/14
PA	Fish and Wildlife Excluding USFW Designated Species		Pam Riddle	2/4/14
NI	Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds		Dave Williams	2-4-14
NI	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species		Dave Williams	2-4-14
NI	Livestock Grazing		Dave Williams/ Jordan Davis/ Kim Allison	2-4-14
NI	Rangeland Health Standards		Dave Williams/ Jordan Davis/ Kim Allison	2-4-14
NI	Vegetation Excluding USFW Designated Species		DW	2-4-14
WJ	Woodland / Forestry		ASD	2-4-14
	Fuels/Fire Management		Josh Relph JS	2/4/14
NP	Geology / Mineral Resources/Energy Production		Rebecca Doolittle	2/4/2014
NI	Lands/Access	No conflicts with land use authorizations	Jan Denney JD	2-4-14
NI	Paleontology		Rebecca Hunt-Foster RHF	2/4/2014

FINAL REVIEW:

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	Katie Stevens KS	2/19/14	
Authorized Officer	Beth Ransel	3/6/14	Beth Ransel

WILDERNESS INTERIM MANAGEMENT
IMPAIRMENT/NON-IMPAIRMENT EVALUATION FORM

With the passing of the deadline for completion of reclamation activities in September of 1990, only temporary, non-surface-disturbing actions that require no reclamation; grandfathered uses, and actions involving the exercise of valid existing rights can be approved within WSA's. The reference document for evaluators and managers is Manual 6330, Management of Wilderness Study Areas (July, 2012).

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION

Name of action: DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2014-0076 EA

Proposed Action: Alternative Action: _____ (check one)

Proposed by: Idaho State University

Description of action: Idaho State University has requested authorization through a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) to offer mountain bike tours on designated trails within the Moab Field Office of the BLM. All use would be day use only with any overnight use occurring in designated campgrounds or private facilities. Idaho State University has not held a SRP with the Moab BLM previously. Standard stipulations as well as mountain bike specific stipulations would apply to the SRP for Idaho State University. The maximum group size would be 15 people. One proposed location (Porcupine Rim) is within a Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Standard stipulations as well as mountain bike specific stipulations would apply to the SRP for Idaho State University. The only portion of the permit to be analyzed in this document is that trip segment which lies within the Negro Bill Canyon WSA.

Locations: The constructed and maintained Porcupine Rim mountain biking trail

What BLM WSAs are included in the area where the action is to take place?

Negro Bill Canyon

VALID RIGHTS OR GRANDFATHERED USES (if any)

Is lease, mining claim, or grandfathered use pre-FLPMA? _____ Yes No

If yes, give name or number of lease(s), mining claim(s) or grandfathered use and describe use or right asserted:

Has a valid existing right been established? _____ Yes No

EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL FOR IMPAIRMENT OF WILDERNESS VALUES

Is the action temporary and non-surface disturbing? Yes _____ No

If yes, describe why action would be temporary and non-surface disturbing and identify the planned period of use:

Activity would consist of one-day guided mountain biking tours. Commercial

activities are permitted uses in wilderness, including WSA's. Mountain biking has been a long-established grandfathered activity on the Porcupine Rim Trail, a portion of which is on a pre-inventory intrusion route in the WSA, with the remainder following a constructed stock trail. Current use, most of which is one-way, averages approximately 28,000 users per year. The Wilderness Act states: "Commercial activities may be performed within the wilderness areas designated by this Act to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas." The BLM's Manual 6330, Management of Wilderness Sturdy Areas (July, 2012) states that most recreational activities are allowed within WSA's.

Failure to adhere to the permit's stipulations could result in non-renewal by the BLM's Administrative Officer.

When the use, activity, or facility is terminated, would the area's wilderness values be degraded so far as to significantly constrain the Congress's prerogative regarding the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness?

Naturalness: Effects to the natural environment would center on trails and natural travel routes where mountain bikers would travel. For the proposed action, however, all travel would be on an existing well-defined and maintained trail. Impacts could involve soils and vegetation. The mountain biking activities would be on a trail which receives heavy recreational use, especially mountain biking, averaging about 28,000 users per year.

Naturalness as an ingredient in wilderness is defined as lacking evidence of man's impacts on a relatively permanent basis. None of the potential effects described above would affect significantly this aspect of naturalness essential to wilderness character.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude: This activity would not decrease opportunities for solitude relative to their current status. The Porcupine Rim Trail receives heavy annual mountain bike use. Although commercial tours are currently allowed on the trail, such use has been light relative to private use. Only the last 2.5 miles of the trail are on the edge of the WSA, with almost all traffic being one-way. There is no reason to believe that the small increase in numbers which could result from the proposed action would significantly reduce any such opportunities for solitude. Furthermore, the trail segment in question lies within the front-country part of the WSA which was noted as *not* possessing outstanding opportunities for solitude in the 1991 *Utah Statewide Wilderness Study Report*.

Outstanding Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: There is no reason to believe that the proposed action will reduce these opportunities. There are no plans for trail construction or other modifications of the area.

Optional Supplemental values: No perceived negative impacts. The original inventory identified no specific supplemental values, although the 1990 Final Environmental Impact Statement identifies several threatened and endangered animal and plant species that may occur in the WSA. The current status is the presence of several plant species on the Utah state sensitive list. These

species are all alcover plants, and do not occur along the established trail.

Considered cumulatively with past actions, would authorization of the action impair the area's wilderness values? Yes No

Rationale: Commercial activities are permitted not only in WSA's, but in officially-designated wilderness.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION

Non-impairment Standard

The only actions permissible in study areas are temporary uses that do not create surface disturbance, require no reclamation, and do not involve permanent placement of structures. Such temporary or no-trace activities may continue until Congress acts, so long as they can be terminated easily and immediately.

The only exceptions to the non-impairment standard are:

- 1) emergencies such as suppression activities associated with wildfire or search and rescue operations,
- 2) reclamation activities designed to minimize impacts to wilderness values created by IMP violations and emergencies;
- 3) uses and facilities which are considered grandfathered or valid existing rights as defined in Manual 6330;
- 4) uses and facilities that clearly protect or enhance the land's wilderness values or that are the minimum necessary for public health and safety in the use and enjoyment of the wilderness values, and
- 5) reclamation of pre-FLPMA impacts.

MAJOR CONCLUSION OF NON-IMPAIRMENT EVALUATION

Action clearly fails to meet the non-impairment standard or any exceptions, e.g. VER, and should not be allowed: Yes No

Action appears to meet the non-impairment standard: Yes No

Action may be allowable, pre-FLPMA grandfathered use: Yes No N/A

Action may be allowable, pre-FLPMA VER: Yes No N/A

OTHER CONCLUSIONS

Restrictions proposed may unreasonably interfere with pre-FLPMA rights or grandfathered uses: Yes No N/A

Reasonable measures to protect wilderness values and to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands are incorporated: Yes No N/A

Environmental Assessment required:

Yes No

Plan of Operations Required:

Yes No N/A

Discovery verification procedures recommended:

Yes No N/A

Consider initiating reclamation through EA:

Yes No N/A

RELATED ACTIONS

Dated copy of Electronic Notification Board notice attached to case file:

Yes No

Media notification appropriate: (optional)

Yes No

Federal Register Notice appropriate: (optional)

Yes No

Information copy of case file sent to USO-933:

Yes No

Evaluation prepared by:

William P. Stevens
Name (s)

March 14, 2014
Date

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
DECISION RECORD**

**Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center
(Permitted mountain bike tours and group rides)**

DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2014-0076 EA

FONSI: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the present document, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and an environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

DECISION: It is my decision to issue the Special Recreation Permit for Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center to operate in the areas listed under the Proposed Action. This decision is contingent upon meeting all stipulations and monitoring requirements attached.

RATIONALE: The decision to authorize a Special Recreation Permit for Idaho State University Outdoor Adventure Center has been made in consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The action is in conformance with the Moab Resource Management Plan, which allows for recreation use permits for a wide variety of uses to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities, provide opportunities for private enterprise, manage user-group interaction, and limit the impacts to such uses upon natural and cultural resources.



Authorized Officer



Date