

Previous analysis of this landscape's roads and trails occurred from 2007 through 2009, however, that decision was appealed and reversed entirely. Because of other Dolores District priorities, a new analysis of all the roads and trails in the RWD landscape did not begin again until 2014.

Roads and trails were reviewed at several points prior to and during this current Rico West Dolores Roads and Trails (Travel Management) Project. Deliberations occurred through Travel Analysis risk/benefit screening; pre-NEPA workshops; Proposed Action; in response to comments received on the Proposed Action (scoping); development of alternatives for the DEIS; and in response to comments received on the DEIS, the SDEIS and during preparation of the FEIS.

For all project file citations below the first part of the file path is O:\NFS\SanJuan\Project\DoloresRD

### **Pre-NEPA**

#### **36CFR212 Subpart A, Travel Analysis of Forest Roads**

Interdisciplinary risk/benefit screening for the Rico West Dolores area occurred at various ID team meetings between March 2013 through January 2014 (Project File:

1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\01\_TravelAnalysis\01\_MeetingNotes). Each risk and benefit criteria was applied to each road to create an overall rating system. Values of 3 (high), 2 (medium) and 1 (low) were assigned for each risk and benefit category for each road. Risk categories included Condition/Maintenance and Repair Costs, Water Resources, Soil/Geologic Hazards, Wildlife Resources, Ecological Resources, Invasives, Cultural Resources, Jurisdiction and Right of Way. Benefits included, Motorized Recreation Use, Recreation Access and Connectivity, Range Management Access, Timber Management Access, Fuels Management Access, Forest Management Access and Emergency Access.

Once a numerical value was assigned to each category, an average was calculated for each route that is represented by the "overall risk (or benefit) ranking". In the "Recommendations" column of the spreadsheets the IDT recorded recommendations. The "Comments" column was used to note additional information about potential future changes to a route. **Project File:**

**1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\01\_TravelAnalysis\02\_DoloresDistrictTAP (Document Titled RicoWestDoloresTAPspreadsheet)**

The Risk/Benefit categories address the identification of a road system described in 36CFR212 Subpart A, 212.5 (b) (1). For example, assigning risk ratings for wildlife, soil/geologic hazard, water resources and cultural resources addresses the goal for a road system that minimizes adverse environmental impacts. Benefit ratings assigned for recreation, forest, range, and fuels management address a road system administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands.

In March of 2014 the ID team clarified that the handbook definition of a Maintenance Level 1 road was a road in storage for one year or more. Roads used for administrative access or private land access where use occurred at least once per year should be coded as ML2-Admin (**Project File: 2014\_0320HandoutTAP\_Level1\_whitepaper revised**).

A workgroup (representatives for engineering, timber and trails) reviewed GIS maps and made recommendations for which ML1 roads were needed and unneeded.

The results of the risk/benefit ranking and ML1 review were later incorporated into the Travel Analysis Report for the Dolores District. This report recommended a minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands. Conversely the report recommends unneeded roads no longer needed to meet forest resource management objectives (and therefore should be decommissioned or considered for other uses, such as

for trails). **(Project File: 1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\01\_TravelAnalysis\02\_DoloresDistrictTAP)**

#### Background Descriptions for Trails

January through May 2014, a similar risk/benefit ranking was accomplished for trails. All trails were evaluated regardless of current motor vehicle designation. Values of 3 (high), 2 (medium) and 1 (low) were assigned for each risk and benefit category for each trail. The ID team developed categories similar but not exactly the same as the road categories. Risk categories included Layout, Water Resources, Wildlife Resources, Ecological Resources, Invasives, Cultural Resources, Need Right of Way. Benefit categories included Recreation Connectivity, Scenery, Backcountry Access and Emergency Access. A remarks column captures ecology and hydrology notes. **(Project File: 1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\03\_Trails Background\03\_trails risk benefit spreadsheet)**

Trails categories provided preliminary information about some of the criteria described in 36CFR212 Subpart B, 212.55 (a). For example, risk categories evaluated for layout, water, wildlife ecological resources, invasives and cultural resources address general criteria to consider effects on National Forest System natural and cultural resources and specific criteria to consider effects on damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources; and harassment of wildlife and significant disruption of wildlife habitats. Benefit categories for recreation connectivity, scenery, backcountry access and emergency access address travel rule criteria for public safety, provision of recreational opportunities, and access needs.

At this stage of the process, the ID team chose not to address travel rule criteria related to conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring federal lands; conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses of National Forest System lands or neighboring federal lands or compatibility of motor vehicle use with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors. The ID team felt these topics were better addressed on the 'NEPA' side of project planning.

Field Reviews 2014 Field Season: In the summer of 2014, the engineering representative on the ID team conducted field reviews of many roads in the analysis area **(\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\01\_Engineering\04\_Fieldwork)**. Other IDT field trip notes are located at **\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\04\_Proposed Action Scoping\04\_FieldTrips**

#### ECR Assessment and Workshops

During the week of February 24th, 2014, staff from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution Udall Foundation met in-person and by phone with 40 persons representing user groups, public agencies, and local jurisdictions. Their interviews focused on two general categories of questions: 1) What would you like to see regarding the management of the roads and trails in the Rico-West Dolores district? 2) How would you like to work with the Forest Service and other user groups regarding travel management planning? The following suggestions for public engagement, collaboration, and communication were made, 1) it may not be productive to convene a collaborative working group charged with seeking consensus on travel management in the Rico-West Dolores district at this time, 2) the lead agency can exhibit collaborative leadership by offering clarity about the goals of the planning process; describing early and often the methods and criteria by which decisions will be made; providing

mechanisms for meaningful input from stakeholders; and providing clarity about how stakeholders interests, questions and data were considered in planning processes. **Project File:**

**1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\01\_Pre\_NEPA\_PublicEngagementStrategy\02\_Interviews and Assessment**

The resulting public involvement strategy included 1) ongoing one-on-one and small group meetings with Forest Service, 2) 'pre-nepa' workshops. Three workshops were held during the summer of 2014 to 1) share information about the upcoming NEPA process, 2) give stakeholders representatives an opportunity to share their values for the area along with information they feel would be important to consider 3) Forest Service present a preview of what they heard, and some of the project planning criteria. The criteria powerpoint displayed criteria similar to the criteria described in 36CFR212 Subparts A and B. **O:\NFS\SanJuan\Project\DoloresRD\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\01\_Pre\_NEPA\_PublicEngagementStrategy\03\_Agendas and Workshop Materials**

Participants in the interview or workshop process included PAPA-Telluride, Montezuma County Commissioners, Circle K Ranch, San Juan Citizens Alliance, Groundhog Store, Private Landowners, San Juan Trail Riders, Trout Unlimited, Quiet Use Individuals, Rico Alpine Society, Town of Rico, Livestock Permittees, Kokopelli Bike Club, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Dunton Hot Springs, COHVCO, ATV Rider, Dolores County Commissioners, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Timberline Trail Riders, Mesa Verde Backcountry Horsemen.

## **NEPA**

### Project Initiation Letter

The project initiation letter (August, 2014) assigned members of the ID team. Team members included staff experts in hydrology, engineering, recreation, range, lands, social impacts, fisheries, and terrestrial wildlife. **Project File: 1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\02\_Project Initiation Letter**

### Proposed Action

The Proposed Action for scoping was developed through interdisciplinary discussions at the landscape, area, sub-area and individual road and trail level. The Proposed Action proposals follow direction in the San Juan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and incorporated areas of known public concern. The latter was determined based on 1) previous public involvement during the 2007-2009 analysis, 2) various one on one or small group meetings at the Dolores District Office, and 3) recreation values presented at workshop 1 of the Pre-NEPA Engagement. Proposals also incorporated recommendations for roads made through Travel Analysis and areas of resource concerns identified through ID team field reviews. Each member of the ID team also brought knowledge gained from other project implemented in the area, or day-to-day administration of trails, roads, and permitted activities. **Project File: 1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\04\_Proposed Action Scoping\01\_Meetings**

The Proposed Action for scoping includes the 'reasons behind' road and trail proposals and many of these reasons mirror the definition of a minimum road system and the criteria for designating motor vehicle use on roads and trails. For example proposals include 1) removing unneeded roads while assigning Maintenance Levels for those roads proposed to remain on the Forest Road system (minimum road system), 2) reducing the gap between road maintenance needs and maintenance funding (minimum road system and subpart B criteria) 3) reducing conflict between recreation uses (subpart B criteria) 4) addressing barriers in sensitive fish habitat (subpart B criteria and MC), 5) reducing impacts

to wetlands (subpart B criteria and MC) 6) reducing conflicts with populated areas (subpart B and MC) 7) reducing conflicts with livestock grazing operations (subpart B and MC – other forest resources), 8) providing road access for forest product gathering, forest management, and recreation access<sup>1</sup> (subpart minimum road system, and subpart b criteria) and 9) providing recreation opportunities (subpart a, minimum road system and subpart b criteria). View the Proposed Action document published for scoping at Project File: **1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\04\_Proposed Action Scoping\06\_Published Documents**

All of the roads identified as unneeded in the Travel Analysis report were carried forward in the proposed action as unneeded and proposed to be decommissioned. Other roads were proposed to be converted to trails in the Proposed Action for Scoping. The Proposed Action for Scoping road system mileages are less than the minimum road system mileages described in the Travel Analysis Report.

Some of the proposals represent a compromise between competing interests. For example, a motor vehicle trail was added at one location, while other roads were closed for a net reduction in resource impacts and a static or net gain in recreation opportunity (example lone cone area). Sections of trail proposed removing motorcycle use, while other segments were proposed to continue or add motorcycle use for connections and riding opportunities.

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 the Forest Service published a *Proposed Action for Travel Management of the Rico West Dolores Roads and Trails* as a starting point for the NEPA process. The ‘scoping period’ ran from December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 with an evening Open House on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The public was encouraged to submit comments regarding travel route designations during scoping, including changes in motorized designations to specific roads and trails they were interested in. The public was also encouraged to submit comments regarding unneeded roads proposed for decommissioning and roads to be maintained on the Forest Service road system (minimum road system).

The Forest Service received approximately 250 comments. Among these, the Forest Service received comments regarding specific roads and trails where the commenter wanted the existing designation of a route to be changed, or indicated agreement with the proposed designation. Other comments expressed favor or disagreement with the roads identified as unneeded to be removed through decommissioning, or roads to be converted to trails. Other comments supported roads identified to remain on the Forest Road system. Comments are located in the Comment Analysis and Response Application database and available for public viewing in the Comment Reading Room on the Forest Service website.

Comments regarding specific trails expressed favor or disagreement with proposals regarding designating single track trails ‘Open to Motorcycles Only’, in that motorcycles would be the only motor vehicle use proposed.

Comments are located in the Comment Analysis and Response Application (CARA) and project ID is Rico West Dolores Roads and Trails Project #44918. Comments may be viewed in the reading room on the project’s webpage.

### Scoping Report

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<sup>1</sup> Conflicts between different types of motor vehicles was not identified as an issue.

ID team review and deliberation of public comments resulted in 1) revised or additional project design features or mitigation measures, 2) issues to be analyzed in detail and 3) alternatives to the proposed action. For additional information regarding the procedure used in reviewing scoping comments, please refer to the revised Scoping Report. **Project File: 1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\06\_Alternatives\01\_ScopingReport**

#### Updated Purpose and Need

In response to public concerns about the Purpose and Need statements in the Proposed Action for Scoping document, the Purpose and Need was changed. Rather than simply reference the travel rule the Purposed and Need was changed to specifically list the criteria from subpart b of the travel rule. *(Subpart a definitions of the minimum road system were not added at that time)*

#### Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS

In response to the controversial content of comments received in response to scoping, it was determined that an Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared. A Notice of Intent with the revised Purpose and Need statement was issued on 06/05/2015.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/06/05/2015-13761/rico-west-dolores-roads-and-trails-project-travel-management-dolores-district-of-the-san-juan>

#### Field Reviews 2015 Field Season

Field reviews in 2015 included the following, IDT field trip to road spur locations along West Dolores Road 06/19/2015; Field Check FR208 and 358 07/13/2015; Spring Creek ID Team Field Review 08/27/2015; Tin Can Basin and Bolam Pass IDT Field Review 10/25/2015;

#### Forest Plan

The Forest Plan was revised during the time period between the first RWD analysis and this current analysis. The current Forest Plan was approved on September 13, 2013. The Overground Suitability section of the Forest Plan includes, "A number of travel landscapes on the SJNF have not undergone site-specific overground travel management planning prior to publication of this LRMP. For these landscapes, travel suitability ... primarily reflects current management and is subject to change through a plan amendment based on site-specific analysis that will be completed through the travel management planning process." This paragraph applies to the RWD area.

Previous litigation focused on the 1983 Forest Plan and specifically Management Area 3. The revised Forest Plan also describes MA 3 with somewhat different locations, desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines. MA-3 refers to natural landscapes with limited management. "On the SJNF, approximately 47% of the MA3 lands are within CRAs. Management activities are allowed in MA3 areas but are more limited in the CRAs. Most MA3 areas emphasize non-motorized recreation opportunities, but motorized travel occurs in some areas on existing roads and motorized trails" (Final 2013 LRMP page 186).

#### Colorado Parks and Wildlife Discussions

Staff from Colorado Parks and Wildlife were asked to meet with Forest Service staff to gain a more detailed understanding of the existing condition of elk populations and habitat with the RWD area. Forest Service shared preliminary GIS calculations of route densities, provided an overview of the analysis process to be used for elk habitat effects, and preliminary interpretations of Forest Plan guidance (**1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\06\_Alternatives\02\_MeetingNotes**).

### Alternative Development

As the ID Team developed the alternatives, the specialists reviewed every road, trail, and area for which a change was requested in comments received during scoping, as well as routes identified by the ID team through field visits or Forest Plan interpretation. Requests for change from public comments were balanced against the recommendations for the minimum road system. For example, the public noted that FR358 should remain open, and FR208 might be a better candidate for decommissioning. The ID team field checked these two roads and agreed. The resulting mileages remained below the minimum road system mileage and were an improved choice related to environmental impacts.

In addition to review of existing routes, new trail connections were proposed to provide a compromise between conflicting comments (example Burnett to Rio Grande), and more road changes were proposed to address environmental impacts (culvert on Fish creek example). Five alternatives were developed for detailed analysis and other alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail as described in Chapter 2 FEIS. **Project File: \1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\06\_Alternatives\02\_MeetingNotes.**

Alternative Development and effects analysis rely on staff knowledge of the RWD area and its uses. Quantitative use levels have not been predicted. Data was collected for one summer season on some of the trails. This data was explained in the DEIS as not used because it could not show trends.

**\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\04\_Proposed Action Scoping\03\_Deliberative emails\emails\_other** The DEIS describes the District recreation program and field contacts made by personnel including trail crews, Field Protection Officers, recreation staff, and other resource staff employees.

### Comparison of Alternatives and Disclosure of Environmental Effects

The definition of the minimum road system and the criteria for designation of motor vehicle use as described in 36CFR212 were included in the description of effects in a comparative format across the alternatives. Topics analyzed in detail were addressed at the scale most appropriate to the topic. Below is a short description of an analysis topic, travel rule criteria, scope and type of analysis, related Forest Plan direction, and how public comment informed the analysis. Detailed information is located in Chapter 3 of the DEIS, the Forest Plan excerpts attached to this document, the Scoping Report and the project file.

Some topic areas were updated in the SDEIS as noted below,

#### **Topic – Wildlife (general)**

*Public Comment Synopsis*– Public comments raised concern that motorized recreation disrupt wildlife and prevent viewing wildlife. Specific locations were called out in public comments. Public comments focused on disruption to individuals or small groups of animals while the analysis focused on habitat effectiveness for the entire population within the RWD analysis area.

*Scope of and Type of Analysis* – The bounds of analysis for wildlife is the analysis area boundary. In order to evaluate the potential for harassment to wildlife or disruption of wildlife habitat,

security areas were identified and compared across the alternatives. The effectiveness of habitat within security areas and connectivity between areas was also included. The analysis was not altered for the SDEIS, however, the section was updated for clarity. **Project File \1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Wildlife**

#### **Topic – Watersheds, Riparian and Water Quality and Rare Plants**

*Public Comment Synopsis*– Public comment called out specific locations of concern related to damage to soils and vegetation. Related to wetlands, public comments noted problem spots along the northernmost 4 miles of the Calico trail, wetland areas on the East Fork Trail, and general water quality concerns on Bear Creek to name a few. Related to soils public comments identified areas of trail braiding and/or erosion. Some commenters called out the sensitivity of alpine vegetation.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – Watersheds were evaluated at the 6<sup>th</sup> code level. Perennial streams and water bodies were evaluated for water quality. Smaller scale locations of riparian vegetation, wetlands and fens were analyzed along with other rare plant habitats such as alpine areas. The effects of the alternatives assumes implementation of design features or mitigation measures. The analysis was updated to improve clarity and add information from 2016 field visits. **Project File \1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\05\_Hydrology and Project File \1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Range Weeds and Rare Plants**

#### **Topic - Fisheries**

*Public Comment Synopsis* – Public comments included concerns about sensitive fish species habitat that included concerns about Spring Creek and greenback lineage cutthroat trout.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – Within the analysis area, streams known to be occupied by greenback lineage cutthroat trout were identified and mapped. The analysis evaluated effects of roads or trails within proximity of this stream habitat. A restoration project to remove a barrier was identified (FR547 culvert removal). USFWS concurred with a finding of ‘not likely to adversely impact’. **Project File 1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Wildlife\Fisheries**

#### **Topic – Cultural Resources**

*Public Comment* – Some comment letters raised concerns for cultural resource impacts along trails. The same commenters supported designated roads and trails and the long term elimination of cross country travel.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – All of the existing motorized roads and trails were buffered by 100 feet to create an ‘Area of Potential Effect’. Within this zone, previous surveys were used to identify resources. Additional survey occurred in 2011. Where sites eligible for the NHRP or ‘needs data’ sites were identified, measures were described to avoid adverse effects. Specific actions common to all alternatives are included in the DEIS. In areas of known sites, trail improvement or realignment requires consultation with District archaeologist. **Reports (including sensitive cultural site information) are located in the District files. Concurrence letters from SHPO are located in the project file**

## **1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\02\_Cultural**

### **Topic - Forest Products**

*Travel Rule* - Minimum road system explanation '....the responsible official must identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands'. Management for Forest health and access to wood products falls under administration and utilization of National Forest lands.

*Forest Plan* – The Forest Plan identifies lands suitable for timber production. In the RWD area, these lands are located outside of the Colorado Roadless areas, management areas with recreation emphasis, and special management areas. Thus less than 1/3 of the RWD analysis area is suitable for timber production.

*Public Comment*- Only a few comments were received on this topic requesting continued access for firewood gathering, and management access for future timber sales.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – Across lands suitable for timber production within the RWD analysis area, roads were evaluated for short and long term access for forest management activities. Forest product gathering access under the current road system was compared to access that would be provided under the alternatives. Project File:

**\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\04\_ForestProducts**

### **Topic – Range Management**

*Travel Rule* - Minimum road system explanation '....the responsible official must identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands'. Range management falls under administration and utilization of National Forest lands. General Criteria for designation of motor vehicle use includes 'conflicts among use of the National Forest system'. Criteria specific to trails includes 'consider the effects with the objective of minimizing 'damage to other forest resources'.

*Forest Plan* – Range management direction emphasizes successful movement and distribution of livestock to achieve forage utilization goals.

*Public Comment* – The Forest Service received comments from permittees about livestock operations and expressed concern about livestock distribution as well as condition of trail tread. No comments mentioned livestock as a source of conflict with recreation experience.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – Active allotments within the analysis area were identified and effects to the forage and livestock operations were discussed for each active allotment. Acres of forage lost to bare ground dedicated to roads and trails was calculated. Range allotment management notes were referenced. **Project File**

**\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Range**

### **Topic - Road Maintenance and Administration (Engineering) later called Transportation.**

*Travel Rule* - Minimum road system explanation '....the responsible official must identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization,



and protection of National Forest System lands'. Engineering of the road system applies to the safety, efficiency and administration. Definition of minimum road system in subpart a 'The minimum system is the road system determined to be needed to ... reflect long-term funding expectations,...' General criteria for designation includes consideration of 'Need for maintenance and administration that would arise' and 'availability of resources for maintenance and administration'. General criteria consider effects on 'Safety'.

*Forest Plan* – The Forest Plan provides direction to identify a minimum road system and directs maintenance activities to be prioritized to gravel surface or better roads, or roads with a high risk, high benefit rating. Forest Plan direction related to terrestrial ecosystems, riparian area and wetland ecosystems also apply.

*Public Comment* – Comments about roads were fewer than comments about trails. Few concerns were raised regarding roads to maintain on the road system, roads to decommission, roads to convert to trail or roads with dual road/trail delegation.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – For the current condition, each road is described by route name, route number and the Operational Maintenance Level from the Infra database. The project proposes to assign specific Objective Maintenance Levels to each road identified for the road system. Un-needed roads are identified by name, route number and include recommendations for decommissioning actions. All roads are displayed on maps to provide location. Roads that cross soils prone to mass movement are listed and evaluated in the separate section of the EIS. Evaluation of expected funding includes estimates specific to the San Juan Forest. The alternatives are compared to each other in terms of maintenance funding needs (both short and long term) and expected funding. Deviations from the Travel Analysis Report are explained. This section was updated to explain in more detail the benefits of roads proposed to be identified on the minimum road system. The decision to be made includes identification of the minimum road system. **Project File: \1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\01\_Engineering**

**Topic – Conflicts between different types of motor vehicles**

*Travel Rule* – General criteria consider 'Conflicts Among Use of the NF System', consider 'Safety'. Criteria specific to trails consider with the objective of minimizing 'Conflicts among different classes of motor vehicle uses on National Forest Lands or neighboring federal lands'.

*Forest Plan* – The forest plan directs evaluation of mixed uses as needed.

*Public Comment* – A relatively few comments were received on this topic. Some raised concern that the presence of full size vehicles or all-terrain vehicles on Forest Roads detracts from motorcycle riding experience and should be a reason for providing 'single-track' riding opportunities as opposed to 'road riding'. This comment is addressed under Recreation Opportunity.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – Forest roads where ATV and UTV riding is a popular activity were identified. An engineering review of these roads (mixed use analysis) resulted in no recommendation to prohibit the 'mixed use' of ATV, UTV and full size vehicles. Conflicts between different types of motor vehicles on single track trails was not analyzed, because only one type of motor vehicle is used (motorcycles). **Project file**

**\\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\01\_Engineering**

**Topic – Trail Maintenance and Administration**

*Scope and Type of Analysis* – Trail fundamentals are explained in the Trails Management Handbook. Each trail is listed by current trail class. Trail tread, grade, and other issues are described generally with examples given on select trails (including photos). A general estimated cost of trail developments is included for each alternative with additional information in the project file. Other aspects of trail maintenance are discussed qualitatively. The majority of analysis resides in the EIS with references in project file

**\\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Recreation**

**Topic - Recreation Opportunity including conflicts between recreation use of National Forest land.**

*Travel Rule Criteria - Travel Rule*– general criteria ...'consider the effects on provision of recreation opportunity'...'public safety'... 'access needs'. Criteria specific to trails...'consider effects with the objective of minimizing...' Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of National Forest System lands '... 'Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational uses of neighboring Federal Lands,... 'Compatibility with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors'. The definition of the minimum road system... 'Safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, (recreation is a type of utilization of National Forest lands).

*Forest Plan* – Recreation opportunity is addressed in the Forest Plan through Desired Conditions and Objectives tied to a range of recreation opportunities across the forest. Route density guidelines provide for road networks up to 1 mile per square mile across watersheds which provides for recreation and management access while protecting resource values. The Forest Plan provides special management area direction for the Town of Rico related to roads and trails that connect from the Town to National Forest lands.

*Forest Plan* - The following sentences reside in the Forest Plan as preamble and not management direction.

1. SJNF and TRFO lands that are adjacent to private lands (referred to as the wildland-urban interface, or WUI) can also create a number of management challenges, including fire management, fuels reduction, recreation conflicts, and wildlife habitat preservation/protection as well as energy and mineral exploration and development..
2. The principal goal of travel management planning is to reduce the development of unmanaged roads and trails and the associated impacts to water resources and aquatic ecosystems, wildlife conflict impacts, and user conflicts.
3. Dispersed recreation includes both day and overnight use and provides important recreational benefits, which include the opportunity to enjoy natural landscapes, escape from crowds, engage in physical exercise, and/or recreate with family and friends. The management of these benefits will seek to balance the strong desire people have for freedom of choice regarding recreation activities, while providing for adequate protection of cultural and natural resources and the need to manage conflicting recreation uses.

The word conflict does not appear in Desired Conditions, Objectives, Standards or Guidelines related to over-ground motor vehicle use except in one place – *Guideline 2.14.19 New trail construction in primitive and semi-primitive ROS settings protect resources, enhance recreation experience/challenge, mitigate user conflicts, and/or provide loops and/or links to other trail networks*. The term ‘quiet use’ only appears in the Rico Special Management Area direction of the Forest Plan.

*Public Comment* – The majority of public comments addressed recreation opportunity specific to single track trails, specifically requesting that certain trails be motorized or nonmotorized. Public comments described personal experiences of conflict by trail name, others listed general concerns about recreation experiences and most of these were users seeking forest settings with ‘quiet use’ opportunities. Some comments requested that hunting access via Forest roads be maintained, while others requested more ‘walk-in’ opportunities. No concerns were identified regarding the road system access to popular trailheads. Anglers called out popular fishing streams and outfitter guides commented on client experiences. Dispersed camping was identified as a popular activity along forest roads. Most comments from residents of populated areas requested limits on motorcycle use of trails in proximity to their properties and included Town of Rico and some properties on the West Dolores Road. Very few comments were received regarding nearby Forest roads in proximity to the same populated areas and most residents requested that Forest road access be maintained.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* –

*Recreation:* Specific recreation opportunities for motorcycle riding, ATV/UTV riding, hunting, dispersed camping, nonmotorized recreation, are described within the analysis area boundary and with regional connections.

*Conflicts between motor vehicle use and existing or proposed recreational use:* The Forest Recreation Opportunity Spectrum was used to describe recreation settings across the analysis area which includes areas of semiprimitive motorized and semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation experience. The current ROS Forest Plan map was re-drawn (**notes in file**). Proposals include changes to the Forest Plan ROS map. Conflicts between motor vehicle use and walk-in hunting opportunities was analyzed in the hunting section of the SDEIS. Conflicts between motor vehicle use of single track trails was expanded in the SDEIS to include a list of specific trails and levels of concern (note that comments are not a statistical sample).

*Compatibility with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account sound, emissions, and other factors.* Public comments did not raise road related concerns. Populated areas within or adjacent to the analysis area are described qualitatively along with effects of the alternatives. Sound impacts to populated areas were also addressed by describing distance from trails and anticipated sound levels.

**Most of the analysis resides in the SDEIS with reference material located at Project File \1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Recreation**

## **Topic – Socio-economics**

### *Travel Rule*

There are no definitions or criteria listed in the travel rule specific to the economies of communities as they are affected by motor vehicle use. However, the minimum road system is established for administration and utilization of National Forest lands, the minimum road system should consider the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The road system

provides for recreation and forest utilization in the form of personal use and commercial wood products and both recreation and forest products contribute to local economies.

*Forest Plan* – The introduction to the Recreation section of the Forest Plan notes, “The SJNF and TRFO offer visitors and local area residents’ extraordinary opportunities to experience the benefits of their public lands. Local and regional economies depend on the recreation market, which is heavily influenced by the opportunities available on the public lands. Visitors value the unique and outstanding recreational assets offered by the SJNF and TRFO. The “backyard” or rural recreation setting provided by many of these lands is an amenity to the active lifestyles and quality of life for local residents.”

*Public Comment* – Comments regarding local economies centered around the potential impacts of changes in motor vehicle use on hunting, or impacts to the Town of Rico from changes in motorcycle access. Comments described both sides of both of these issues. Some feel that reducing motor vehicle use enhances walk in hunting and would draw more hunters, while other feel that reducing motor vehicle use would cause some hunters to go elsewhere. Businesses and citizens were also divided as to whether or not direct access to the Town of Rico by trails would increase or decrease revenues to local businesses.

*Scope and Type of Analysis* - The bounds of analysis for this topic is the San Juan National Forest. Data was available that the Forest scale but not at the scale of the District or the RWD area. Data included demographics, economic sectors, visitor use (NVUM) and social values identified through public involvement and the pre-NEPA workshops. Economic benefits by types of use and especially motorized versus nonmotorized recreation uses could not be quantified (**email project file**). Rather, contributions to local economies could be described for day use/overnight use and local/nonlocal use. The socio-economic analysis used conclusions from the recreation opportunity analysis about potential changes in visitation to the RWD area.  
**\1900RicoWestDoloresTravelManagement\02\_Travel Management Plan\07\_Resources\Recreation**

#### **Publication of DEIS and Public Comment Period May 6, 2016**

A DEIS was published which began a 45 day comment period that was extended.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/05/06/2016-10719/environmental-impact-statements-notice-of-availability> Amended Notice of Availability to extend comment period

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/06/24/2016-15008/environmental-impact-statements-notice-of-availability>

#### **Field Visits 2016**

Additional field visits occurred in 2016 including visit to fen locations by hydrologists. Information from field visits for other projects were also shared and incorporated into the SDEIS.

#### **Publication of SDEIS and Public Comment Period beginning July 7<sup>th</sup>**

A SDEIS was published within began a 45 day comment period. The Note to Reader section of the SDEIS explains changes from the first DEIS to the SDEIS.

End of Notes: November 11, 2017 by Debbie Kill

