

## **CHAPTER 10 - RECREATION**

---

The BLM, Moab FO area is a world-famous recreation destination. The Grand RMP approved in 1985 did not anticipate the growth in the recreation industry that occurred shortly thereafter. As a result, demand-driven recreation planning in the intervening years has been completed in a piecemeal fashion. There has been an attempt to document and accommodate the huge surge in demand since the completion of the 1985 RMP. Recreation occurs throughout the Moab FO area. This chapter describes the current conditions, management practices, trends, and concerns in the recreation program. This chapter also identifies recreation patterns, as well as conflicts, between recreational activities and other resources.

### **10.1 RESOURCE OVERVIEW**

There are two types of designated recreation areas:

1. Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs). These specific areas are set aside for recreation management and are managed for intensive use.
2. Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs). The Grand ERMA encompasses all lands within the Moab FO area that are not in an SRMA.

#### **10.1.1 Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)**

SRMAs are areas where significant public recreation issues or management concerns occur. Special or more intensive types of management are typically needed. Detailed recreation planning is required in SRMAs and greater managerial investment is likely. SRMAs usually require increased rules and guidelines to manage for this intensive use. Areas hosting large numbers of visitors are usually those that are SRMAs. However, in the Moab FO area, the SRMAs are not the areas that receive the greatest visitation.

Two areas have been formally established as SRMAs: Canyon Rims Recreation Area, and the Colorado River Recreation Area. Figure 10-1 shows the locations of the SRMAs within the Moab FO area. Figure 10-2 shows other major recreation attractions in the Moab FO area.

##### ***10.1.1.1 Canyon Rims SRMA***

Canyon Rims was established in the 1980s on 100,273 acres of public land south of Moab. Two campgrounds and four overlooks are within the SRMA, as well as the Trough Springs Hiking trailhead. Major activities include hiking, backpacking, and sightseeing. The primary roads within Canyon Rims, which were constructed by the BLM and include several scenic turnouts, are Utah Scenic Backways. Canyon Rims Recreation Area is managed under the Canyon Rims Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP), completed in 2003.

##### ***10.1.1.2 Colorado River SRMA***

The Colorado River SRMA was established in the 1980s. The SRMA extends along the Colorado River from the Colorado State Line to Castle Creek (near the Castle Valley turnoff on Utah Highway 128), and along the Dolores River from the Colorado State line to its confluence with the Colorado River. The SRMA includes Westwater Canyon of the Colorado River, and includes the extensive facilities surrounding the Westwater Ranger Station. It also includes the

upper portion the area bordering the River along Utah Highway 128 (from Dewey Bridge to Castle Creek). Major activities include boating and camping. Note that this area is not the same as the Colorado Riverway, discussed below in the ERMA. Boating management in the Westwater Canyon portion of the area is administered under an annual operating plan. Commercial boating use within the SRMA is management through permit systems and comprehensive permit stipulations.

### **10.1.2 Grand Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA)**

ERMAs are areas where dispersed recreation is encouraged and where visitors have a freedom of recreational choice with minimal regulatory constraint. Significant public recreation issues or management concerns are limited and minimal management, consistent with the Bureau's stewardship responsibility suffices in these areas. Detailed planning is not usually required for these areas. However, in the Moab FO area, the areas with the greatest numbers of visitors and those that are in the greatest need of special management are within the Grand ERMA.

All areas within the Moab FO area that are not part of a SRMA are included within the Grand ERMA. That is, every acre in the Moab FO area that is not in an SRMA is in the Grand ERMA. The following subsections describe popular recreation sites within the ERMA.

#### ***10.1.2.1 The Colorado Riverway***

The Colorado Riverway includes the public lands managed by the BLM in the following areas:

- Along the Colorado River and Utah Highway 128 from Dewey Bridge to U.S. 191, including Negro Bill Canyon Trailhead, Onion Creek, Castleton Tower (Castle Rock) and Fisher Towers. Utah Highway 128 is a State Scenic Byway, and is also a portion of the Prehistoric Highway National Scenic Byway.
- Along the Colorado River and Utah Highway 279 from Moab Valley to Canyonlands National Park, including Wall Street, Poison Spider Trailhead and Shafer Basin. Utah Highway 279 is a State Scenic Byway
- Along Kane Creek Road from Moab Valley to the block of state land south of Hunter Canyon, including Amasa Back.

While a very small portion of this (Dewey Bridge to Castle Creek) is within the Colorado River SRMA, the great majority of the Riverway is in the Grand ERMA. The Riverway is the most popular destination of Moab FO area visitors, with visitation estimated at 1.04 million during 2002. Visitors engage in camping, hiking, four-wheel driving, scenic auto touring, mountain biking, bouldering, BASE (Building, Antennae, Span, Earth) jumping, rock art viewing, dinosaur track viewing, rock climbing, rafting and boating within the Colorado Riverway.

Campground use records indicate that use is high from March through October, with peak use occurring in May and to a lesser extent in October. July and August are less popular than the spring and fall peak use periods, as visitors have a greater variety of recreation destinations during the summer. Use is very low from early November through the end of February, when most people consider it too cold (BLM 2001a).

Based on observation and casual interviews, users of the Colorado Riverway can be divided into several categories:

- day and overnight campers using sites along the Riverway, while in the Moab area, to mountain bike, drive and ride OHVs, hike or participate in a special event;
- campers displaced from Arches National Park's campground;
- campers using sites because they provide a relatively inexpensive place to camp;
- motorists taking scenic drives along routes described on the Moab Auto Tour brochure or taking an alternate route to Grand Junction; and
- rafting and paddling groups, fishermen, climbers, mountain bikers, hikers, off-highway vehicle (OHV) users, BASE jumpers, and other day users.

Recreation management within the Riverway includes providing information at recreation sites, managing developed recreation sites, protecting visual quality and health and human safety by limiting the areas where visitors can camp and drive, and managing commercial uses in accordance with the Riverway Plan (BLM 2001a).

There are extensive recreation facilities on the Colorado Riverway, including the following campgrounds (Table 10-1):

<b>Campground Name</b>	<b># of Sites</b>	<b># of Group Sites</b>
Goose Island	18	2
Negro Bill	17	
Drinks Canyon	17	
Hal Canyon	11	
Oak Grove	7	
Big Bend	23	3
Upper Big Bend	8	
Fisher Towers	5	
Hittle Bottom	12	
Dewey Bridge	7	
Williams Bottom	18	
Jaycee Park	7	
Goldbar	10	4
Kings Bottom	7	
Moonflower	8	
Hunters Canyon/Spring	8	
Echo	9	

In addition, the Colorado Riverway has four boat ramps servicing the Colorado River Daily trip, one boat ramp serving the canoe trip along Utah Highway 279, four trailheads (with toilets), maintained hiking and biking trails, and multiple information kiosks.

While many of the resource problems within the Colorado Riverway have been addressed and corrected since 1922 by the actions taken through the Colorado Riverway RAMP, there are still some remaining problem areas. Cross-country travel and camping restrictions are addressed only through a Federal Register Notice (July 1992), which is in effect only until the completion of the forthcoming RMP. Some undeveloped camping areas still remain, which are causing resource problems.

#### ***10.1.2.2 Sand Flats Recreation Area***

Sand Flats, part of the Grand ERMA, is located between the Negro Bill Canyon and Mill Creek Wilderness Study Areas (BLM 2001c). Sand Flats Recreation Area encompasses 7,240 acres, and is managed as a self-funding site in partnership between Grand County and the BLM. Fees are charged for day use and camping and go directly towards maintenance of facilities. Major activities include camping and mountain biking especially on the Slickrock Trail, which was designated a National Recreation Trail by the Secretary of the Interior. Sand Flats Recreation Area provides access to the following popular mountain bike and OHV trails:

1. Slickrock Trail
2. Porcupine Rim Bike and Jeep Trail
3. Fins and Things Jeep Trail
4. Hell's Revenge Jeep Trail

A RAMP was completed in 1994 for the Sand Flats Recreation Area, and the area is managed according to this Plan (BLM 1994). In addition, there is a Cooperative Management Agreement between Grand County and the BLM to provide guidance in administering the area. Camping restrictions and off road vehicle designations are addressed only through a Federal Register Notice (July 1992), which is in effect until the new RMP is completed.

#### ***10.1.2.3 Utah Rims***

Utah Rims Recreation Area is a 15,400-acre area immediately west of the Colorado border and south of I-70. This area is primarily used for day use by western Colorado residents. Dirt biking is the primary recreation activity but the area is also popular with mountain bikers and horseback riders. A Plan Amendment to the Grand RMP (1985) is being prepared regarding vehicle designations in Utah Rims. Currently, resource damage is occurring as a result of off road vehicle travel. The purpose of this planning effort is to provide sustainable motorized recreational opportunities. A management plan is being prepared for this recreation area.

#### ***10.1.2.4 Cameo Cliffs***

The Cameo Cliffs consists of 20,050 acres east of U.S. Highway 191, south of the town of LaSal and north of the Lisbon Valley Industrial Area. The management plan is in preparation. All-terrain vehicle (ATV) riding, horseback riding and some limited hiking and mountain biking are the primary recreational activities. A Plan Amendment to the Grand RMP (1985) is being prepared regarding vehicle designations in Cameo Cliffs. The purpose of the Cameo Cliffs

planning effort is to provide opportunities for motorized recreation, primarily ATV riding, in a responsible fashion. This may result in a change in the OHV use category. (The category in the 1985 Grand RMP is "Open to Cross-country Travel".)

#### ***10.1.2.5 North of Moab off U.S. Highway 191***

##### ***10.1.2.5.1 East of Highway 191***

The area that is south of I-70 and east of U.S. Highway 191 borders Arches National Park. This area of public land includes the Klondike Bluffs Trail, the Copper Ridge Sauropod Trackway and the Bar M. Loop Trail. Cross country OHV travel is prohibited in most of this area by Federal Register Notice (January 2001). The current vehicle designation ("Limited to Existing Roads and Trails") is in effect only until the completion of the new RMP. (A very small portion of the area was limited to existing roads by the 1985 Grand RMP.) In the portion of this eastern area that is south of Utah Highway 313, camping is limited to designated sites by the Federal Register Notice of January 2001. This camping restriction is in effect only until the completion of a new RMP.

##### ***10.1.2.5.2 West of Highway 191***

This area includes scenic driving and several motorized and non-motorized trailheads, including Gemini Bridges, Courthouse Wash, Bartlett Wash, Blue Hills Road, Mill Canyon Dinosaur Trail, The Old Copper Mill Site in Mill Canyon, Halfway Stage Station, and Monitor and Merrimac Trail. A substantial amount of unrestricted camping occurs in this area, especially around Bartlett Wash and Mill Canyon, and has led to sanitation problems and resource damage. Although off-road driving is prohibited via a Federal Register Notice published in January of 2001, substantial cross country OHV travel is occurring. This off-road damage includes hill climbs, alternate route choice, play around campsites and other forms of damage. The current vehicle designation ("Limited to Existing Roads and Trails") is in effect only until the completion of the new RMP.

U.S. Highway 191 from I-70 to its intersection with Utah Highway 128 is part of the National Prehistoric Highway National Scenic Byway.

#### ***10.1.2.6 Utah Highway 313***

Utah Highway 313 is the Dead Horse Mesa Scenic Byway (a State Scenic Byway), providing access to Canyonlands National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, Seven Mile Canyon and seven dispersed camping areas, which provide overflow and destination camping from the two parks (Dead Horse Point State Park's campground has 25 sites; Canyonlands National Park's campground has 11 sites.) Utah Highway 313 also provides access to Labyrinth Canyon of the Green River, the rims and mesas above the Green River (Labyrinth Rims), upper Long Canyon and the upper portion of the Gemini Bridges Route. At this time, the BLM camping areas are not developed and do not have sanitation facilities. The Moab FO is currently preparing for the construction of a campground in 2005 with vault toilets one-third of a mile from Highway 313 on the Mineral Point road. There are also four view areas maintained by the Moab FO along Highway 313. Two of these view areas have toilet facilities.

Camping and off-road vehicle restrictions are a result of two Federal Register Notices published in 2001; these notices are in effect only until the RMP is completed. Resource damage is

currently occurring from both camping and off-road travel. A total of 401,427 people traveled Utah Highway 313 in 2002.

#### ***10.1.2.7 Kokopelli's Trail***

Kokopelli's Trail is a 140-mile multiple use trail connecting Loma, Colorado and Moab, Utah. Mountain bikers heavily use this route, although most portions are also suitable for OHVs and for full-sized four-wheel drive vehicles. The route passes through lands administered by the Moab FO, the BLM Grand Junction Field Office, and the Manti-LaSal National Forest. Kokopelli's Trail was established for multi-day bike trips. Small, primitive campsites with toilets, tables and fire rings are located along the trail. Three of these (Bitter Creek, Cowskin and Rock Castle) are managed and maintained by the Moab FO. Kokopelli's Trail is a Millennium Trail, designated in 2000 by the White House Millennium Council.

#### ***10.1.2.8 White Wash Sand Dunes/Ten Mile Canyon***

The only dune area in the Moab FO area, White Wash Sand Dunes are located east of the Green River and south of Interstate 70, about 25 miles from Green River City, Utah. White Wash is very popular with ATV riders and dirt bikers, especially on spring and fall weekends. OHV riders also visit other sites in this area, including Ten Mile Canyon, Crystal Geyser, Red Canyon, Rainbow Rocks, and Duma Point. Currently, the area has no facilities other than an informational bulletin board. A minimum of 28,582 visitors recreated at the White Wash Sand Dunes in 2002.

OHV categories in this area are mixed. The northern part of the area was limited to existing roads and trails in the 1985 Grand RMP. The southern portion of the area was limited to existing roads and trails by the Federal Register Notice of January 2001 (this notice is in effect until the time that the plan revision is signed). A middle portion of the area is open to cross country travel. Extensive resource damage is occurring from camping activities and especially from unrestricted vehicle travel. This resource damage includes damage to soils, scenic quality, vegetation, cultural, and paleontological resources as well as to riparian resources.

#### ***10.1.2.9 Ken's Lake***

Ken's Lake is a reservoir 10 miles south of Moab, and is within Spanish Valley. Jointly managed by the Moab FO of the BLM and by the Spanish Valley Water Conservancy District, Ken's Lake has a 31-site campground, as well as a day use area and beach. Hiking, biking, fishing, non-motorized boating, OHV and horseback riding opportunities are within or adjacent to the recreation area. Vehicle and camping restrictions are the result of a Federal Register Notice (November 1996) that is in effect until the new RMP is completed.

#### ***10.1.2.10 Kane Creek Crossing***

The area where the Hurrah Pass road crosses Kane Creek has become very popular for dispersed camping especially among off road vehicle enthusiasts. OHV play at camp is the major threat to the scenic values of the area, as well as to the water quality of Kane Creek. Both dispersed camping and OHV use have led to sanitation problems and resource deterioration due to these unrestricted recreational activities. Although cross-country vehicle travel was restricted by a Federal Register Notice in January 2001, much of this type of activity still occurs. The

restrictions imposed in this Federal Register Notice are in effect until a new RMP is signed. There are currently no limitations on camping activity.

#### ***10.1.2.11 Mill Creek Canyon***

Mill Creek Canyon is located directly east of Moab. This perennial stream is the "backyard" for those Grand County residents who live on the east side of Spanish Valley. An exceedingly scenic canyon, it is popular for hiking, swimming, and viewing rock art. Some horseback riding also occurs in the canyon. A management plan for the area was signed in 2001. Recreational use of Mill Creek Canyon is governed by this management plan and the accompanying environmental documents. Management is made more difficult by the split ownership of the canyon: public lands are interspersed with School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) and private lands. A well-known off-road vehicle challenge hill, Potato Salad Hill, is located at the entrance to Mill Creek Canyon.

#### ***10.1.2.12 Green River Corridor***

The Green River is the western border of the Moab FO area; the Green River is shared with the Price Field Office. Three popular float sections are shared between the two offices, although day-to-day management of the facilities has been informally deferred to Price. These three float trips are: Desolation Canyon, Gray Canyon (which constitutes the last day of the Desolation trip and is also the Green River "Daily"), and Labyrinth Canyon. Both Desolation Canyon and Labyrinth Canyon require permits. The Green River Daily does not require a permit; the entire Green River Daily is accessible by road and is a short stand-alone day trip. Facilities along the Green River include a campground, toilets and a boat ramp along the Green River Daily, and a seasonal contact station and toilet at Mineral Bottom, the termination of the Labyrinth Float trip.

The launch point for the Labyrinth Canyon trip is at Green River State Park; the riverbed of Labyrinth is State sovereign land, with most of the shoreline managed by BLM. Both the BLM and Utah State Sovereign lands share management of the area via a formal agreement.

#### ***10.1.2.13 The Book Cliffs***

The Book Cliffs are a large area in the northern part of the Moab FO area. Within this lightly used and relatively unknown area, which stretches from the Green River to the Colorado State line north of Interstate 70, are five Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). Recreation seekers use the Book Cliffs primarily for big game hunting, scenic drives, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, backpacking and some limited vehicle camping. There are ample opportunities for solitude and primitive, dispersed recreation in the Book Cliffs. The Sego Canyon Rock Art site is located on the southern edge of the Book Cliffs.

#### ***10.1.2.14 Other Areas***

In addition to the areas listed above, the remainder of the Moab FO area is contained within the Grand ERMA. Areas such as Entrada Bluffs and Kane Creek Canyon Rim receive significant visitation. Some areas, such as Yellow Cat and Black Ridge receive moderate visitation. Other areas, such as the Dolores Triangle, East LaSal Creek, the Cisco Desert, and Beaver Creek are less visited, but can be very popular during hunting season. As many areas within the Moab FO area become more visited and more crowded, some visitors are increasingly seeking out less

traveled areas. Much of the former backcountry in the Moab FO area is now receiving heavy to moderate recreational use; the majority of the areas of the Moab FO area (outside the Cisco Desert) have the potential for substantial recreational use.

### **10.1.3 Facilities**

The BLM directly manages and maintains many types of facilities throughout the Moab FO area, including 21 campgrounds, boat ramps, the Westwater Ranger Station, trailheads and auxiliary facilities such as signs, as well as roads and trails, which are discussed separately below. The Price Field Office manages facilities on the Green River through an informal arrangement.

#### ***10.1.3.1 Campgrounds***

The Moab FO manages 21 developed fee area campgrounds, with 248 individual fee campsites and 10 group sites. In addition, the Sand Flats Recreation Area has a total of 127 campsites. Although located in the Moab FO area, the Price Field Office manages the 10-site campground at Swasey's Boat Ramp on the Green River Daily. The following facilities are some of those maintained by the Moab FO:

- 3 picnic areas
- 89 vault toilets
- 433 fire grills
- 349 picnic tables
- 12 trash dumpsters
- Four overlooks
- 94 information boards
- 500 BLM manufactured signs
- 7 boat ramps
- 24 parking lots
- 20 fee pipe safes
- 5 group site shade shelters

#### ***10.1.3.2 Vehicular Routes***

The Moab FO itself marks 277 miles of road. The Moab FO maintains the main entrance roads in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area (the Needles Overlook and Anticline Overlook Roads, both of which are State Scenic Byways). Those routes, which are primarily used for vehicular recreation, are those that are marked by the Moab FO, often in conjunction with a user group such as the Red Rock Four Wheelers or the Moab Bike Patrol. The Moab FO marks the following routes:

- Amasa Back Route
- Copper Ridge Sauropod Trackway Interpretive Trail / Copper Ridge Jeep Route
- Fins n Things Jeep Route
- Flat Pass Bike Route
- Gemini Bridges Road



- Gold Bar Rim Jeep Route
- Golden Spike Jeep Route
- Hell's Revenge Jeep Route
- Kane Creek Rim/Pritchett Canyon Route
- Klondike Bluffs Bike Route
- Kokopelli's Trail
- Lower Monitor and Merrimac Bike Route
- Moab Rim Route
- Monitor and Merrimac Jeep Trail Route
- Poison Spider Route
- Porcupine Rim Bike Route
- Sevenmile Rim Jeep Route
- Steelbender Jeep Route
- Needles Overlook Road (Utah State Scenic Byway)
- Anticline Overlook Road (Utah State Scenic Byway)

Additionally, many other motorized routes within the Moab FO area are used for recreational purposes.

The most popular motorized routes include any of the 785 miles of the Jeep Safari Route system (this figure includes dirt roads within the Moab FO area that are permitted for Jeep Safari use). This network of backcountry routes has been popularized in guidebooks and on maps as well as by club use. Some of the Jeep Safari Routes are marked, but the majority of routes are not marked on the ground. Jeep Safari routes include Behind the Rocks, Chicken Corners, Cliff Hanger (Amasa Back), Copper Ridge, Crystal Geyser, Dome Plateau, Fins and Things, Flat Iron Mesa, Gold Bar Rim, Golden Spike, Hellroaring Rim, Hell's Revenge, Hey Joe Canyon, Kane Creek Canyon, Metal Masher, Moab Rim, Poison Spider, Porcupine Rim, Pritchett Canyon, Rose Garden Hill, Secret Spire, Sevenmile Rim, Steelbender, Strike Ravine, 3-D, Top of the World and Wipe-Out Hill. Other popular four-wheel drive routes include Gemini Bridges and Canyonlands Overlook.

"Rockcrawling," a vigorous type of jeeping, is currently popular in the Black Ridge area, on a route known as Helldorado, though much of this route is on state and private lands.

There are no routes solely dedicated to dirt biking or to ATV use. These activities take place on the same routes as used by four-wheel drive vehicles, and often occur on Jeep Safari routes. There is an informal, user-made network of motorcycle routes in the White Wash area.

### ***10.1.3.3 Popular Mountain Bike Routes***

Mountain bike use occurs on many of the Jeep Safari routes as well as on other routes. Popular mountain bike routes include Gemini Bridges, Porcupine Rim, The Moab Slickrock Bike Trail, Amasa Back, Flat Pass, Klondike Bluffs, Kokopelli's Trail, Poison Spider, Lower Monitor and Merrimac, Bartlett Wash, Moab Rim, Kane Creek Canyon Rim, Bar M, Hurrah Pass and Onion Creek.

**10.1.3.4 Popular Hiking Trails**

The following trails are reserved for hiking use only: Hunter Canyon, Fisher Towers, Corona Arch, Copper Ridge Sauropod Trackway Interpretive Trail, Mill Canyon Dinosaur Trail, Negro Bill Canyon, the Ken's Lake hiking trail system, Trough Springs Trail and the Windwhistle Nature Trail. These routes are marked and maintained by the Moab FO as hiking trails. While the Hidden Valley Trail and the Portal Trail are marked and maintained as hiking trails, bicycle use is also allowed. Hikers also extensively use the Moab Rim Route. Hiking also occurs elsewhere in the Moab FO area, particularly in canyon systems. Hiking is allowed anywhere within the Moab FO area. General areas that are popular for hiking include the Sand Flats area, the entire Mill Creek area, Behind the Rocks and area above Potash Road.

10.1.3.4.1 Old Spanish Trail

The Old Spanish Trail was designated a National Historic Trail by the U.S. Congress in 2003. Management of this trail has just been initiated. There is a total of 118 miles of this historic trail within the Moab FO area. Several well-known locations along the Old Spanish Trail, such as Casa Colorado, Ojo Verde and Kane Springs, are located within the Moab FO area. There has been consideration given to marking this Old Spanish Trail for equestrian use.

10.1.3.4.2 The Grand County Road Inventory

The Grand County road inventory will be considered as baseline information, to be used for future OHV designations, and will be considered as an information source as a Travel Management Plan is being developed for the Moab FO area. Through the process of developing the Travel Management Plan, these routes will be verified. San Juan County has completed a similar inventory. This inventory will also be considered for OHV designations as the Travel Management Plan is developed for the Moab FO area.

**10.1.4 Activities**

Recreation opportunities in the Moab FO area are extensive. The following list of activities is categorized by use level (Katie Stevens, Russ von Koch, Brent Northrup, Alex Van Hemert, and Bill Stevens, BLM Moab FO, in meeting on May 5, 2003; see Table 10-2).

<b>Table 10-2. Activities by Use Level in the Moab FO Area</b>		
<b>High Use</b>	<b>Medium Use</b>	<b>Low Use</b>
Driving for pleasure (sight-seeing)	ATV riding	BASE jumping
Mountain biking	Dirt bike riding	Backpacking
Hiking	Rock climbing (sport, traditional, bouldering, canyoneering)	Hot air ballooning
Jeeping	Special events	Hunting
Camping		Fishing
River activities (rafting and paddling)		Swimming
Nature study/Cultural study		Canyoneering
		Rock crawling

### **10.1.5 River Recreation Use**

The Moab FO area provides rafting and boating experiences for many people on a yearly basis. All commercial use is under Special Recreation Permit (SRP) with limited permit availability outside of Labyrinth Canyon. Nine sections of the Colorado and Green Rivers are floated extensively.

#### ***10.1.5.1 Westwater Canyon of the Colorado River***

This is a whitewater segment, and is managed under a limited use permit system, with limitations on the numbers of people allowed to launch. Westwater Canyon is considered one of the finest whitewater float trips in the country. Westwater Canyon is entirely within the Colorado River SRMA. Extensive facilities are maintained at Westwater to help manage the area, including a full service ranger station, employee housing, a water system, boat ramps, parking lots and a campground. Private as well as commercial boaters benefit from this intensive management.

#### ***10.1.5.2 The Colorado River Daily (from Hittle Bottom to BLM Takeout along Utah Highway 128)***

This section has several mild rapids. Private boaters are not required to obtain a permit. There are no limitations on the numbers of boaters allowed. The Colorado River Daily is in the Grand ERMA below Castle Creek (shoreline only). The Colorado River upstream from Castle Creek (river as well as shoreline) is located in the Colorado River SRMA.

#### ***10.1.5.3 The Colorado River along Utah Highway 279***

This 20-mile flatwater section is usually canoed. There are no permits or use limitations. It is within the Grand ERMA.

#### ***10.1.5.4 The Colorado River from the Colorado State Line to Westwater***

The section of the Colorado River from Loma, Colorado to Westwater, Utah is called Ruby/Horsethief. This popular flatwater float trip is administered by the Grand Junction, Colorado BLM office. Four miles of the trip are within the Moab FO area. As the takeout is at Westwater, heavy Ruby/Horsethief use can lead to parking overflow problems at the Westwater Ranger Station.

#### ***10.1.5.5 Green River – Desolation Canyon (from Sand Wash to Nefertiti Rapid)***

This 76-mile section of the Green River is called the Desolation Canyon float trip. There are fifty ripples and rapids in this section. Private permits are required for Desolation Canyon; the BLM Price Field Office issues these permits. The east side of Desolation Canyon is in the Grand ERMA.

#### ***10.1.5.6 The Green River Daily (from Nefertiti Rapid to Swasey's Beach, 10 Miles North of Green River, Utah)***

This is the last 10 miles of the Desolation Canyon float trip. There are several mild rapids along this stretch. Permits are not required for this Daily portion. It is in the Grand ERMA.

#### ***10.1.5.7 Green River – Labyrinth Canyon (From the City of Green River to Mineral Bottom)***

This 60-mile section of the Green River is one of the premier flatwater canoe trips in the country. Permits are required for Labyrinth Canyon, although numbers of boaters are not limited. Labyrinth Canyon is in the Grand ERMA, and it is managed by agreement with Utah Sovereign Lands with assistance from Utah State Parks.

Growing in popularity is the flatwater section of the Colorado River from Cisco to Dewey Bridge. Both private and commercial users use this 20-mile section of the river. There is no private permitting process for this section of the river. In addition, the Dolores River from the Colorado/Utah state line to its confluence with the Colorado River is floated in the springtime by a limited number of people (free permits are required). Limited flows on the Dolores restrict its use for much of the year.

### **10.1.6 The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum**

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a tool used by recreation planners to classify recreation areas across five categories ranging from most to least primitive. The Moab Field office has recently completed an inventory of the current ROS and it is shown in Figure 10-3.

## **10.2 SPECIFIC MANDATES AND AUTHORITY**

### **10.2.1 Federal Mandates**

The following Federal mandates guide decisions about recreation use and OHV use on BLM lands.

#### ***10.2.1.1 The Wilderness Act of 1964***

The Wilderness Act of 1964 sets the precedence for the designation of Wilderness Inventory Areas and Wilderness Study Areas, limiting motorized and mechanized travel. Detailed information about the wilderness act is found in the Wilderness section of this AMS.

#### ***10.2.1.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968***

The Wild and Scenic Rivers chapter of the AMS addresses this act in detail. This act relates specifically to recreation because Wild and Scenic Rivers can be classified as Recreational River Areas, consisting of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Although there are no sections of Wild and Scenic Rivers that fall within the Moab field office boundaries, this act is relevant for the current planning effort. More

detailed information about Wild and Scenic Rivers is included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers chapter of this AMS.

### ***10.2.1.3 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1969***

The land and water conservation fund is a federal program providing grants to outdoor recreation and open space projects. The fund receives its revenue primarily from the Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas leasing receipts. The LWCF provides funding for state and local pass-through grants through the National Park Service. Projects typically include land acquisition, outdoor recreation facility development and renovation. This act is relevant to recreation planning because it could provide funding for specific projects.

### ***10.2.1.4 The National Trails System Act of 1968***

The National Trails System Act is based on the following premises.

1. In order to provide for the ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population and in order to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation, trails should be established (i) primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation, and (ii) secondarily, within scenic areas and along historic travel routes of the Nation which are often more remotely located.
2. The purpose of this Act is to provide the means for attaining these objectives by instituting a national system of recreation, scenic and historic trails, by designating the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system, and by prescribing the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system.
3. The Congress recognizes the valuable contributions that volunteers and private, nonprofit trail groups have made to the development and maintenance of the Nation's trails. In recognition of these contributions, it is further the purpose of this Act to encourage and assist volunteer citizen involvement in the planning, development, maintenance, and management, where appropriate of trails.

### ***10.2.1.5 Executive Order 11644 – Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands***

Executive Order 11644 states, "those regulations shall direct that the designation of such areas and trails will be based upon the protection of the resources of the public lands, promotion of the safety of all users of those lands, and minimization of conflicts among the various uses of those lands. The regulations shall further require that the designation of such areas and trails shall be in accordance with the following:

1. Areas and trails shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resources of the Public lands.
2. Areas and trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats.
3. Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and

to ensure the compatibility of such issues with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.

4. Areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated Wilderness Areas or Primitive areas. Areas and trails shall be located in areas of the National Park System, Natural Areas, or National Wildlife Refuges and Game Ranges only if the respective agency head determines that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, aesthetic, or scenic values."

#### **10.2.1.6 Executive Order 11989 – Off-road Vehicles (OHVs) on Public Lands**

Executive Order 11989 added the following provisions to Executive Order 11644:

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3 of this Order; the respective agency head shall, whenever he determines that the use of off-road vehicles will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public lands immediately close such areas or trails to the type of off-road vehicle causing such effects, until such time as he determines that such adverse effects have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence.
2. Each respective agency had is authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by off-road vehicles except those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open to such use pursuant to Section 3 of this order.

#### **10.2.2 Management Guidance**

An Instructional Memorandum entitled "Implementation of Utah Recreation Guidelines" (No. UT 2001-090; BLM 2001b) was issued in August 2001 to help guide decisions for recreation resources. A premise of the guidelines is that the health of the land and the quality of the recreational experience are inseparable. Compatible recreation management and activities are detailed in this report. Two major themes are outlined in this report; strategies for recreation management, and strategies for promoting stewardship among users of the resource.

Standards outlined in this memorandum address the relationship between rangeland health and recreation use. Specifically, implementation standards suggest the following:

1. Limit use where necessary to protect resources from damage
2. Implement on-the-ground management
3. Coordinate with other agencies for traffic control, search and rescue, and public safety
4. Appropriate placement of infrastructure
5. Promote stewardship through interpretation, permitting, communication, collaboration, and educational programs
6. Encourage private sector to market responsibly
7. Educate the public on appropriate human and solid waste disposal techniques (BLM 2001b)

## 10.3 CURRENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

### 10.3.1 The Grand Resource Management Plan (RMP)

The Grand RMP was approved in 1985 and provides the framework for planning in the area. The 1985 Grand RMP was completed prior to the explosion of recreation use on public lands in the Moab FO area. The 1985 Grand RMP specifically addresses the Canyon Rims Recreation Area, the Colorado and the Dolores Rivers, and the issuance of recreation permits as well as a few routes; however most of the issues and locations that are important to the Recreation Program are not addressed at all. The guidance given in the 1985 RMP to the recreation program lacks the specificity needed to manage burgeoning use. While most of the recommendations in this plan have been accomplished or are no longer relevant, the following proposed action could be carried forward: the designation of 1,375 acres in Negro Bill Canyon as an Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) to protect scenic recreational values, the sensitive plant *Aguilegia micrantha*, and the riparian area along the perennial stream.

The 1985 RMP also made the following OHV decisions (shown in Figure 10-4):

1. Designate 1,183,660 acres as open to OHV use
2. Designate 596,234 acres limited to existing roads and trails
3. Designate 24,454 acres as closed to OHV use
4. Designate 15,206 acres as in Mill Creek and East Mill Creek as limited to designated roads and trails

OHV management is an issue that needs to be addressed in the current RMP revision.

### 10.3.2 Recreation Area Management Plans (RAMPs)

Rapid growth in recreation activities in the Moab FO area, since the approval of the Grand RMP in 1985, has precipitated the need for the development of specific RAMPs. Four RAMPs (Colorado Riverway, Mill Creek, Sand Flats and Canyon Rims) have been completed to-date. Three of these plans (the Colorado Riverway, Mill Creek and Sand Flats Plans) have been accompanied by Federal Register Notices that instituted rules and regulations associated with some or all of these plans (discussed below). These regulations are temporary and are revised at such time as the RMP is revised. The Canyon Rims RAMP included a Plan Amendment that changed OHV designations in that area. Two RAMPs are in preparation at this time – Cameo Cliffs and Utah Rims. Both of these RAMPs consider OHV designation in the Plan Amendment process.

#### 10.3.2.1 Colorado Riverway

A RAMP was completed for the Colorado Riverway in 1992 and updated through a formal amendment in 2001. The area extends thirty miles along Utah's Scenic Byway 128 (Utah Highway 128) from the historic suspension bridge at the town site of Dewey, and then continues along Utah Scenic Byway 279 for 28 miles southwest along the Colorado River, to the eastern boundary of Canyonlands National Park. The area also includes the lower section of Kane Creek Canyon, as well as the Castle Rock and Onion Creek areas. This RAMP has guided the

construction of 18 campgrounds and numerous day use sites along the river. The most heavily used area in the Moab FO area, the Colorado Riverway has been subject to planning to stop resource degradation, to restore scenic and other resource values, and to provide recreational opportunities for both visitors and residents.

A portion of the Colorado River SRMA (from Dewey Bridge to Castle Creek) is contained in the Colorado Riverway Recreation Area. However, the majority of the Riverway is not in the SRMA. Objectives of the Riverway RAMP (2001a) include:

1. ROS Class IV (Roaded natural): to provide a somewhat natural appearing environment with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of man, permit motorized use, harmonize recreation management practices with the natural environment, and manage for no more than moderate concentrations of users with facilities sometimes provided for group activities;
2. ROS Class III (Semi-primitive motorized): to provide a relatively natural or naturally appearing environment where evidence of man, restrictions, and controls are present, but subtle; permit motorized use, recreation facilities blend with the natural environment, and management that fosters dispersal of users;
3. ROS Class II (Semi-primitive, non-motorized): To provide a largely natural appearing environment with little evidence of man, few restrictions or visitor controls, no motorized use, few, if any, recreation facilities other than trails and signs and management that fosters dispersal of users.

The RAMP also established ROS classes throughout the Riverway.

The 2001 Amendment to the Riverway RAMP added several site-specific proposals, including additional campground and trailhead development, as well as a bike path along Utah Highway 128. A second amendment to the Riverway RAMP is currently being prepared. This amendment analyzes the construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Colorado River and the bike path along the first 3.2 miles of Utah Highway 128.

#### ***10.3.2.2 Mill Creek Canyon Planning Area***

The Mill Creek Canyon RAMP was signed in February 2001. The RAMP affects the Mill Creek Planning Area, which includes all BLM lands along the south fork of Mill Creek Canyon from the town of Moab to the USFS boundary. The overall goal for the area is to protect, manage and improve natural and cultural resources through effective use of minimum tools. Objectives to achieve this goal are focused on the protection of natural and cultural resources and include:

- Protection and management of wildlife and riparian values,
- Control of noxious weeds,
- Maintenance of instream flows in Mill Creek and implementation of the recommendations made in the Total Maximum Daily Load requirements of the EPA (Mill Creek being a 303d stream),
- Continuation of efforts to acquire or exchange private and SITLA lands from willing owners,



- Continued management of the planning area as limited to designated roads,
- Recommending a land use plan amendment to consider the canyon as an ACEC,
- Recommending management according to Visual Resource Management (VRM), and
- Maintaining primitive backpacking and hiking opportunities.

Management actions stated to achieve these goals are aimed at balancing dispersed, day use recreation opportunities with the integrity of the resource.

### ***10.3.2.3 Canyon Rims Recreation Area***

The Canyon Rims Recreation Area consists of approximately 100,273 public land acres with access off U.S. Highway 191. The overall objective for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area is to protect, manage and improve the natural resources of the area while allowing for responsible recreation. The goal is to manage the Canyon Rims Recreation Area for recreation activities such as camping, vehicle touring on the primary road system, touring the secondary road system by motorized vehicle and mountain bike, and hiking and backpacking the canyons, in accordance with the ROS classes described above. Interpretive and educational opportunities will be used to fulfill the potential of the Canyon Rims Recreation Area. The following specific objectives for the Canyon Rims Recreation Area were developed after considering past management actions, legal requirements, and conformance with the Grand RMP (1985).

1. To protect cultural, historical and archaeological resources on the Canyon Rims in accordance with BLM policies. All activities will be evaluated and designed to avoid or mitigate negative impacts to cultural resources.
2. To manage the area to protect visual and scenic resources. Change those oil and gas leasing parcels currently in Category 1 (Open to Leasing) to Category 2 (Open to Oil and Gas Leasing With Special Stipulations). Categories would be examined for their congruence with VRM classes (see below). This change was effected by a Plan Amendment to the 1985 Grand RMP (BLM 2003a)
3. To protect and manage habitat so that wildlife, special status plant and animal species, ecological sites, water quality and native riparian and upland vegetation will benefit. Manage to maintain all range improvements at the Canyon Rims Recreation Area.
4. To acquire or exchange private and SITLA lands from willing administrators within the planning area. Should any lands become public, they will be managed as the public lands are in this plan.
5. To continue to manage the portion of the planning area that is limited to existing roads under the Grand RMP as limited to existing roads. This plan changes lands currently in the "Open" category to "Limited to Existing Roads" for consistency and resource protection. A map of existing roads is included in the RAMP amendment. The amendment accompanying this RAMP changed 58,306 acres in the "Open" category to "Limited to Existing Roads." In limited areas of high visitation, roads will be marked so that off-road travel does not occur. There will be no provisions for intensive (i.e., open, play-type) motorized recreation or for competitive motorized events.
6. To manage the major recreation facilities in the Canyon Rims Recreation Area at their current level of development. Provisions will be made to upgrade the facilities to meet

the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. To manage the Canyon Rims Recreation Area to maintain its visual quality following objectives established for VRM classes in the BLM Visual Resource Management System.

#### ***10.3.2.4 Sand Flats Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP)***

The Sand Flats RAMP was approved in 1994. (A 2003 amendment to the plan allowed for development of a campground above Days Crack.) Located adjacent to Moab and bordered by Negro Bill and Mill Creek Wilderness Study Areas, the Sand Flats area has received a dramatic increase in recreation use due to the international recognition of the Slickrock Bike Trail. The Sand Flats Management Plan identifies the following management objectives:

- To provide for a recreational "mix" of opportunities necessary to meet variable visitor expectations, while maintaining the relative natural characteristics of the area;
- To maintain wilderness values in adjacent Wilderness Study Areas;
- To prevent degradation of the natural values in the planning area and provide for restoration of areas where vegetation and soils have been damaged by recreational use; and
- To provide for public health and safety.

The Sand Flats RAMP identified, and successfully implemented, the following programs that guide management of the area:

1. Use management guidelines for other resource programs, including cultural resources, wildlife, soils and vegetation resources, and conflicts between livestock and recreation users.
2. Land tenure adjustment to concentrate efforts to consolidate lands adjacent to the Slickrock Bike Trailhead. Currently, the State Sections in the Sand Flats area are leased by Grand County to manage camping, using fees collected. No land tenure adjustment has occurred yet although it stands as a recommendation in the plan.
3. Off Road Vehicle Designations to maintain off-road vehicle opportunities limited to designated road and trails outside WSAs. This objective was accomplished by a published rule in the Federal Register.
4. Implementation of a user fee system
5. Site development for camping areas with a total camping capacity of 250 – 400 individuals.
6. Visitor services including emergency services, information and interpretive services, and visitor and resource protection.
7. Resource manipulation and rehabilitation
8. Maintenance of facilities funded largely through user fees
9. Administration of the plan by cooperative agreement between the BLM and Grand County, whereby the BLM is responsible for planning, development and maintenance activities, and the County is responsible for collecting fees and distributing revenues for maintenance and development.

**10.3.3 Budget and Fee Collection for Programs**

The Moab BLM Recreation Program is important to the local economy. Of the nearly \$100 million in sales revenue in Grand County, approximately \$45 million is attributable to recreation on public lands.

Due to a relatively flat base budget, the Moab FO has come to rely on the Fee Demonstration program for needed funds to support intensive public use. Services to the public are provided from these fee monies, such as campground maintenance and expenses related to the Westwater Canyon permit system. Maintenance and operation of facilities is costly and requires a commitment of funds to provide safe and proper facilities. The Moab FO has had to become much more self-sufficient than typical BLM offices in order to provide for public safety and enjoyment. Table 10-3 describes the current (2003) budget and fee programs and their allocations for the Moab FO.

<b>Table 10-3. Budget and Fee Collections for Programs in the Moab FO Area, 2003</b>	
Base recreation from non-fee accounts	\$208,000
Annual recreation fees collected	\$512,000
Total recreation budget (base and fees)*	\$724,000
*Excludes Sand Flats Recreation Area	

In addition, Grand County collects \$252,000 for the Sand Flats Recreation Area; this money is used by the County to maintain and manage this area. The Moab FO receives none of the fee money from the Sand Flats Recreation Area.

**10.3.4 Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management**

The Grand RMP outlined OHV designations (1985). Since that time, Federal Register Notices have instituted rules that will remain in place until the new RMP is signed. They are compared in the table below. In addition, wilderness has been designated in Utah as part of the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area bill. The Black Ridge Wilderness Area is closed to OHV use (Table 10-4).

<b>Table 10-4. Comparison of 1985 RMP OHV Designations and Present OHV Designations</b>		
	<b>Grand RMP (acres)</b>	<b>After Additional Restrictions and Designations (acres)</b>
Open to cross country travel	1,183,660	725,370
Limited to Existing Roads and Trails	596,234	734,074
Limited to Designated Roads and Trails	15,206	48,169
Limited to Inventoried Roads	309,749	309,749
Closed to OHV Use	24,454	33,819

Since the approval of the Grand RMP, there have been dramatic changes in visitation. These changes forced alterations in the OHV designations in order to protect visual, cultural, and vegetation resources. The numbers of visitors have increased, and the numbers of visitors

engaging in motorized recreation have also increased. This required the changes to OHV categories as described above.

OHV management is an ongoing activity that is very time consuming for staff in the Moab office. In fiscal year (FY) 2002 the Moab office reported several activities and accomplishments related to OHV management. These activities included monitoring and maintaining trails, maintaining and adding to a database of monitoring use, installing fencing to protect vegetation on certain trails, coordination with local officials and other agencies, WSA monitoring, and ongoing training on OHV related issues. The BLM rangers issued 115 citations and 38 written warnings related to OHV activities (BLM 2002).

### **10.3.5 Organized Recreation and Permitting**

Commercial outfitting, guiding, and special recreation events are a very important part of the local Grand County economy. Many businesses rely on the commerce that events provide, and commercial outfitting provides a living for many people in the local economy. The large number of events and outfitting establishments in the Moab FO area represent a wide variety in the type of SRP. Permitting is a time consuming activity for BLM staff, as an environmental analysis must be made before issuing a permit.

#### ***10.3.5.1 Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) for Commercial Outfitters***

As of 2003, there are 116 permitted commercial outfitters in the Moab FO area. They include:

- River uses (29)
- Jeeping (27)
- Biking (22)
- Climbing (9)
- Hiking (6)
- Hunting (6)
- OHV touring (4)
- Horse/Pack (3)
- Shuttle Service (2)
- Photography (2)
- Base Jumping (1)
- Canyoneering (1)
- Hot Air Ballooning (1)
- Retreat (1)
- Rock Art Viewing (1)

SRP holders must have a certificate of public liability insurance, use fee payment, either \$80 or 3% of gross receipts, a post-use report. SRPs issued by the Moab FO are subject to all the rules promulgated by the BLM.

(Note: BLM has placed a moratorium on authorizing additional commercial permits in the Moab Field Office for river use on the Colorado and the Dolores Rivers.)

#### ***10.3.5.2 Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) for Special Events***

An "event" is a single, structured, organized, consolidated, or scheduled meeting or occurrence for the purpose of recreational use on public land. There are approximately 19 special events with pending permit applications for 2004. Of these, nine are competitive events, including a

motorcycle race, three bike races, two trail running foot races, and three triathlon-type non-motorized races.

Applications for special recreation event permits (commercial or competitive only) must be submitted 180 days in advance. Applications for commercial or competitive events must be filed by September 1 of the year prior to the event. This rule applies only to the Moab FO by Federal Register Notice. The application form must include a topographic map of the area of operation as well as a current operating plan. SRPs must also include a certificate of public liability insurance, use fee payment, either \$80 or 3% of gross receipts, and a post-use report. For events, the fee is \$4 per participant per day.

Due to recent increases in recreational use in the Moab area that exceed monitoring capability and available space, priority for authorization of new SRPs for land-based commercial and competitive events is given (where conflicts exist) to applicants proposing uses that:

- Do not duplicate existing uses;
- Take place outside the months of March, April, May and October;
- Use lands and facilities off public lands for overnight accommodation of guests;
- Display and communicate the Canyon Country Minimum Impact Practices; and
- Focus visitation on sites and areas capable of withstanding repeated use.

The great number of visitors to public lands during peak periods led to the promulgation of these rules in order to protect resources and to disperse visitation. Other factors are also considered including the public demand for the proposed use, the capability of the applicant to carry out the proposed use, projected government revenues, and past performance. These special rules for commercial and competitive events will be evaluated in the revised RMP.

### ***10.3.5.3 Special Area River Recreation Permits***

In addition to commercial permit requirements, permits for private boaters are required for three river stretches within the Moab FO area.

1. Westwater Canyon of the Colorado River requires permits; only five private groups are permitted per day (up to 75 people). There is a fee of \$7 per person for this permit. Group size is limited to 25 people. All permittees are required to follow standard river use stipulations. The Westwater permit program has evolved into a largely self-funded permit and management system.
2. The Dolores River from Gateway to the confluence with the Colorado River requires a free permit and adherence to standard river use stipulations.
3. Interagency river trip permits for the Labyrinth section of the Green river are required for noncommercial boat trips on any portion of the Green River between Green River State Park and the northern boundary of Canyonlands National Park. Permits are free and issued under the joint jurisdiction of the BLM and Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. Individuals and groups are required to possess and use portable toilets and fire pans in Labyrinth Canyon. Group size is limited to no more than 25 people.

#### **10.3.5.4 Recreation Use Permits (RUPs)**

Campground fees are paid under the Recreation Use Permit program. For FY 2003 there were 18,108 RUPs issued for individual campsites and 320 RUPs issued for nine reservable group sites under a reservation system.

#### **10.3.6 Federal Register Notices**

The 1985 Grand RMP imposed very few management parameters on recreation activities. As visitation increased, the Moab FO Recreation Program found it necessary to place restrictions on activities such as camping, travel, and wood gathering. (See Figure 10-5 for camping restrictions and Figure 10-6 for wood gathering restrictions.) The management parameters specified through Federal Register Notices need to be evaluated for inclusion in the new RMP. The following notices have been issued since the 1985 RMP.

- July 24, 1992: Camping, woodcutting and travel restrictions in Riverway and Sand Flats Recreation Area
- December 14, 1992: Occupancy stay restrictions
- April 2, 1993: Camping and firearms restrictions on the Colorado River
- June 4, 1993: Prohibition of possession of alcohol by minor on public lands in the Moab FO area
- November 29, 1996: Camping, wood cutting and travel restrictions in Mill Creek, Sand Flats, Ken's Lake, Little Canyon and Seven Mile Canyon
- August 1, 2000: Affirmation of fees at fee sites
- January 22, 2001: Camping and woodcutting restrictions within the Grand Extensive RMA
- January 22, 2001: Travel restrictions within the Grand Extensive RMA

### **10.4 RESOURCE DEMAND AND ANALYSIS**

This section of the chapter attempts to document the demand for the resource by looking at the following subsections:

- Past use patterns, including seasonal demand
- Past visitation using various data collection methodologies
- Demand for particular activities, specifically OHV use and boating

#### **10.4.1 Seasonal Demand**

The Moab region in particular, and Southeastern Utah as a whole, experience heavy seasonal visitation and demand for recreation activities. Busy seasons include both spring and fall, with spring bringing the most visitors to the area. Visitation occurs throughout the year, with the spring season being February through May, and the fall season being September through November. Spring and fall visitors engage in the full range of recreation activities, including jeeping, mountain biking, ATV and dirt bike riding, hiking, rock climbing and camping. Summer

visitation is mainly associated with touring the National Parks and with river running; while this period brings substantial numbers of visitors, these people mainly enjoy driving through the public lands, viewing scenic overlooks and doing some hiking and biking.

#### **10.4.2 Current, Past and Projected Visitation**

At least two methods of determining visitation to the area have been used including traffic counts and comparisons with Arches National Park visitation (BLM 2002). Each is discussed below.

##### ***10.4.2.1 Traffic Counts to Assess Visitation***

Visitor use of BLM recreation venues is difficult to quantify. There are multiple access points to BLM lands within the Moab FO area, rather than one entrance station as at many National Parks. The Moab FO has initiated a study to measure visitation on BLM lands with the use of traffic counters at key locations. Counters were located based on staff knowledge and experience. The study also uses visitor data from trail registers, camp collections, and other special use recreation permits. Data received from the National Park Service and Utah State Parks and Recreation were used to determine the value of a single car count, or how many people ride in one vehicle. Counters (both Utah Department of Transportation [UDOT] and BLM), trail registers and permit data are currently available from the following locations:

- UT 128 at Milepost 6 traffic counter
- UT 279 at US 191 traffic counter
- UT 313 at US 191 traffic counter
- Kane Creek Road traffic counter
- Gemini Bridges traffic counter
- North Utah Rims traffic counter
- South Utah Rims traffic counter
- Klondike Bluffs traffic counter
- Blue Hills (North) traffic counter
- Blue Hill (South) traffic counter
- Monitor and Merrimac traffic counter
- Floy South exit (White Wash) on I-70 traffic counter
- Labyrinth boating permits
- Dolores River boating permits
- Black Ridge traffic counter
- Powerdam (Mill Creek) traffic counter

The above list provides the sources for visitation data to the Moab FO area. The estimated visitation to the Moab FO area, based on this methodology, is at least 1.6 million visitors, possibly as high as 1.9 million visitors annually. The BLM staff estimates that 1.9 million may be a conservative estimate because it excludes all non-monitored access points (BLM 2002). For instance, all users of the Upper Colorado Riverway who come from the east are not counted, nor are there counters at recreation areas such as Cameo Cliffs or in the Book Cliffs. The Upper Colorado Riverway count alone represents a substantial number of visitors. It is important to note that these numbers are the people going to BLM recreation sites, and not visitors to the Moab Area in general. One should also note that these are visits to sites, and not necessarily the number of people coming to visit the public lands in the Moab FO area, as one person may go to several sites while on a trip.

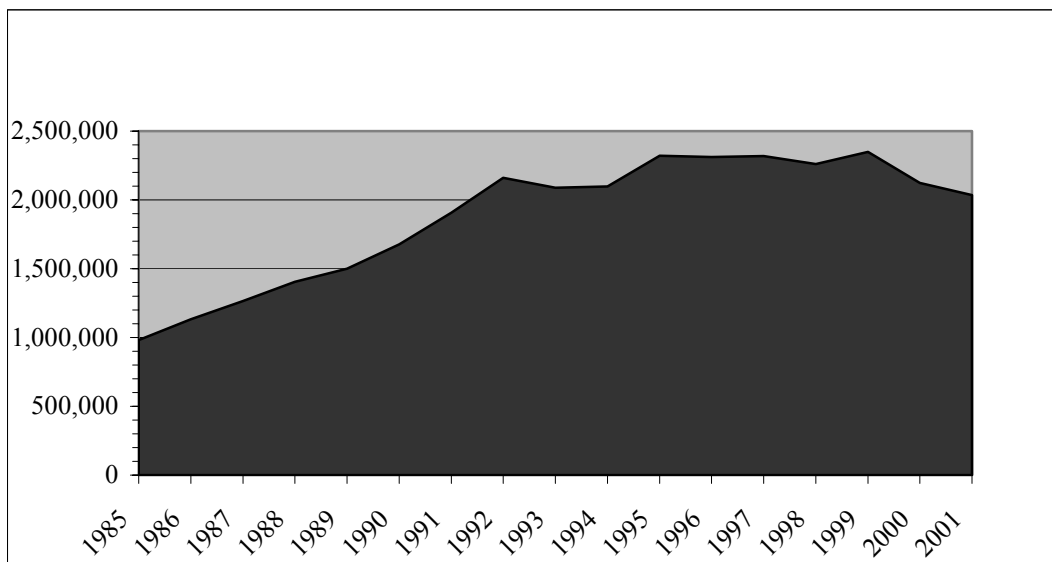
Close to 2 million visitors annually represents a substantial workload on the part of the Moab BLM recreation staff. These visitors camp, bike, jeep and generally recreate on BLM land, requiring sanitation facilities, information, monitoring, and law enforcement.

**10.4.2.2 Assessment of Visitation Relative to Arches**

As a proportion of Grand County's recreation resources, the BLM provides 66% of the total base of recreation lands. Based on the Recreation Management Information Systems (RMIS), the visitation to the Moab FO area is roughly 2.7 times that of neighboring Arches National Park. Using this method of calculation, the peak visitation to the Moab FO area occurred in 1999, with 2,348,946 visitors. Although this model would project visitation dropping slightly to 2,035,870 in 2001, other data do not indicate a real drop in public land visitation. For instance, visitation to BLM campgrounds has continued to increase in every year since 1999. An estimation of visitation to public lands, based on visitation to Arches National Park between 1985 and 2001, is given below in Graph 10-1.

Note that this method of visitation estimation differs from that obtained from traffic counter and trail register data. This is because the latter system does not take into account all access points, and many visitors are not being counted under this method.

**Chart 10-1. Visitation in the Moab FO Area.**





It may be surprising to some that the Moab FO area receives greater more visitors than the surrounding national parks (see Table 10-5). However, many of the activities that visitors come to the Moab area to enjoy can only be done on public lands. For instance, OHV activity, mountain biking, rock hounding and other such activities are available on BLM land, and not on national park lands. In addition, once visitors come to the area to visit a national park, they find that there is a much larger land area available for recreation outside those national parks.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Count of Visitors</b>
I-70 UT/CO Border Traffic Count	2,314,830
Thompson Springs Welcome Center	97,896
Arches National Park	786,429
Canyonlands National Park	401,558
Dead Horse Point State Park	173,680
Green River State Park	138,531
Source: Utah Travel Council, 2002.	

**10.4.2.3 Utah Travel Council Assessment of Visitation**

As part of the Grand County Tourism Profile, the Utah Travel Council publishes visitation numbers to various locations throughout the county. They are shown below for 2000.

From these data, one can see that if the Moab BLM were a discrete unit, its 1.9 million visitors would dwarf those of the surrounding national and state parks. The Moab FO area contributes the bulk of visitors counted in the regional visitation count. In addition, the Moab FO area, as a unit, is fourth in visitation figures in the entire state of Utah. According to the Utah Travel Council, the first three sites are: 1) Temple Square in Salt Lake City 2) Glen Canyon National Recreation Area; and 3) Zion National Park (with 2.4 million visitors in the year 2000). Public lands in the Moab FO area receive nearly twice the number of visitors that Bryce Canyon National Park receives (1.01 million in 2000).

**10.4.3 Use and Demand For Specific Activities**

**10.4.3.1 OHV Use and Demand**

The Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation monitors OHV registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles. The following data show a dramatic increase in OHV ownership in the State of Utah during the last 5 years (Table 10-6).

	<b>1998</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	77,361	160,583	146%
<b>Grand County</b>	238	726	205%
*OHV registrations include ATVs, non-street legal motorbikes, snowmobiles, and dune buggies. Vehicles that are street legal, such as jeeps and trucks, are licensed, and are not considered OHVs for registration purposes.			

It is important to note that the majority of ATV and dirt bike users in the Moab FO area are residents of Colorado. In addition, users come from the Wasatch Front of Utah other western states, and from all over the country to dirt bike and ATV on public lands in the Moab FO area. The Moab area has been featured in national OHV publications (ATV, dirt bike, and four-wheel driving), and has become nationally known as an OHV destination. While it is difficult to quantify numbers of OHV users, motorized use of the Moab FO area has increased substantially.

A study of the 1997 Moab Jeep Safari gives insight into the demographics, use, and demand for one type of OHV use (four-wheel driving) in the Moab area. The typical participant in the Jeep Safari is male (92 percent), with a mean age of 40, educated, somewhat affluent, with little ethnic diversity. In this particular study, only 3.6 percent of participants in the Jeep Safari were from the immediate area, reinforcing the idea that Moab is a unique setting and that people are willing to travel considerable distances to experience this setting (Reiter et al. 1998).

During Jeep Safari Week demand is highest for the following areas:

- Near Dead Horse Point State Park including Arth's Rim, Poison Spider Mesa, Gold Bar Rim, and Golden Spike.
- The area just east and south of Moab including Porcupine Rim, Hell's Revenge, Fins & Things and Steel Bender
- Near Kane Creek, including Cliff Hanger, Kane Creek Canyon Road, Moab Rim, Hurrah Pass, Pritchett Canyon, Behind the Rocks and Flat Iron Mesa
- Northwest of Arches National Park including Wipeout Hill, Seven Mile Rim, Hey Joe Canyon, Ten Mile, Secret Spire, 3D and Crystal Geysers (Reiter et al. 1998).

Typical expectations of these OHV users include scenery, naturalness, seeing new areas, and remoteness. Socializing within one's group was also identified as a high expectation of this user group. The primary management priorities as expressed by the respondents are to:

- Protect the natural resource
- Not close or restrict use on any existing routes
- Provide new trails
- Not maintain existing trails (that is, keep the routes challenging)
- Mark and sign popular routes
- Emphasize information and education approaches to minimize impacts, and to inform and educate OHV recreationists (Reiter et al. 1998).

Note: This was a study, not of OHV users in general, but only of Easter Jeep Safari participants, who pay to go on four-wheel drive tours with the Red Rock 4-Wheeler Club.

Demand for OHV activities is expected to continue to increase in the Moab FO area. This will place demands on the Moab FO to provide for and monitor motorized users. This anticipated increase in demand also has implications for OHV designations and for route marking.

**10.4.3.2 River Recreation Use and Demand**

Visitor counts for boaters are based on permit data and observations and illustrate the current demand for river recreation on four river segments in the Moab FO area (Table 10-7).

	<b>Green River Labyrinth</b>	<b>Green River Daily</b>	<b>Colorado River Daily</b>	<b>Colorado River Westwater</b>
Number of Boaters	8,000	11,000	59,000	14,000
Segment Length (Miles)	70	8	13	17
Rapid Classes	I	II-III	I-III	III-IV
Average Trip Length (Days)	5	1	1	2
Source: Utah River Study Results Report: Recreational Use, Value, and Experience of Boaters on Rivers Managed by the BLM in Utah, IORT, 2001.				

In general, satisfaction of river users is high, with the average satisfaction of approximately 95% on both the Green and Colorado Rivers (Reiter and Blahna 2001).

Characteristics of boaters in Utah vary by river and segment. Seventy-one percent of Green River Daily boaters are from Utah. In contrast, only 16 percent of Westwater boaters are from Utah, with 52% of users residing in Colorado. Surprisingly, while the Colorado Daily is primarily a tourist attraction, approximately 50 percent of users are from Utah.

Average group size on each segment of river varied by location; 11 people on the Green River Daily, 13 people on Labyrinth, 10 on Westwater, and 13 on the Colorado River daily. More than 60 percent of floaters on all sections spend at least one night in Utah. On overnight trips, floaters spent, on average, approximately \$170 per person per trip (Reiter and Blahna 2001).

**10.4.3.3 Mountain Biking Use and Demand**

A survey conducted by the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism discussed mountain bike use. Although this survey is not indicative of the entire mountain biking community, it does shed light on attitudes and perceptions of mountain bikers, particularly tourists, visiting the area. The typical mountain biker at Slickrock is either a college student or a well-established professional. This study suggests that on the whole, mountain bikers are typically well educated, and have disposable income. More bikers on the Slickrock Trail were from Colorado than from any other state. Attitudes concerning issues and management were mixed. When asked about impacts, 37% of respondents thought impacts were high (noticeable), while the remainder thought they were low or at an acceptable level. Respondents felt that vehicle travel off designated routes and human waste and garbage disposal were more pressing management problems than resource impacts. Visitors felt that there should be more of a focus on resource protection than on the development of visitor services.

Most mountain bikers support the use of fees to help fund Slickrock Trail management, which could be extrapolated to the rest of the mountain biking population as well. Respondents were willing to support modest fees for trail use, and felt that \$2 was an appropriate use fee (IORT 2002).

#### **10.4.3.4 Demand for Facility Development**

In the past 15 years, the Moab FO has constructed and maintained a variety of recreation infrastructure, which includes 89 toilets, 98 information bulletin boards, 21 campgrounds, 5 boat ramps and numerous parking areas. However, the present level of facility development is still not sufficient to meet the needs of the recreating public, nor is it sufficient to protect resources from the recreating public. Areas within the Grand ERMA that are receiving heavy visitation and camping use will require facilities such as camping areas, toilets, information kiosks, marked routes and parking areas in the very near future. These areas include the Utah 313 corridor, the area northwest of Moab known as Labyrinth Rims/Gemini Bridges (including Ten Mile Canyon and White Wash Sand Dunes), the Bartlett Wash/Mill/Tusher Canyon areas, Utah Rims, Cameo Cliffs and Kane Creek Crossing area.

It is reasonable to expect that, in the next 15 years, recreation facilities construction will continue to be needed, although the pace of construction is expected to lessen. With visitation to BLM-administered public lands around Moab continuing to increase (and with the need for additional facilities already extent with the present visitation), facilities to provide for these visitors must keep pace in order to protect the land and to provide for human sanitation. Current use levels continue to produce degradation of resources, and additional facilities are needed to accommodate visitation and stabilize resource values. Examples of demand-driven development include: 1) providing camping facilities where dispersed camping activity exceeds capacity, or 2) providing marked OHV or bike routes when numbers and types of users change so that route marking can maintain public safety and protect resources. In addition, providing for vehicular users often requires building parking lots, trailheads and toilet facilities.

### **10.5 CONSISTENCY WITH NON-BUREAU PLANS**

#### **10.5.1 Cooperative Agreements**

The Moab FO has agreements with the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) concerning the management of the Williams Bottom camping area and has an informal agreement with the Grand Water and Sewer Service Agency on the management of the Ken's Lake Recreation Area. There are also agreements with State Sovereign Lands and Utah State Parks on the management of the Labyrinth Canyon section of the Green River. The Moab FO has an agreement with Grand County on trail planning and coordination. Grand County and the Moab FO have a Cooperative Management Agreement that covers the management of the Sand Flats Recreation Area. The Moab FO has a formal agreement with Canyonlands Natural History Association (CNHA) on the operation of the Moab Information Center, and on general operations of CNHA.

#### **10.5.2 National Park Service (NPS) – Arches and Canyonlands**

Recreation on NPS lands is typically managed much differently than on BLM lands. Management goals are not always consistent between NPS and the BLM, Moab FO. This situation affords the opportunity for the BLM and the NPS to work together to resolve issues around common borders. With more staff and funding than the Moab FO, the National Parks are managed as enclaves unto themselves. A specific Natural Resources Management Plan for each

park guides activities. The National Park Service completed a Natural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment in May 1985 (NPS 1985). Arches National Park completed a General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan in 1998.

One major difference in management plans is the difference in frontcountry versus backcountry issues. For example, crowding in both Arches and Canyonlands is managed in part by the availability of similar activities on adjacent BLM lands. Arches National Park has planned for 95% of its visitors to visit only the most developed areas of the park, and have allocated resources accordingly. The Moab FO must plan for both frontcountry and backcountry uses (NPS 1998).

### **10.5.3 Grand County General Plan**

The Grand County General Plan Update (April, 2004) states that the County should "Promote Management of Public Lands for the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People of Grand County and the Nation." Specifically, the plan states that public lands are the foundation of the county's economic prosperity: "Grand County's goal is to achieve a stable economic base while minimizing degradation of the economic, social, ecological, and cultural resources of the public lands." Policies related to recreation include:

- The County encourages the agencies to reclassify most areas currently classified as "Open to Motorized Travel" to a more restrictive travel designation such as "Motorized Travel Limited to Designated Roads and Trails."
- Grand County strongly encourages the agencies to implement an immediate "No New Tracks" policy, limiting motor vehicle use to existing roads and trails, except where specifically designated.
- Grand County will participate in developing a trail plan that accommodates non-motorized users, including hikers, backpackers, mountain bikers, and horse riders.

### **10.5.4 San Juan County Master Plan**

The San Juan County Master Plan, completed in 1996, addresses recreation on public lands with a series of objectives and implementation strategies. It states "San Juan County supports responsible public land recreation and tourism" (San Juan County 1996). When responding to public land recreation proposals the county will consider:

- the county's ability to provide essential services such as law enforcement, emergency services, water and waste management, and search and rescue.
- the impacts on traditional recreation uses (e.g., OHV trail development at the expense of traditional hiking or riding trails).
- other traditional uses, such as grazing, energy mineral development, wildlife and other issues that have formed the basis of San Juan Counties past and present land use ethic.
- forming partnerships with concessionaires, agencies, and special interest groups for the purpose of facilitating recreation management in an orderly fashion.
- anticipated economic returns and allocations of revenues received.

### **10.5.5 Other Plans for Consideration**

The Manti-La Sal National Forest is currently undergoing a Forest Plan Revision that will be relevant to planning for the Moab FO area. There is an opportunity for consistency across administrative boundaries regarding OHV designations, the recreation opportunity spectrum, and special recreation areas. This plan is in the public scoping phase and is slightly behind the schedule for the new Moab-Monticello RMP.

The UDOT is currently upgrading U.S. Highway 191. Part of this project includes a separated bike path. The accommodation of a separated bike path is consistent with the demand for more recreation facilities explained above. The UDOT is also constructing a pedestrian/bike bridge across the Colorado River just upstream from the U.S. Highway 191 bridge and a bike path along the first 3.2 miles of Utah Highway 128. Both of these projects are also consistent with the demand for more recreation facilities.

The Grand Junction BLM Field Office and the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA) are preparing an RMP to guide the management of the CCNCA for the next 10–15 years. An EIS is being prepared concurrently with the RMP. The planning process was initiated on December 12, 2001, with publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.

## **10.6 ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

### **10.6.1 User Conflict and Displacement**

As recreational use has increased throughout the Moab FO area, recreationists have moved into areas historically used by other resource users, such as ranchers and the oil and gas industry. Sometimes, conflicts have developed among these user groups, as long-term users resent encroachment of recreationists on the public lands. In turn, some recreation users see their use of the public land as the highest and best use, and feel that the established users have no place on that land.

There has also been a displacement of certain recreation groups from some areas due to conflicts with other recreation user groups. For instance, the growing popularity of Gemini Bridges for ATV and dirt biking has led to fewer numbers of mountain bikers, as they have been displaced by the faster moving and louder modes of transportation.

Another source of tension is among various recreation user groups. When recreational use reaches a certain threshold, user groups start to resent the multi-use nature of public lands. For example, some hikers resent mountain bikers and motorized users on shared trails, while mountain bikers may seek some trails free from motorized use. The multi-use concept becomes strained when use levels reach a threshold. Specific areas where user conflict and displacement is occurring include:

- Monitor and Merrimac Trail – conflicts between motorcycle users and mountain bikers
- Bartlett Wash – conflict between grazing and recreation uses and between motorized and non-motorized use
- Kokopelli's Trail – conflict between OHVs and mountain bikers

- Hurrah Pass/Kane Creek Crossing – conflict between OHVs and mountain bikers
- Slickrock Trail – conflict between dirt bikes and mountain bikers
- Gemini Bridges – conflict between OHVs and mountain bikers
- Moab Rim – conflict between OHVs, hikers, and mountain bikers
- Seven Mile Canyon – conflict between OHVs and horseback riders
- Poison Spider Trail – conflict between OHVs and mountain bikers

### 10.6.2 Resource Conflicts/Impacts

Various recreation activities impact other resources, such as riparian areas, cultural resources, vegetation, wildlife, soils, grazing, and oil and gas. Resource conflicts occur when two uses compete for the same resource, such as recreation and wildlife competing for land. Specific areas where resource conflict is occurring include:

- Moab Canyon – conflict between recreation users and vehicular traffic
- Gemini Bridges and Long Canyon Roads/Shافر Canyon – conflict between recreation and wildlife (bighorn sheep)
- Bartlett Wash – impact of camping and OHV use on riparian area
- White Wash area– impact of OHV use on visual quality, riparian resources, cultural resources, and oil and gas and ranching operations
- Crystal Geysir/Wash area – impact of OHV use on visual quality, riparian resources, cultural resources, and oil and gas and ranching operations
- Wall Street – conflict between climbing activities and vehicular traffic
- Onion Creek – motorized vehicles travel in the stream, creating streambed damage, soil erosion, and vegetation loss
- Castle Rock – conflict between residents' wishes and current recreation use
- Tenmile Canyon – motorized use in stream conflicts with wildlife, cultural, and riparian resources
- Duma Point – motorized use conflicts with bighorn sheep escape habitat Kane Creek Crossing– impact of motorized vehicle use and camping on riparian area
- Tusher Canyon – motorized vehicle use in the stream is impacting the riparian area
- Seven Mile Canyon – conflict between motorized vehicle use and cultural resources
- Mill Creek Canyon – hiker and horse use conflicts with cultural resources
- Mill Canyon – motorized vehicle and mountain bike use conflicts with riparian resources, visual quality, cultural resources, and vegetation
- Upper Courthouse Wash – motorized vehicle traffic conflicts with visual quality, vegetation, riparian, and cultural resources
- Pritchett Canyon – conflicts between vehicle use and wilderness values in the Wilderness Study Area and visual quality
- Klondike Bluffs – motorized vehicle and mountain bike use conflict with paleontological resources

- Westwater Canyon – OHV use on the rims of Westwater Canyon conflicts with wilderness values of the Wilderness Study Area and with river visitors' experience along the Colorado River
- Along highway corridors – as OHV trails are created parallel to paved highways, conflict with the visual quality that drivers on the highways wish to experience

### **10.6.3 Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV)**

The increase in the use of OHVs has created several issues for the Moab FO area. First, the speed and increasing capability of OHVs allows easier access to remote parts of the Moab FO area, making management of this activity more difficult, and increasing the potential range of impacts. Second, the popularity of this activity continues to grow, both in private use and in more special events taking place. Planning for areas in which OHVs can be used continues to receive national and local attention. Cross-country OHV use, both legal and illegal, is creating additional resource damage and is a real and important issue in the Moab FO area. In addition, the issue of conflicting recreational use, primarily between OHV and other users, both recreational and resource users, continues to grow.

### **10.6.4 Impact of Jeep Safari Week**

Jeep Safari and Easter week draw the largest number of visitors to the area and have warranted a monitoring program. Estimates place the number of visitors at over 20,000 during Easter weekend, making this time period the most intense for visitation. The Easter period sees the greatest number of impacts from inappropriate and over-capacity use. Moab BLM staff estimate that the majority of the damage to public lands occurs during this one week. The following observations were made from monitoring data in 2002:

- Most users during Jeep Safari week (the week prior to Easter) are not Jeep Safari registrants. Only 21.5 percent of trail users were registered with the Safari; and
- During Jeep Safari, motorized use is 9 times greater than motorized use observed just after Jeep Safari week.

This same report attempted to measure the impacts on resources from the Jeep Safari and from the many additional motorized users who come during Easter Week. Measurements were obtained at Behind the Rocks, Moab Rim, Fins-n-Things, Steel Bender, and Poison Spider. On Behind the Rocks Trail, an average trail widening of 15.7 percent was measured. On the sections of widened trail, there was damage to about 75 percent of the vegetation immediately bordering both sides of the road. Along the Moab Rim trail, an average widening of 5.6 percent was measured. On many trails, vehicle lines created up to 45-minute delays, and spectators gathered to watch the event create even more traffic and impacts on routes (BLM 2002 Jeep Safari Monitoring Report).

### **10.6.5 Colorado Riverway**

While many of the resource problems within the Colorado Riverway have been addressed and corrected by the actions taken through the Colorado Riverway RAMP, there are still some remaining problem areas. Cross-country travel and camping restrictions are addressed only



through a Federal Register Notice, which is in effect only until the completion of the next RMP. Some undeveloped camping areas still remain and are causing resource problems. There is a need for more staff presence in the Riverway, given the level and type of visitation. "Backcountry" areas of the Riverway, such as Shafer Basin, Onion Creek and Castle Rock are currently devoid of facilities; this may not be adequate for the numbers of visitors these areas are receiving.

#### **10.6.6 Publicity**

Over the past several years Moab has become the topic of many news and periodical articles, which is creating an increased interest in the area. The resultant increase in visitation creates the need for more management and infrastructure.

#### **10.6.7 Dependence of Local Industry on Public Lands**

The BLM staff completed a report entitled the Economic Impact of Public Land Recreation and Tourism on Moab City and Grand County in 2003. This report documents the dependency of local industry on public lands recreation. In other words, the local economy has become dependent upon the tourism opportunities afforded by public lands. The report states the following:

- The City of Moab's economy is 58.5 percent recreation and tourism based, generating \$96.5 million in taxable sales of goods and services (UDTD 2002).
- Recreation and tourism generated local tax revenues of \$3.48 million for Grand County in 2001, representing 67% percent of total tax revenues collected.
- The recreation/tourism sector share of employment is 46 percent.
- 45 local recreation companies provide sales and rentals, repairs, river running services, tours, shuttles, camping and equipment. The majority of these companies utilize BLM land exclusively. They employ 251 people full time at an average salary of \$1,200 per month.
- There are 44 restaurants, 1,583 hotel rooms, 278 bed and breakfast rooms, and 1,101 commercial campground sites. Many of the customers of these establishments come to Moab to recreate on public lands (Goldhor-Wilcock and Stevens 2003).

#### **10.6.8 Staffing**

A staff of 13 manages the BLM Moab FO Recreation Program. Of these 13, two are seasonal river patrol rangers, and four are maintenance staff (three of which are only seasonally employed). The remainder of the staff includes recreation planners, technicians, and the branch chief. The current recreation management staff has indicated that increased "on-the-ground" staffing could provide education and interpretation, enforcement, and research. The recreation program is supported by two law enforcement officers, whose duties include all aspects of public lands law.

### **10.6.9 Inadequate Facilities/Public Health and Safety**

The availability of facilities is directly related to public health. Inadequate numbers of organized campgrounds and restroom facilities contribute to unhealthy levels of human waste in some areas, posing a health risk to visitors. At present, many of the problem areas (especially those close to the city of Moab) are on non-public (state and private) lands. While the BLM has provided restroom facilities (89 in total), the number is still inadequate for the number of visitors even to BLM lands. Funding for maintenance of existing and needed facilities is also a serious issue.

There is a need for more staff presence in the Colorado Riverway, given the level of visitation. Backcountry areas of the Riverway, such as Shafer Basin, Onion Creek and Castle Rock, are currently devoid of facilities; this may not be adequate for the numbers of visitors these areas are receiving.

A substantial amount of unrestricted camping occurs in the area North of 191, especially around Bartlett Wash and Mill Canyon, near the Kane Creek Crossing on the way to Hurrah Pass, and in the White Wash/Ten Mile Area; this has led to sanitation problems and resource damage.

### **10.6.10 Preservation of Access**

A number of SITLA land holdings are within the boundary of the Moab FO area. The goals of SITLA are different than those of the BLM and include development of lands. The BLM is concerned that important accesses to trails maintained by the BLM will be jeopardized as SITLA seeks to develop properties within the Moab FO area.

### **10.6.11 Piecemeal Approach to Planning**

Since the adoption of the 1985 Grand RMP, the increase in visitation has prompted four RAMPs. These plans have helped greatly in managing visitors and resources; however, they were created without a single overall vision for the resource. In addition, many popular areas (e.g., the Highway 313 corridor, White Wash/Ten Mile, Bartlett/Mill Canyon and the Kane Creek Crossing) have not been the subjects of any planning efforts.

## **10.7 MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS**

Many opportunities exist for improving recreation management in the Moab FO area. Three major categories are discussed below.

### **10.7.1 Recreation Designations**

#### ***10.7.1.1 Additional Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)***

Additional SRMAs could be considered for high use areas where more intensive management is required. These areas could include:

1. An expanded Colorado River SRMA. It is important to note that the Colorado River SRMA is *not* the same as the Colorado Riverway. The Colorado River SRMA was

created to manage rafting in Westwater Canyon and on the Dolores River. The Colorado Riverway Recreation Area focuses not on boating, but primarily on land-based recreation along the Colorado River. Neither the Kane Creek nor Potash corridors are in the existing Colorado River SRMA. The segment from Goose Island up to Castle Creek (on Highway 128) is also not in the SRMA. The Richardson Amphitheater, which includes Fisher Towers and Castle Rock, is not within the existing Colorado River SRMA. The Colorado River SRMA should be expanded to include these popular areas, and to provide a management framework for both land- and water-based recreation along the Colorado River.

2. Sand Flats
3. Cameo Cliffs
4. Utah Rims
5. Dolores River Canyons (for backcountry primitive experiences)
6. South Moab, including Mill Creek Canyon
7. Labyrinth Rims (including the Gemini Bridges area, White Wash/Ten Mile, Bartlett/Mill Canyon, and the Utah Highway 313 corridor)
8. Bookcliffs

#### ***10.7.1.2 Focus Areas***

To alleviate conflict between users, focus areas could be implemented. A focus area would concentrate on a single primary use, while allowing other non-interfering uses. Focus areas could allow a better matching of recreation expectation and experiences. For example, a dirt bike/ATV area may be designated, but mountain biking would still be allowed within this area. A particular area may be designated as a mountain biking focus area; hikers would still be allowed to use this area, but it would be managed primarily for mountain bike use. An area managed for hikers (e.g., Day Canyon) might not allow any motorized or mechanized use, as that use would conflict with the quiet experiences that hikers seek.

A variation on the theme of focus areas is to use temporal management. Temporal management rotates type of use during specified time periods. For instance, a trail might be open to hikers only on one day a week, to hikers and mountain bikers for two days a week, and to all users, motorized and non-motorized during the remaining four days of the week.

#### ***10.7.1.3 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)***

The concept of ROS is based on the premise that a recreation opportunity is dependent on particular qualities found in nature, and it takes this premise and considers factors such as qualities found in recreational activities and qualities found in managerial direction. By combining these qualities in different ways, a variety of recreation opportunities is achieved. Variations on management and activities on the resource are usually expressed as a range of opportunities, from primitive to developed. The inventory completed by staff in the Moab FO could be carried forward as a management strategy to create a balanced range of opportunities throughout the resource area. For example, areas that are used primarily for backpacking could be designated in the ROS spectrum as primitive, while areas that are typically used for motorized

vehicles could be designated as ROS class to include roads and developed recreation opportunities. The ROS could also be used in conjunction with other strategies, such as limits of acceptable change (LAC), described below, or the concept of focus areas, described above.

#### ***10.7.1.4 Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)***

LAC are usually applied to a specific resource area when the management of users, and their impacts, can be controlled to achieve a desired state of the resource. In the Moab FO area, this could be applied to specific recreation areas with an established goal for use. If the goal for the resource is set, then chosen social or resource indicators will determine when activity levels should be modified. For example, the LAP for a specific OHV route could be set at a soil disturbance threshold. As soils are degraded up to a pre-determined point, activity levels would be modified in order to maintain achievement of the goal set for that route.

#### ***10.7.1.5 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)***

ACECs may be established through this RMP process. ACECs established through this process could set restrictions on certain recreational activities.

#### ***10.7.1.6 OHV Management***

The RMP must designate all lands for OHV use as open to OHV cross-country travel, closed to OHV use, and limited to either existing or designated roads and trails. Those areas designated as "Limited to Designated Roads and Trails" would have specific route designations made. To arrive at these designations, the purpose and need of inventoried vehicle routes would be assessed and the resource conflicts associated with vehicle routes would be identified.

#### ***10.7.1.7 National Recreation Area***

The RMP could consider and recommend a National Recreation Area, National Conservation Area, or combination of the two. Only Congress can designate such an area. Typically, National Recreation Areas are centered on large reservoirs or around major population centers. National Recreation Areas can also be established in areas that provide outdoor recreation to a large number of people. A National Recreation Area could provide additional funding and management structure to high-use portions of the Moab FO area. A National Conservation Area could provide protection of certain features or values.

### **10.7.2 Funding and Education**

Additional funding for the recreation program in the Moab FO area would provide several additional opportunities including staffing, education and interpretation, facility development and continued maintenance of facilities.

#### ***10.7.2.1 Staffing***

Additional funding could be devoted to staffing needs. One particular shortage identified by staff at the BLM, Moab FO is the need for more recreation rangers and technicians. Staff could also

be devoted to outreach programs that aim to educate visitors before user conflicts or resource damage occurs.

#### ***10.7.2.2 Education and Interpretation***

BLM staff members have indicated that an important component in recreation management and recreation resource protection is proactive user education. Education could be implemented in several ways, including:

- programs to highlight the relationship between natural resources and recreation use, including additional ranger staff, presentations, displays and brochures;
- additional outreach to educate recreation users on regulations within the Moab FO; and
- an expanded website to advise on recreation opportunities and applicable restrictions.

#### ***10.7.2.3 Facility Development***

Funding could enhance facility development throughout the Moab FO area. BLM staff has recognized the following facility needs throughout the planning area:

- Additional restrooms in key locations would help alleviate the increasing problem of health and human safety.
- Additional informative kiosks could aid in proactive user education.
- New parking areas and improved access to high-use areas could alleviate traffic flow problems and the perception of congestion among users.
- Developed campgrounds in selected areas, especially where dispersed camping has been identified as a problem, would consolidate use and protect the integrity of surrounding resources.
- Picnic sites and developed campgrounds could reduce the risk of wildfires caused by human activity.

#### ***10.7.2.4 Fee Systems***

Funding could be increased by implementing additional fee systems for services provided in areas of high recreation use to offset the cost of providing these essential services.

### **10.7.3 Regional Recreation Planning Focus**

A regional planning focus for the field office would consolidate previous piecemeal planning efforts into a greater goal for the area. Specifically, the RMP should incorporate the issues and solutions raised in the RAMPs. Alternatives developed for recreation in the RMP should begin with the management actions included for the following RAMPs:

1. Colorado Riverway
2. Millcreek Canyon
3. Sand Flats

#### 4. Canyon Rims

As part of creating a regional focus the BLM could, in partnership with other involved entities, identify priority recreation access routes over private lands and state lands and/or create a regional recreation planning body with cooperative planning abilities. Other opportunities for recreation management that have been identified by BLM staff include proactively protecting vegetation and improving the recreation data-gathering system.

### 10.8 REFERENCES

- Goldhor-Wilcock, A., and B. Stevens. 2003. Economic Impact of Public Land Recreation and Tourism on Moab City and Grand County, Utah.
- Grand County. 2003. General Plan Update, Public Draft. Grand County, Utah.
- Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (IORT). 2002. Slickrock Trail Mountain Bike Survey: Implications for Resource Managers and Area Communities. No. NR/RF/012, Moab: Utah State University Extension.
- North Carolina State University. 1994. Conflicts on Multiple Use Trails. North Carolina State University, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management.
- Reiter, D., and D. Blahna. 2001. Utah River Study Results Report: Recreational Use, Value, and Experience of Boaters on Rivers Managed by the BLM in Utah. Utah State University, Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.
- Reiter, D., D. Blahna, and R. Von Koch. 1998. Off-Highway Vehicle Four-Wheeler Survey: A Summary Report of 1997 Moab Easter Jeep Safari Participants. Utah State University, Institute for Outdoor Recreation and the Bureau of Land Management.
- San Juan County. 1996. San Juan County Master Plan. San Juan County, Utah.
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 1994. Grand Resource Area – Sand Flats Recreation Area Management Plan. Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001a. Utah's Colorado Riverway – Colorado River SRMA Recreation Area Management Plan. Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 200b1. Instruction Memorandum No. UT 2001-090, Implementation of Utah Recreation Guidelines. Bureau of Land Management, Utah State Office.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2001c. Mill Creek Canyon Management Plan. Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003a. Recreation Management Plan for Canyon Rims Recreation Area. Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office.

- \_\_\_\_. 2002. Comparison of Moab Field Office Recreation and Wilderness Programs with Arches National Park and Dead Horse Point State Park, Site Data as of June 2002 with FY 2002 Budgets and FY 2001 Fees. Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office.
- \_\_\_\_. 2003b. Camping Opportunities – Moab Field Office. Website. Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office. Accessed on January 31, 2003. Located at [http://www.blm.gov/utah/moab/camp\\_chart.html](http://www.blm.gov/utah/moab/camp_chart.html).
- U.S. National Park Service (NPS). 1985. Natural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Canyonlands National Park. National Park Service.
- \_\_\_\_. 1998. General Management Plan, Development Concept Plan for Arches National Park. National Park Service.
- Utah Division of Travel Development (UDTD). 2002. State and County Economic and Travel Indicator Profiles. Department of Community and Economic Development, Utah Division of Travel Development.

### **Moab Field Office Internal Reports**

2002 Jeep Safari Monitoring Report.

Moab Field Office FY 2002 OHV Monitoring Activities and Accomplishments.

Draft 2002 Moab Field Office Visitor Usage Estimates.

Draft Route Analysis as Part of Moab Field Office Travel Management Plan. (Internal review purposes only).

Obtaining an Interagency Noncommercial River Trip Permit for the Labyrinth Canyon Section of the Green River.

### **Moab Field Office Bulletin Boards**

Commercial Permit Database for the Moab Field Office.

**This Page Intentionally Left Blank**