

Transportation and Access Plan (Implementation Guidance)

This Transportation and Access Plan (TAP) provides a management framework that supports the Bureau of Land Management's (BLMs) mission, achieves resource management objectives and provides appropriate, sustainable public and administrative access. This TAP accompanies travel maps that will be available in electronic and hard copy format. The maps and this TAP are adaptable - they can be changed to meet resource and resource use program objectives.

Route Types

BLM Travel and Transportation Handbook (BLM 2016) uses three different route types to describe the intended use designation - "road", "primitive road" and "trail". The route type is the description of the physical conditions of the route and describes the extent of the physical and/or vehicular access each type may support, as well as lending guidance to maintenance requirements. Route nomenclature in all implementation material (e.g. maps) would utilize the three route types as defined in the BLM Travel and Transportation Management Handbook (BLM 2016):

Road: A linear route declared a road by the owner, managed for use by low-clearance vehicles which have four or more wheels, and are maintained for regular and continuous use.

Primitive Road: A linear route managed for use by four-wheel-drive or high-clearance vehicles. These routes do not customarily meet any BLM road design standards. Unless specifically prohibited, primitive roads can also include other uses such as hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Trail: A linear route managed for human powered, stock or OHV forms of transportation or for historical or heritage values. Trails are not generally maintained or managed for use by four wheel-drive or high-clearance vehicles.

Designation Types

Area Designations: Open, Limited, or Closed motorized use classifications were identified in the 2020 UFO RMP. These area designations are not changed by this Transportation and Access Plan.

Route Designations: The route designation type describes the modes of transportation that can occur on the route, how the use can occur, and when access to the route is allowed. The proposed alternatives consider a range of route designations, including specific types of motorized, mechanized and foot and/or livestock travel.

General Travel Designations: Motorized and mechanized travel onto public lands from adjacent private lands will be limited to public access points only.

Additional routes and access may be established for specific program use through discretionary permit activities, including recreation and lands and realty. These permits would be evaluated on a project specific basis.

A travel management plan is not intended to provide evidence bearing on or addressing the validity of any Revised Statutes 2477 (R.S. 2477) assertions. R.S. 2477 rights are determined through a process that is entirely independent of the BLM's planning process. Consequently, travel management planning should not take into consideration R.S. 2477 assertions or evidence. Travel management planning should be founded on an independently determined purpose and need that is based on resource uses and associated access to public lands and waters. At such time as decisions are made on R.S. 2477 assertions, the BLM will adjust its travel routes accordingly.

Monitoring

Based on availability and funding, BLM staff will monitor the Transportation and Access Plan route system throughout the year to estimate public use and visitation, effects on natural resources, and to evaluate the plan's effectiveness in achieving desired resource objectives. Monitoring will be used to identify issues and focus management on areas most needing attention. Route designations may be adjusted if deemed necessary based on monitoring information.

Monitoring has three purposes:

- Tracking the implementation of actions adopted in the transportation and access plan.
- Determining the effectiveness of management actions.
- Identifying where actions may need to be adjusted.

The monitoring plan utilizes two scales:

- Long-term monitoring: Are resource conditions and user experiences in the planning area improving, staying the same or declining over time?
- Project-level monitoring: How well have specific management actions been implemented on the ground? Are they effective?

The key indicators for monitoring travel routes include:

- Traffic volume, type of use, geographic distribution, temporal patterns;
- Trail condition (including changes in width at sample points), drainage, and erosion issues;
- Impacts caused by use of designated routes on habitat conditions (such as loss of vegetation or changes in species composition) for special status plant and wildlife species, or changes in wildlife behavior related to recreation patterns;
- Impacts caused by illegal cross country motorized or mechanized use, to soil, vegetation, wildlife or cultural resources; and
- Violations of route and area designations, incursions on routes designated "closed" and cross-country motorized or mechanized tracks.

Known sensitive resource areas will be given priority for monitoring frequency and follow up. Monitoring results will be incorporated into scheduling annual maintenance or repair work, to evaluate implementation progress, to assess the effectiveness of the plan in achieving desired

conditions, to identify adaptive measures, to identify unauthorized off route travel, and to respond to changing conditions, access and management needs.

Guidance on Exceptions to Off-Road Travel Limitation

Range Access: Access for permittees holding a valid grazing permit will be handled within the range permitting process, in accordance with any other restrictions, such as seasonal closures or seasonal use limitations identified in the RMP or Transportation and Access Plan. Range staff will coordinate with permittees and the authorized officer to plan limited access to existing and/or new range improvements with no access via designated routes. This access will also be coordinated with other resource staff. This will provide access to existing and/or new range improvements for all construction, maintenance, and inspection activities as required by cooperative range improvement agreements or range improvement permits. Range access for specific projects may also utilize the Travel Variance process described below.

Travel Variance: The Authorized Officer may issue a written travel variance or other written authorization for motorized travel off designated routes. Travel variances for use of existing roads can be issued for specific periods of time, or for specific types of uses (e.g. permittees may receive written authorization to drive on existing roads to access range improvements). Travel variances for cross country travel would be considered on a case by case basis with written approval by an authorized officer, with the exception of emergencies and valid existing rights, and appropriate mitigation measures would be required (see below for the Travel Variance form).

Signage, Education and Enforcement

Signage: All open and limited use routes would be signed and/or mapped as open for navigational purposes: signs would include assigned route numbers and would be installed at major intersections and other appropriate locations. Routes proposed as closed would not be signed, unless determined necessary. The travel management signs will follow the “Recommended Road and Trail Signing for Public Lands” standard road and trail sign format developed by the multi-agency Colorado Natural Resources Group (March 2011).

Education: Education efforts would focus on the community benefits of varied types of access to public lands and would target trail partners, local businesses and organizations that represent trail users.

Maps would be developed and published for general public use. These maps would depict routes available for motorized and non-motorized use - closed routes would not be depicted. Routes limited to administrative and/or permitted motorized use would not be depicted on these maps. Each route would be assigned a number or name to enhance public navigability, though depending on the scale or format of maps not all route numbers may be visible or depicted. Maps would be available at the UFO offices, on the internet, and displayed at informational kiosks on BLM managed lands.

The following four target messages or themes would be emphasized in public education:

- Stay the Trail (www.staythetrail.org)
- Leave no Trace (www.lnt.com)
- Respect the rights of private landowners and other public land users
- Respect natural resources

In order to foster appreciation of the area's natural and cultural resources, additional educational material would be displayed, as appropriate, at kiosks on BLM managed lands.

Enforcement: The BLM will begin with education efforts for the public (described above) about the specifics of the regulations; however, law enforcement officers can issue a notice of violation any time after the designation is publicly available. The transportation and access plan would be enforced by implementing the signage and maps described above. Routes not shown on the BLM maps are not open to public motorized or mechanized travel. Routes designated for motorized or mechanized use may not always be signed on the ground but will be identified on BLM maps. While the BLM will make efforts to post or gate well established closed routes, it will be the public's responsibility to reference the BLM maps and information to stay on designated routes for motorized or mechanized travel. The BLM will enforce any activity not consistent with designation and identified with either maps or signage.

Activities in violation of the rules may include motorized or mechanized travel off designated routes, wrong vehicle type, or use during seasonal closures. For areas where travel planning has occurred and route designations are in place, an illegal trail will be considered to be any trail constructed by the public that has not been approved by the Authorized Officer. By the above definition, all constructed trails not identified in the TAP are illegal.

Trails created exclusively by the passage of foot/hoof (social trails) are not considered 'constructed'. Therefore, the BLM law enforcement response to illegal and social trails will differ based on site specific circumstances. For both illegal and social trails, the BLM response will be commensurate with and proportional to the impact(s) occurring on resources (e.g. wetlands, steep/erodible soils, fragile habitat, etc.). BLM will also facilitate the timely rehabilitation of illegal and social trails in high use areas (e.g. SRMAs) where said trails negatively affect navigability and map use by visitors. In more dispersed or lesser used areas, management response will be appropriate to the observed level of resource impacts.

Maintenance and Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation: A variety of closure methods would be available, depending on site-specific circumstances. In general, the minimum closure techniques that support resource needs would be used. Methods of closure might include one or more of the following: natural rehabilitation, obscuring the road or trail entrance, blocking the road or trail entrance or signing as closed.

Route segments slated for rehabilitation could be ripped in total, or in part, using ripper teeth on a trail dozer or bulldozer. Use of bulldozers would be limited to roads, trails and washes. The purpose of ripping a route surface would be to create furrows and provide visual cues that the route is closed to vehicular use. Furrows are intended to provide a seed bed for new vegetation and discourage reuse of the area for motorized or mechanized travel. These furrows would be

seeded with desired plant species as specified by BLM specialists. Vegetation restoration work would occur at time of furrowing to reduce weed competition with desired plant species.

After closure and/or rehabilitation, the route segment could be subject to posting of “Closed” at points of entry, and the installation of a barrier of closely positioned boulders (24 inches in diameter or greater), fencing or other barrier to prevent entry.

Where designation changes are proposed to restrict use to certain use types (such as OHV, single track, non-motorized), minimum techniques required to achieve resource goals would be used. Methods of restriction might include one or more of the following: signage, physical restrictions such as boulders, or natural reclamation down to the prescribed travel width, or other appropriate methods. These methods would be similar to those used for route rehabilitation/closure.

Appropriate and applicable project-related clearances and consultation processes (such as NHPA section 106 compliance and consultation, including tribal consultation) would be completed prior to any undertaking, including ground disturbing activities, reroutes, new routes, physical closure, etc.

Maintenance: Both motorized and non-motorized road and/or trail segments could receive periodic maintenance including smoothing of tread, removal of rocks and other obstacles, installation of drainage structures (i.e. culverts, rolling dips, water bars, etc.) cleanout of drainage structures, and repair of gullies and rills. Maintenance of routes may require mechanized/motorized equipment.

Maintenance may also include minor realignments of the route network that have already been analyzed and may not require additional NEPA analysis. While additional NEPA analysis may not be needed for these adjustments, clearances for sensitive resources would be completed as needed, and would determine final realignments. The term “minor realignment” refers to a change of no more than ¼ mile of one designated route. It could include the opening of an existing, but previously “closed” route that serves the same access need as the “open” route that is to be “realigned.” Minor realignments include following:

- Minor realignments of a route where necessary to minimize effects on cultural resources.
- Minor realignments of a route necessary to reduce impact on sensitive species or their habitats.
- Minor realignments of a route necessary to reduce impact associated with erosion.
- Minor realignments of a route that would substantially increase the quality of a recreational experience, while not affecting sensitive species or their habitat, or any other sensitive resource value.
- Minor realignment where valid ROWs or easements of record were not accurately identified in the route designation process.

Minor realignments would be documented in the TAP and associated maps, and the reason for the change would be recorded and maintained in the project administrative file.

The route inventory, route evaluation, and environmental assessment are intended to identify the existing condition and the resource impacts associated with each route. While information

related to a maintenance level may be implied, it is expected that route designations would result in the development of travel management objectives for each route. The maintenance levels assigned during the planning process may change as a result of a change in use patterns, better route condition information, or travel management objectives. Therefore, the BLM will adapt by increasing maintenance and/or assigned maintenance levels wherever necessary to address and prevent undue impacts to the route infrastructure and/or adjacent resources.

Adaptive Management

In developing this transportation and access plan, BLM used the best information available, including scientific research, agency monitoring reports, public information received from trail users, local residents, special interest groups, and government officials. However, the agency's knowledge may change as local environmental conditions change, as new management techniques are learned, and as scientific and technology advances. In the future, some of the new management decisions reached in this document may need revision or modification as a result of new information or changes in legal status. The transportation plan would use an adaptive management approach to modify management actions by incorporating new information and/or technology gained over time.

The term adaptive management can be described as a systematic approach for improving management of natural resources, with an emphasis on using outcomes of current management and incorporating results into ongoing and future management. To illustrate how BLM would apply adaptive management strategy, this plan would use data collected in periodic BLM monitoring efforts (described below) and information and observations provided to the BLM from the public, permitted land users, and government officials to make decisions about ongoing management of the route system. For example, if it was determined that a particular route was not indicated or was depicted in the wrong spatial location on the route map, it would be incorporated or adjusted, or if a previously evaluated route was erroneously designated, it would be rectified on the map and would not require amendment of the transportation plan.

As these situations are discovered during the implementation process, the routes would be evaluated based on BLM planning criteria, and management actions implemented as appropriate. It is also likely that new routes and trails may be proposed to provide for better management and to meet management objectives. A general "Trail Development Process" is described below. Adaptive measures that require construction of a new designated route will require amendment of the transportation plan. Amendments would undergo a public review process, and appropriate documentation for compliance with NEPA and other applicable laws and regulations.

Implementation Priorities

1. Signs, education and outreach:
 - a. Install basic wayfinding signage on trails designated as Open and indicate a recommended direction of travel as needed.
 - b. Develop a public facing map of the area and share updated data with COTREX.
 - c. Coordinate with the Town of Paonia, on a kiosk structure in Apple Valley Park with a map.

- d. Create smaller wayfinding pedestal signs near main intersections and the entrances on to BLM managed lands.
 - e. Update signage and materials as routes are rerouted and closed.
- 2. Reroutes:
 - a. Begin with rerouting trails that conflict with Colorado Desert Parsley.
 - b. Install limiters to reduce tread width expansion on trails remaining open in Colorado Desert Parsley population areas.
 - c. Complete all “Reroute Corridor” identified trails.
 - d. Rehabilitate and close old trail alignments.
- 3. New Trails:
 - a. Once reroutes are completed, coordinate with local user groups on prioritizing future trail construction.
- 4. Access:
 - a. Continue to work with the Town of Paonia and other partners to ensure legal public access to Jumbo Mountain.

Trail Development Process

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to clearly define the process required to create new trails or modify existing trails across public lands managed by the BLM UFO. Trails provide a wide range of recreational opportunities - motorized, equestrian, mechanized and pedestrian. Trails are also a tool used by the agency to provide those diverse recreational opportunities while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources. Following the background information below is a step-by-step summary of the process for planning, designing, constructing, maintaining, and monitoring trails that are legal, fun, functional and sustainable.

The Process

For many years, the Bureau of Land Management has actively partnered with organizations and individuals in the UFO area to design and construct many of the trails on public lands. These trails help support a strong recreation-based infrastructure that makes this area a recreation destination, and an excellent place to live and play. As the popularity of trail-based recreation has grown, so has the need to carefully manage those trails in order to protect recreation opportunities, as well as the many other resources found on local public lands. Effective stewardship of public lands requires collaboration and communication between and among land managers and the many people who use and enjoy those lands. To that end, the BLM recognizes the need to openly communicate the BLM's trail planning and construction process, as well as the BLM's current trail management strategy.

The BLM has worked with trail user groups to implement a trail planning and construction process which creates fun, functional and sustainable trail systems while protecting important natural and cultural resources. Each trail or trail system proposal presents unique opportunities and challenges, but the basic steps for successfully navigating the process are described below.

1. **Formulate a trail proposal or concept.** This is usually the easy part. You've got an idea for a great new trail opportunity or know of an existing trail that really needs to be fixed. Avoid the temptation to grab a tool and start digging, or to simply start trampling in a new route. Remember these are public lands managed for multiple uses.
2. **Share your idea with others.** Find other user groups who share an interest in the area. Introduce yourself to these other players and begin to develop a relationship of open communication and trust. A few key points to remember about building a constituency:
 - **Look at the big picture.** Public lands contain many different resources and have many different values to many different people. Those differences require a broad and balanced management perspective. Consider the wildlife habitats and avoid sensitive habitats.

- **Communicate effectively.** Ask questions if the process, or another person's perspective, is unclear. Listen carefully to others involved in the process.
 - **Think creatively and collaboratively.** Look for ways to partner with the agency and other user groups to provide the time, talent and funding necessary to move a trail proposal through the process.
3. **Identify the purpose and need for the trail.** Think about why your trail idea is important and what purpose it would serve. The purpose of the trail is to ...? The reason we need the trail is ...? Write those ideas down.
 4. **Contact the BLM office (or other agency) that manages the land you're interested in.** Call or e-mail to set up an appointment to talk with someone (usually someone from the recreation program staff) about your idea.
 5. **Know and understand the process.** Take some time to learn the details of the process summarized in this document. A few key points to remember about the process:
 - Find the funding. Trails aren't cheap. Use a trail project planning and budgeting worksheet to develop an accurate estimate of how much your project is likely to cost, then determine how those costs will be paid.
 - Be patient! The trail development process takes time (sometimes years.) The end result will be worth it.
 - Be flexible. Changes are often necessary to address issues that arise during the process.
 - Learn more about trails. There are many great print and electronic media resources, as well as hands-on training opportunities, to learn more about trail planning, design, layout, construction, maintenance and monitoring. The document "Guidelines for a Quality Trail Experience" for trail design, construction and maintenance guidance is available online at: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/travel-and-transportation>
 - Determine current management direction. Work with BLM staff and/or other trail partners/organizations to identify laws, management plans, policies, and special designations that may affect the trail proposal. Some of the management components that will likely be involved with trail proposals include:
 - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – the law that guides any proposed action on Federal lands.
 - National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – the law that guides land managers to consider and protect cultural resources.
 - Endangered Species Act (ESA) – the law that guides managers to protect listed threatened and endangered species.

- Resource Management Plan (RMP) – provides general management guidance for all resources within the Field Office. The recreation section of an RMP will define what types of recreation opportunities are targeted for different areas within the Field Office or NCAs.
 - Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) – provide specific recreation management direction for areas. Recreation Management Plans are based on the recreation objectives in the Resource Management Plan.
 - Special area designations
 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) – areas where specific resource concerns have been identified, and management actions are implemented to protect those resources.
 - Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) – undeveloped areas that are managed for “primitive and unconfined” recreation, and for other wilderness values.
6. **Refine trail proposal and define Trail Management Objectives (TMOs).** Based on management direction findings, adjust proposal to fit within current management objectives and guidelines. If the trail proposal is in an SRMA, be sure the TMOs are consistent with objectives for that area in the Resource Management Plan.
- Trail Management Objectives define what the trail looks like, and how it’s managed. TMOs may include some or all of the following specifications:
 - Trail name/number
 - Type of use
 - Trail type
 - Level of use
 - Use season
 - Level of difficulty
 - Tread width
 - Corridor width and height
 - Surface condition
 - Maximum sustainable grade
 - Operations and patrol
 - Maintenance requirements
 - Special features
 - Monitoring requirements
 - Recreation Objective
7. **Design and lay out a sustainable trail alignment.** This process is further defined by the document entitled “Guidelines for a Quality Trail Experience” available at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/travel-and-transportation>

Trail design and layout requires special training and experience. Utilize a qualified trail designer to ensure a high-quality sustainable trail alignment. Qualified trail designers may

be agency employees, trained volunteers, or hired trail contractors.

8. **Initiate NEPA Process.** The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides a framework for analyzing the impacts of a proposed project. It requires input from a wide range of resource specialists from the BLM, and often other agencies as well. NEPA analysis along with the associated field work and paperwork is performed by BLM staff, by a contractor, or by a combination of the two. The NEPA process is a public process and provides opportunities for public input regarding any proposed action on Federal lands. For more information about the NEPA process, visit the BLM website at: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa>
9. **Modify the proposal if required by NEPA.** Sometimes trail reroutes will be required to mitigate impacts to other resources.
10. **Begin construction or maintenance of the trail following completion of the NEPA process.** If the project is approved, and once the EA is signed, implementation of the decision can begin.
 - Managing trail construction and maintenance requires special training and experience. Qualified trail builders may be agency employees, trained volunteers, or hired trail contractors.
 - Well planned coordination and oversight is essential to ensure high quality sustainable trail construction and maintenance.

Finally, once your trail is completed it's important to monitor and maintain the trail to ensure that TMOs are being met. Monitoring should include:

- Physical monitoring – is the trail maintaining the design and construction specifications identified in the TMO?
- Social monitoring – is the trail providing the recreational opportunities and experiences specified in the TMO and RMA objectives?
- Is the on-going maintenance program appropriate for the location and level of use of the trail?

Modify the trail if it is not meeting objectives. Any modifications to the trail will require BLM approval.

Travel Variance Form

Type of motorized/mechanized travel off designated route	Passenger Vehicle	Heavy Equipment (Describe below)
	OHV/ATV	
	Motorcycle	
	Bicycle	
Name of person completing this form		
Signature		
Today's Date		
General Location		
Description of Activities and Applicable Mitigation/Monitoring		
Name of BLM Specialist		
Signature of BLM Specialist		
Name of Decision-Maker		
Signature of Decision-Maker		