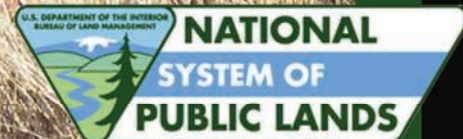


Scoping Report
for the Comprehensive
Travel and Transportation
Management Plan

for the St. George Field Office

and associated
Environmental Assessment



October 2010

BLM Mission

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

NLCS Mission

Created in 2000 by the Secretary of the Interior, the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) brought into a single system of specially designated areas managed on a landscape level under the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) multiple-use mandate. Passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11) provided a statutory basis for the NLCS. The NLCS contains national monuments, national conservation areas, wilderness, wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, national scenic and historic trails, and the conservation lands of the California Desert. Many of the treasured landscapes within the NLCS are popular tourism destinations managed for their outstanding scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources. The long-term vision guiding the NLCS is to conserve, protect, and restore the Conservation System's lands, natural, and cultural and historic resources, and water for future generations.

Scoping Report

for the
**Comprehensive
Travel and Transportation Management Plan**

for the
St. George Field Office

and associated
Environmental Assessment

Prepared by

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
St. George Field Office**

October 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the public scoping process for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) St. George Field Office (SGFO) Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan (Travel Plan) and associated Environmental Assessment (EA) for BLM-administered public lands in Washington County, Utah. It summarizes the comments provided by the public and identifies the issues to be carried forward in the alternative development process.

The purpose of public scoping is to identify issues important to the management of public lands and resources. These issues will guide the development of alternatives that will be evaluated in the EA and will ultimately guide development of the Travel Plan. Scoping also provides the public the opportunity to learn about the management of public lands and assists the BLM with identifying the public's concerns regarding the resources within the planning area. This Scoping Report summarizes the scoping process, reports on the comments received, and identifies the issues raised by the public during the scoping process. It is made available to the public in accordance with Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610.2(d) in order to allow those who provided input during the scoping process an opportunity to verify their issues were properly identified and recorded.

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11), Subsection O (The Omnibus Act) requires that a Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan should be completed no later than three years after enactment of the Act. The SGFO initiated this planning process to comply with Congressional direction from The Omnibus Act.

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* announcing the initiation of the planning process. In addition, news releases, legal notices, a planning bulletin, and website postings provided information on the process and identified opportunities for the public to provide input. Formal public meetings were held in three locations in and near the planning area, and in Salt Lake City. Other outreach efforts included information dissemination and a variety of formal and informal meetings with local governments, interested groups, and numerous one-on-one contacts with public land users and interested members of the public. Comments were accepted in a variety of formats, to include written comments provided at the meetings, and both email and hard copy letters sent to the BLM to ensure those who wished to participate could do so effectively.

Chapter 1 provides a background for this planning effort, its legal limitations/sideboards, and a summary of scoping efforts. Chapter 2 summarizes the public comments. Throughout the scoping period 1,940 individuals provided comments concerning the future management of the planning area. Many of these comments were repeated submissions of form letters. Analysis of the comments identified 724 unique comments. While several comments raised issues to be addressed during development of the resource management plans (RMP) for the Beaver Dam Wash and Red Cliffs National Conservation Areas (NCA), the majority of transportation comments addressed route designation, which is addressed in this Travel Plan effort (see Chapter 3). Through analysis of the public comments, some were not within the scope of this planning effort (Chapter 4). Finally, several comments provided new data to be used in developing the Travel Plan/EA (Chapter 5).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

THE OMNIBUS ACT

On March 30, 2009, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11), Subsection O (The Omnibus Act), designated 16 new National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units including two new National Conservation Areas (NCAs) on public lands managed by the St. George Field Office (SGFO), Washington County, Utah. Section 1977 of the Omnibus Act requires that a Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan (Travel Plan) should be completed no later than three years after enactment of the Act. The SGFO is initiating a public planning process to comply with Congressional direction from The Omnibus Act.

Issues being addressed by the Travel Plan include motorized and non-motorized access to trails and roads on public land, public safety and awareness, conflicts between different user groups, and protection of the natural and cultural resources of the SGFO. As part of the Travel Plan, The Omnibus Act directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to identify a trail or system of trails known as the “High Desert Off-Highway Vehicle Trail”.

The new Travel Plan will make route designations within SGFO jurisdictional boundaries, guided by the planning criteria identified through resource management planning and agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts. The Travel Plan will address and integrate, to the degree possible, BLM, Forest Service, Park Service, state government, and local government travel planning on the lands in or adjacent to the public lands managed by the SGFO.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

One of the SGFO’s greatest management challenges is providing reasonable and varied transportation routes for access to public lands, and providing areas for a wide variety of both motorized and non-motorized recreational activities. Prominent among the travel management issues the SGFO faces is the complex challenge in managing motorized activities on the public lands. The combined effect of population increases in Washington County and the use of off-highway vehicles (OHV) have generated increased social conflicts and resource impacts on the public lands.

To address these complex issues, the SGFO is implementing a comprehensive approach to travel and transportation planning. Comprehensive Travel Planning is the process of planning for and managing access and transportation systems on public lands. Traditionally, the BLM’s Travel and Transportation Program focused primarily on motor vehicle use. Within the comprehensive travel planning framework, this paradigm has been expanded to encompass all forms of transportation, including travel by foot, horseback, bicycle, and motorized vehicle, including two-wheeled (motorcycles) and four-wheeled (off-road vehicles, cars, and trucks).

Additionally, comprehensive travel planning expands on the traditional approach of travel and transportation planning by implementing an interdisciplinary structure, in that all resource and resources uses and accompanying modes and conditions of travel on public lands are addressed holistically. The goals and objectives of all resources and resource uses are recognized and addressed within the travel planning framework. Management prescriptions are then implemented with the intention of complementing and enhancing the opportunity for those goals to be achieved. By recognizing the goals of other resources the BLM SGFO will minimize impacts to wildlife habitat, reduce the introduction and

spread of invasive weeds, minimize conflicts among various motorized and non-motorized recreation users, and prevent damage to cultural resources. A comprehensive approach to travel and transportation management is reflective of the concerns and needs of the multiple programs that exist on BLM lands.

PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria are the constraints, ground rules, or planning sideboards that guide and direct the development of the Travel Plan. The criteria determine how the planning team approaches development of alternatives and, ultimately, selection of a Preferred Alternative. Planning criteria ensure plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. The preliminary planning criteria were included in the NOI (see *Federal Register*, May 10, 2010, Vol 75, No. 89, pages 25876-25877), along with an invitation for the public to comment on the criteria. Preliminary planning criteria include the following:

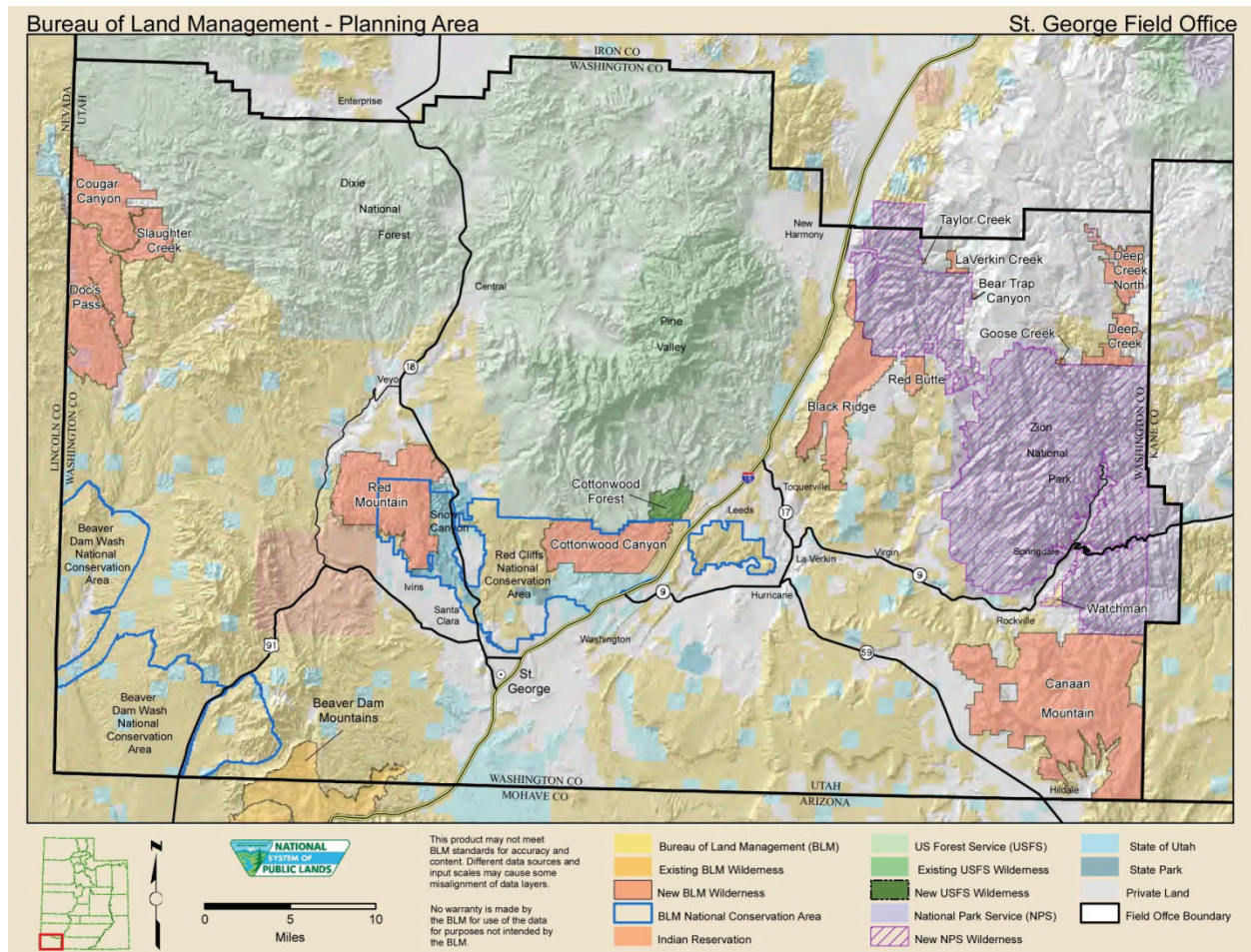
- The public planning process for this Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan will be guided by Public Law 111–11, in addition to FLPMA and NEPA.
- The BLM will use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore impaired systems.
- The Joshua Tree Instant Study Area within the Beaver Dam Wash NCA will be carried forward in all alternatives for management of the Beaver Dam Wash NCA and the area will continue to be managed under Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review.
- One suitable river segment under SGFO administration that was not designated into the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers by Public Law 111–11 will continue to be managed in accordance with BLM Manual 8351 Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management.
- Area designations (open, closed, or limited use) for motorized recreation will be consistent with the BLM National Management Strategy for Motorized OHV Use on Public Lands and transportation and travel management policy.
- Motorized travel routes designated through the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve Public Use Plan (2001) will be carried forward under one or more alternatives.

SETTING

Geographic Setting

The geographic area being considered in this planning process is all the BLM-administered public lands in Washington County, Utah. Situated in the southwestern corner of Utah, the area is at the transition between three major physiographic provinces: the Colorado Plateau, the Great Basin, and the Mojave Desert. This unique blend of geologic landforms creates a wealth of varying landscapes, open vistas, and spectacular scenery that is recognized in national and international sectors. Zion National Park and the Pine Valley Mountains of the Dixie National Forest define the eastern and northern boundaries of the county. To the west lie the valleys and mountains of Nevada, while the broad, undeveloped expanses and rugged topography of the Arizona Strip are visible immediately to the south. Elevations range from a low of 2,200 feet at the Arizona border to nearly 10,400 feet in the Pine Valley Mountains. Average yearly precipitation ranges from a low of 7.5 inches in the desert to 35 inches in the higher elevations. The geographic setting is depicted on the map of the planning area (Figure 1).

Figure 1. BLM Planning Area



Administrative Setting

Most public lands in Washington County are managed by the SGFO. Approximately 4,800 acres of public land, north of the town of Enterprise, are managed by the BLM's Cedar City Field Office and are not addressed in this planning process. Land ownership in the county is depicted in Table 1. Privately-owned lands are concentrated primarily around the major transportation routes, river corridors, and areas suitable for agricultural development. The Shivwits Band of Paiute Indians occupies an approximately 28,000 acre reservation, located along the Santa Clara River. Lands owned by the State of Utah include four state parks; acreage owned by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR); and a significant amount of land administered by the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).

Table 1. Land Status in Washington County

Land Manager	Approximate Acreage	Percent
Bureau of Land Management	629,000	40
U.S. Forest Service	423,000	27
National Park Service	142,000	9
Bureau of Indian Affairs	28,800	2

Land Manager	Approximate Acreage	Percent
State of Utah	88,900	6
Private Land	262,000	16
Total	1,573,700	100

COLLABORATION AND CONSULTATION

Cooperating Agencies

A cooperating agency is “an eligible governmental entity that has entered into a written agreement with the BLM establishing cooperating agency status in the planning and NEPA processes. The BLM and the cooperating agency will work together under the terms of the agreement. Cooperating agencies will participate in the various steps of the BLM’s planning process as feasible, given the constraints of their resources and expertise” (43 CFR 1601.0-5 (e)). The BLM collaborates with cooperating agencies in identifying issues, collecting inventory data, formulating alternatives, estimating effects of the alternatives and developing a preferred alternative. The BLM has invited the following government entities to become cooperating agencies, all of whom have accepted:

- Mojave County
- Washington County
- State of Utah

Native American Consultation

As part of the planning process, the BLM has initiated consultation with culturally affiliated Native American Tribes. Early and continued consultation with Native American tribes throughout the planning process is an integral part of developing comprehensive planning documents which seek input from all affected and interested individuals, groups and organizations. Table 2 contains a list of tribes specific to this planning effort.

Table 2. Native American Tribes Contacted for Consultation

Tribal Organization Contacted	Tribal Organization Contacted
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	Indian Peak Band of Paiutes
Colorado River Indian Tribe	Kaibab Band of Paiutes
Havasupai Indian Tribe	Kanosh Band of Paiutes
Hopi Indian Tribe	Koosharem Band of Paiutes
Hualapai Indian Tribe	Las Vegas Paiute Tribe
Navajo Nation	Moapa Band of Paiutes
Pueblo of Zuni	Pahrump Band of Paiutes
Ute Indian Tribe	San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	Shivwits Band of Paiutes
Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah	Southern Paiute Consortium
Cedar Band of Paiutes	

THE PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS

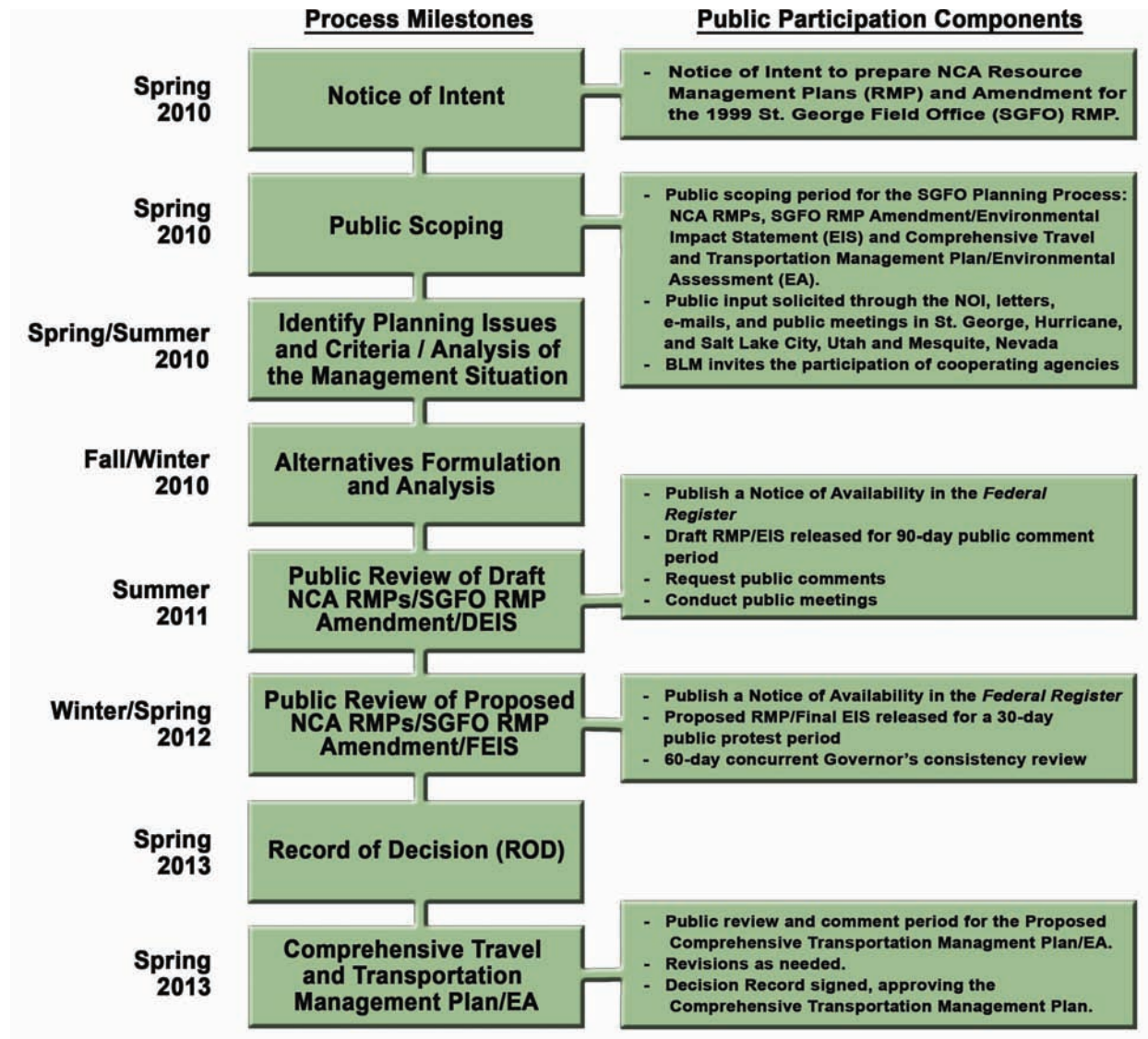
After completion of the 1999 RMP revision, the BLM set out to produce a Transportation Management Plan for the field office. That process began in January of 2005 and a Scoping Summary Report was produced in June of that year. However, after initial scoping, the plan was never finished due to lack of funding.

In May 2010, the SGFO initiated the scoping process again, in conjunction with scoping for two new NCAs established by the Omnibus Act (see *Federal Register*, May 10, 2010, Vol 75, No. 89, pages 25876-25877). Public scoping is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in the early stages of developing an EA to determine the scope and significance of issues related to a proposed action such as the development and implementation of a Travel Plan (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1501.7). Scoping helps identify issues important to the travel management in the SGFO, as well as issues and conflicts to be examined in the planning process and ultimately, decisions in the Travel Plan. The scoping process is designed to encourage public participation and to solicit public input.

The importance of public scoping becomes evident as the planning process progresses. Public comments regarding issues that should be addressed will be placed in one of the three following categories:

1. Issues to be addressed in the Travel Plan (Chapter 3)
2. Issues that are not within the BLM's legal authority to address (Chapter 4)
3. Issues to be addressed through other policy or administrative action (Chapter 4) or Alternatives will be developed for issues to be addressed through this planning process (Chapter 3). The alternatives will become part of the Travel Plan. Figure 2 below charts the progress of this process together with the concurrent RMP amendment and NCA planning.

Figure 2. Planning Process

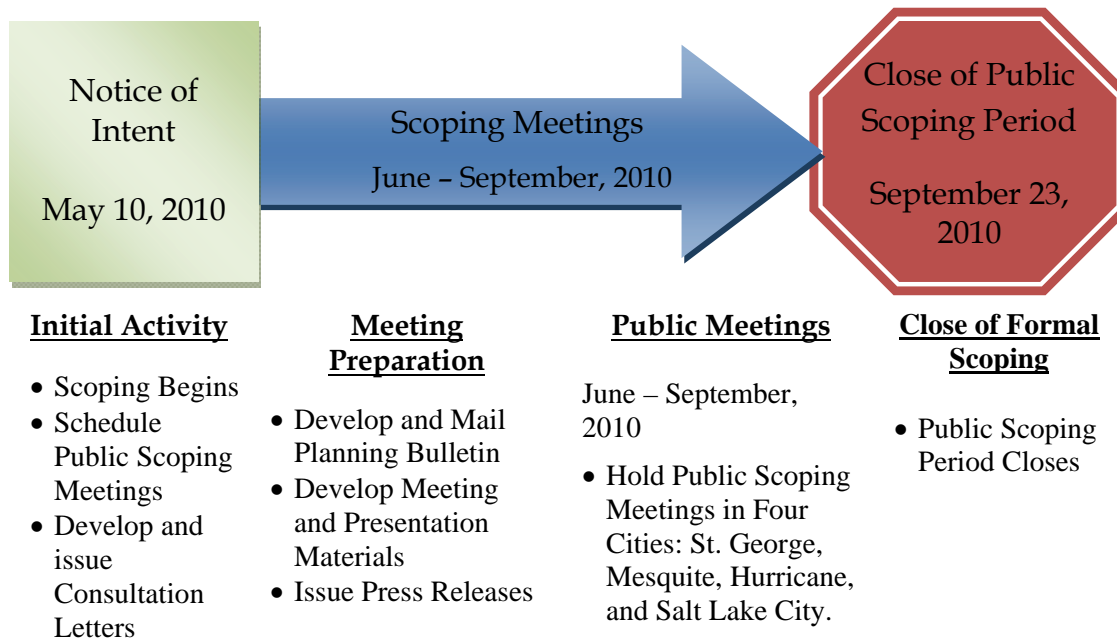


The scoping period began with a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare the NCA plans and RMP amendment published in the *Federal Register* on May 10, 2010. Beyond the official initial announcement in the *Federal Register*, the BLM conducted extensive public outreach during the scoping period. The BLM provided information to and/or made presentations to formal groups including local governments, the Association of Counties Annual Convention, chambers of commerce, Citizen's for Dixie's Future, and the Rotary Club. The BLM also made informal outreach efforts regarding education and information dissemination, as well as numerous one-on-one contacts with public land users and interested members of the public. Another source of public outreach was the BLM's SGFO website (www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fp/st_george.html), which provided information on public meetings and information on the planning process.

Public scoping occurs at the beginning of the planning process and represents one step of public involvement (Figure 3). There will be additional opportunities for focused public input throughout the planning process. The scoping period included seven public scoping meetings held in St. George (4),

Utah; Mesquite, Nevada; Hurricane, Utah; and Salt Lake City, Utah. The formal scoping period ended on September 23, 2010.

Figure 3. Public Scoping Process Timeline



PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

Public scoping meetings provide an opportunity for interested parties to submit scoping comments and to be involved early in the planning process (40 CFR 1501.7). It is also an opportunity for the public to ensure the BLM's route inventory reflects the on-the-ground knowledge the public has gained using the route network in Washington County.

Meeting Logistics and Attendance

The NOI announced the BLM would hold public scoping meetings. The dates, meeting locations and times, as well as instructions for providing comments by July 19, 2010, were later announced in a press release published in newspapers throughout the planning area (Appendix B). BLM held scoping meetings in St. George, Hurricane and Salt Lake City, Utah and Mesquite, Nevada. These meetings were announced in the local media (Appendix B), as well as through a planning newsletter (Appendix C) that was mailed to hundreds of individuals, organizations and agencies and passed out at each of the scoping meetings. The newsletter provided the same information published in the newspapers regarding the meeting locations and times and instructions for submitting comments. The newsletter provided a list of issues to be considered in the NCA RMPs, RMP Amendment, and the Travel Plan and requested that the public provide input and suggestions for route designations. The same information was also available on the SGFO BLM website (www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fp/st_george.html). Four public meetings were held over a one-week period in June 2010. Three more were held during August and September. The total registered attendance for all seven meetings was 275 people (Table 3).

Table 3. Meeting Location/Attendance

Meeting Location	Meeting Date	Registered Attendance
St. George, UT	June 14, 2010	157
Mesquite, NV	June 15, 2010	15
Hurricane, UT	June 16, 2010	67
Salt Lake City, UT	June 17, 2010	30
St. George, UT (BLM Office)	August 5, 2010	3
St. George, UT (BLM Office)	August 26, 2010	2
St. George, UT (BLM Office)	September 23, 2010	1
Total		275

The meetings were conducted in an open house type format with attendees coming and going throughout a two hour period. BLM resource specialists from a number of resource area disciplines, including recreation and transportation management, were available to answer questions and provide additional information on these and other specific issues throughout the meeting. A number of informational posters and maps regarding specific resource uses and issues were located throughout the room. The posters served as a starting point for attendees to frame comments and raise issues with the resource specialists. The posters and maps were also useful in allowing attendees to provide feedback on specific policies and practices provided on the posters, as well as issues with boundaries on the maps. Additionally, tables were set up with projectors displaying current digitized BLM route information on a screen. The public was invited to make comments and route suggestions that were digitized and recorded on the spot. Large paper maps were also provided on which participants could identify locations of trails or points of access by drawing on the maps. A number of useful comments came from these interactions and will be used in framing alternatives for the Travel Plan. Several other methods of providing comments were discussed, including written comment forms, email, and the BLM website.

Printed information available for participants to take with them included informational fact sheets, and maps. The fact sheets contained information specific to travel management (Appendix E) along with information relevant to the NCA plans and RMP Amendment. Comment forms were available for attendees to make scoping comments and submit them at the meeting. The participants also had the option to take the form with them and mail it to the BLM. Examples of the comment form can be found in Appendix E of this report.

Written public input provided on comment forms during the public scoping meetings tended to focus on travel and access management, including area and route designation, specifically regarding access for recreational uses, such as mountain biking and OHV use. Other topics discussed include equestrian use and OHV impacts on natural and cultural resources. Conflicts between these resource uses was also a topic frequently mentioned in the comments. Comments specific to the NCAs were also provided by the public; however, these are discussed in the scoping report for the NCA plans and RMP Amendment. The number of total comment forms received at each meeting is illustrated in Table 4 below. Many of the forms submitted contained more than one comment.

Table 4. Public Scoping Meetings: Number of Comment Forms Received by Meeting Location

Meeting Location	Number of Comment Forms Received
St. George, UT	62
Mesquite, NV	2
Hurricane, UT	28
Salt Lake City, UT	16
Total	108

It is important to note that many blank comment forms were taken by the public and returned with written comments later during the scoping period. Such comments are enumerated and summarized in Chapter 2.

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2.0 SCOPING COMMENTS

METHOD OF SUBMITTAL

A total of 1,940 respondents submitted written scoping comments. These comments were accepted via mail, delivered in person and via e-mail. Of the 1,940 respondents, 1,546 submitted through some variety of form letter. Form letters are standardized and duplicated letters which contain the exact same text and comments. Typically, the letter is used by a number of respondents who then fill in their name, date and address separately. A total of eight different form letters were identified during the scoping period. From the eight form letters, 30 unique comments were extracted and analyzed.

There were 394 respondents who submitted comments with unique text not derived from a form letter. From these 394 respondents, 724 unique comments were identified as pertaining to unique, individual issues. Table 5 shows how which sources the unique comments came from.

Table 5. Scoping Comments by Source

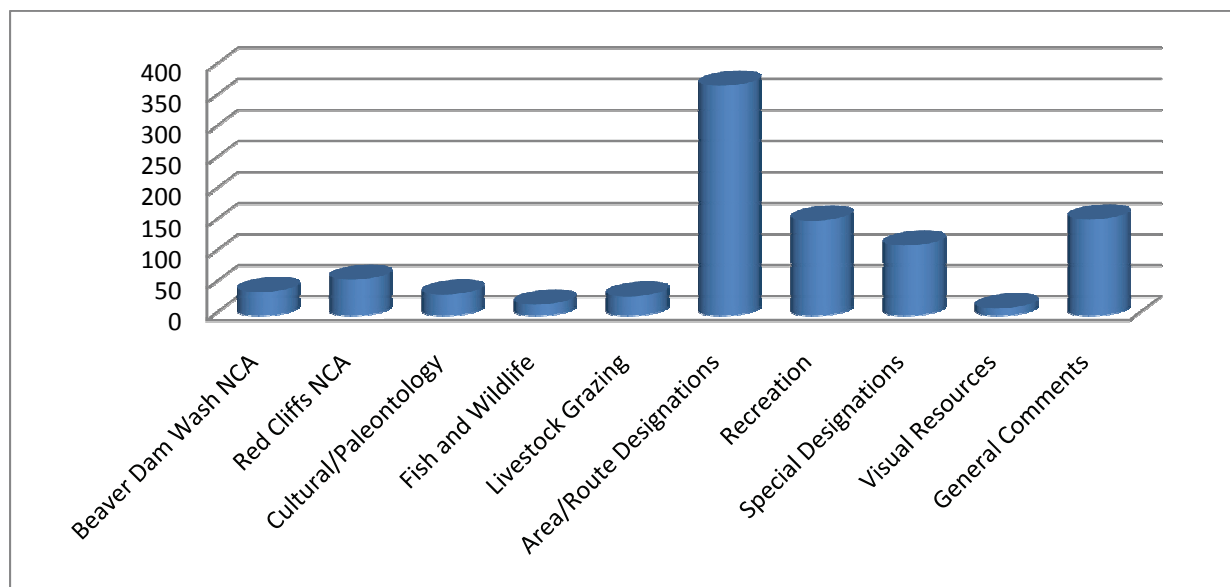
Method of Submittal	Number of Unique Comments	Percent
Mail or Delivered in Person	401	55%
E-Mail	293	41%
Form Letter	30	4%
Total Unique Comments	724	

Several comments were received multiple times and/or in multiple formats (e.g., email and hard copy mail). When identical responses were submitted by the same author, the earlier response with the author's signature was retained in the public record.

NUMBER AND TYPE OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

After the scoping period ended on September 23, 2010, the public comments were numbered and entered into a database. Each public comment was read in its entirety. In many cases, public comments addressed more than one topic or category. Comments were extracted from the original submission (letter, email, etc.), recorded, and categorized by topic.

The following graph and table (Figure 4 and Table 6) indicate the number of comments identified in each resource category. This enumeration is not intended to show or indicate weighing of comment categories or bias towards any issue; it merely indicates the level of public interest in various issue areas. The comment analysis process equally considered all written and scoping meeting comments based on the issues raised and information provided. Several individual comments addressed more than one category or topic. These comments were coded under both comment categories. For example a comment suggesting off-highway vehicles (OHVs) should not be allowed within the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area (NCA) would be categorized under the Red Cliffs NCA and under area/route designations for suggesting a "closed" area designation. Comments categorized as general comments addressed broad management concepts or specific issues that did not warrant being sorted to a separate category.

Figure 4. Number of Comments by Category**Table 6. Written Scoping Comment by Category**

Category	Number of Comments	Percent
Beaver Dam Wash NCA	38	5%
Red Cliffs NCA	58	8%
Cultural/Paleontology	34	5%
Fish and Wildlife	18	2%
Livestock Grazing	31	4%
Area/Route Designations	359	50%
Recreation	153	21%
Special Designations	112	15%
Visual Resources Management	12	2%
General Comments	155	22%
Total Unique Comments*	724	

* NOTE: Some of the 724 unique comments addressed multiple categories and were counted in multiple rows in this table, therefore numbers and percents in this table will add up to more than the total number of comments and more than 100 percent. For example, if a comment addressed grazing in the Beaver Dam Wash, it was counted as 1 of the 38 comments on the Beaver Dam Wash NCA and also 1 of the 31 livestock grazing comments.

OUT OF SCOPE COMMENTS

Some public comments raised issues that are beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan (Travel Plan). Although every comment was read, categorized, and entered into the database, those that raised issues outside the directives of The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11), Subsection O (The Omnibus Act) were not considered beyond the determination that they raised issues that were out of scope. All out of scope issues are identified in Chapter 4. Below are a few examples of comments with issues that are outside the scope.

Some public comments were outside the scope of this Travel Plan. Out of scope comments included suggestions for routes outside of the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) jurisdiction or where Congressional designation supersedes the BLM’s authority to designate routes. Out of scope issues are addressed in Chapter 4 of this report. Below is a list of examples of comments that are outside the scope of this planning effort:

- Suggest to do what The Omnibus Act has already done, such as:
- “Under no circumstances, should BLM designate routes in riparian areas, especially Beaver Dam Wash.”
- Suggest to reverse Congressional direction from The Omnibus Act, such as:
- “NCA area Beaver Dam - All the roads seem to be closed - not right. There are lots of roads & trails no longer open.”
- Propose to require completion of inventory actions already addressed by BLM policy:
- “Please do not conduct cultural resource surveys on all potential off-road vehicle routes on public lands in Washington County. Motor vehicle access does not increase vandalism and looting of cultural resources.”
- “...I urge the BLM to conduct cultural resource surveys on all potential off-road vehicle routes on public lands in Washington County. Motor vehicle access ultimately results in increased vandalism and looting of cultural resources.”
- Propose to designate or not designate routes based on RS 2477 claims: “The Goldstrike property access must remain open from all the R.S. 2477 routs along the south and the north end of the property to have and maintain an ingress and egress to factor in public safety.”

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The following section contains a summary of the in-scope comments received during scoping. Chapter 3 of this report lists the issues brought forward by these comments. Because scoping for the Travel Plan took place concurrently with scoping for the NCA resource management plans (RMPs) and St. George Field Office (SGFO) RMP Amendment, there were many comments related to OHV use in general, area designations for travel management, and other types of recreation that could have been brought forward in this section, but which would have been out of scope. As comments were divided up between the two scoping reports, only those pertaining directly to routes designations were considered in this document. To view other comments made during scoping relevant to the NCA plans and RMP Amendment see the Scoping Report for the NCA plans and RMP Amendment.

Comment: *All routes shown on the BLM's inventory map should remain open. Roads that are used by full size vehicles that are designated as ATV routes for the High Desert Trail system should remain open to all OHV's.*

Specific comments Related to Route Designations

The largest number of unique comments made during the scoping process pertained to route designations. The bulk of these were specific suggestions for routes to be included in the Travel Plan. Attached to many of these comments were maps, GPS files, GIS shape files, and hard copies of scans of hand-drawn maps. The greatest number of route suggestions was for motorized OHV routes, including different route types for different types and widths of vehicles. Some of the motorized route suggestions were specifically suggested for competitive events. The second greatest number of routes suggestions was for non-motorized mountain biking trails, followed by suggestions for

Comment: *I would like to see the mountain biking trails maintained and expanded in our area.*

equestrian-specific routes, and hiking trails.

Many of the routes suggested were existing roads and trails, however some suggestions were to create a new trail designated for a specific purpose. Some of the comments suggested rerouting existing trails to accommodate conflicting resources, such as paleontological resources on Little Creek Mesa. Another example is wash bottoms in general were suggested as possible new routes that would have little ecological damage. A few comments suggested that a complete inventory of existing routes should be completed prior to the route designation process.

Some comments specifically identified routes that the commenter would like to see closed, such as in designated Wilderness areas or within other special areas, such as NCAs, areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs), lands with wilderness characteristics, or near historical sites. A number of routes were suggested to be managed for a different use type than what currently exists, such as closing a trail to motorized vehicles or limiting a route to narrow vehicles only. A few comments suggested that all routes the BLM would like to designate should complete cultural surveys first.

All routes identified on maps or using some other cartographic medium (e.g., GIS, GPS, GoogleEarth) were checked against the main BLM route inventory to ensure the identified route was part of the master route inventory. Routes that were not part of the inventory were inventoried, as appropriate.

Comment: *New routes or areas for motorized travel are not needed. In particular I am very opposed to motorized routes through the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. This area should continue to be restricted to non-motorized travel only.*

3.0 ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING SCOPING

Scoping is a dynamic process that assists with identifying issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan (Travel Plan) and environmental assessment (EA). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land Use Planning Handbook (BLM-H-1601-1) defines planning issues as disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Issues include resource use, development, and protection opportunities for consideration in the preparation of the Travel Plan.

For this process, each issue was developed as a position-neutral statement or question that sets the groundwork for development of alternative solutions to be analyzed in the EA. To generate the issues from public comments, each public comment was analyzed and key points summarized. These summaries can be found in Chapter 2 of this report, along with some key quotes from the actual comments from which they were derived. For each comment summary, a position-neutral issue statement was identified.

The following list is a compilation of scoping issues raised to this point in the process. Since the scoping process is dynamic and continual, scoping issues are subject to change throughout the planning process as new conditions and/or information are identified.

Some of the suggestions below for new routes may contain suggestions which are out of scope, such as routes outside BLM-administered land. Since further analysis of the proposed routes may be needed to determine if they are out of scope, we have listed the suggestions here in this report, even though some of the suggestions may not warrant further analysis in the development of alternatives.

Route Designations Issues

- 1) Will route designations consider designations for specific types of motorized recreation (e.g. single track, all-terrain vehicles, full width road)?
- 2) Will a complete route inventory be completed as part of the Travel Plan?
- 3) Are there existing routes that should be closed?
- 4) What routes should be designated for motorized use?
- 5) What routes should be designated for non-motorized use (hiking, biking, equestrian, etc.)?
- 6) What route designation management should be applied to Mojave Desert tortoise populations that are outside designated NCAs, specifically including habitat linkages?
- 7) Will the Travel Plan address cumulative loss of designated route mileage throughout the region?
- 8) Will the BLM take into account motorized route designations that consider the type of road or trail (full sized road, all-terrain vehicle trail, motorized single track, etc.)?
- 9) Will the Travel Management Plan consider the needs of the disabled and elderly?
- 10) To what degree are new trailheads, signage, maps, education, enforcement, or facilities needed for recreation or off-highway vehicle use specifically (e.g., user education, resource management, interpretation, etc.)?

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4.0 ISSUES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE EA

Some issues raised during scoping are beyond the purpose of the Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management Plan (Travel Plan) and will not be considered in the Environmental Analysis (EA). There are three explanations for removing these issues from consideration.

- 1) The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) does not have authority to resolve the issue.
- 2) The issue raised is addressed through other policy or administrative action or is outside the narrow focus of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11), Subsection O (The Omnibus Act).

Issues in this chapter are grouped by the appropriate explanation, organized by comment category.

EXPLANATION 1) THE BLM DOES NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE.

The BLM is granted certain authorities through federal law which are implemented by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Issues that fall under this explanation are usually resolved through Congressional or Judicial action.

Access and Travel Management

- 1) How will the BLM address Revised Statute (RS) 2477 claims within NCAs?

Revised Statute (RS) 2477 contained in the 1866 Mining Law (Act of July 28 1866, chapter 262, 8, 14 Stat. 252, 253 *codified at* 43 USC 932) was intended to facilitate settlement of the West by granting the ability for counties and states to assert a “right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands.” On October 21, 1976, Congress repealed R.S. 2477 through passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Since then, it has been an ongoing issue between the Federal government, counties, and states as to which routes were developed in the West under the RS 2477 authority and thus under the responsibility of the counties. In 1997, Congress directed the Department of the Interior to not issue any new regulations on RS 2477. Several court cases have addressed a variety of legal points concerning resolution of RS 2477 claims. Based on legal decisions and BLM policies, this planning effort cannot adjudicate, analyze, or otherwise determine the validity of claimed rights-of-way. Resolution of RS 2477 assertions is a legal issue beyond the scope of this planning effort. However, nothing in the RMP extinguishes any valid right-of-way, or alters in any way the legal rights the state and counties have to assert and protect RS 2477 rights or to challenge in Federal court or other appropriate venue any use restrictions imposed by the RMP that they believe are inconsistent with their rights.

EXPLANATION 3) THE ISSUE RAISED IS ADDRESSED THROUGH OTHER POLICY OR ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

The issue raised is addressed through other policy or administrative action. This includes those actions that are implemented by the BLM as a standard operating procedure, because law or regulation requires them, or because they are BLM policy. The following such issue was raised during the scoping process:

Cultural Resources

- 1) Will each suggested route require cultural resource surveys before designation can occur?

BLM policy does not require the completion of cultural resource surveys for every existing route prior to designation (IM-2007-030). However, the St. George Field Office has worked to ensure that all routes that have a high potential for cultural resources (per archaeologist recommendation) are inventoried prior to consideration for designation.

5.0 DATA SUMMARY/DATA GAPS

During the scoping period, the public was encouraged to identify issues for the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Additionally, individuals, organizations, and agencies were encouraged to provide BLM with applicable data that could assist in alternatives development and/or alternatives analysis. New data and data gaps were required to be identified beyond casual reference. Public comments that simply made statements of preference were not considered new data.

Data provided by agencies and organizations during the public scoping period:

- Trail and Route Location Maps
- Access Locations to Other Public Lands
- County Management Plans

No additional data gaps were identified beyond those identified in Pre-Plan Analysis for the Beaver Dam Wash and Red Cliffs National Conservation Area Management Plans, St. George Field Office Resource Management Plan Amendment, and Environmental Impact Statement, Appendix A (Geospatial Data Development and Data Themes).

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