

LOWER COLORADO RIVER WILD AND SCENIC STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATIVE

June 30, 2010

Catherine Robertson
Grand Junction Field Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506

Re: Wild and Scenic River Suitability Evaluation
Dolores River

Dear Ms. Robertson:

The Lower Colorado River Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Collaborative is a dedicated group of individuals and organizations working together to identify management options for several stream segments that the Grand Junction Field Office found to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) during its recent inventory and analysis. The group seeks to outline management options to recommend to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a means of maintaining not only the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) that the agency has identified but also the stakeholder uses and values that currently exist in and along these stream segments. Ranchers, farmers, environmental advocates, water providers, representatives of local and state government, and other stakeholders have collaborated to find management approaches that meet both the needs of BLM and the needs of the broader stakeholder community.

In order to make the best use of the time available before BLM's May 2010 deadline for feedback into the draft Resource Management Plan (RMP), the stakeholders identified nine of the 27 eligible stream segments on which to focus their efforts. Using the percentage of federal land along the segment, the number of ORVs, and the number and type of existing management provisions as guiding criteria, the group prioritized the following segments for their collaborative discussions: Roan Creek, Carr Creek, Gunnison River Segment 2, Colorado River Segment 3, Dolores River, Ute Creek, East Creek, West Creek, and North Fork West Creek. Working groups have identified the stakeholder uses and values that they want to maintain and gathered data to inform their deliberations. Additionally, small task groups are preparing separate letters to BLM regarding the Little Dolores River and Colorado River Segments 1 and 2.

Building on recommendations from the working group addressing this segment, the stakeholders have come to consensus recommendations regarding the Dolores River. First, the stakeholders have identified a series of management provisions that we recommend that BLM incorporate into the new RMP for the Grand Junction Field Office to maintain the ORVs and stakeholder uses and values. These management provisions are outlined in the attached table.

Second, in the addition to the management recommendations, the stakeholders also recommend that a larger stakeholder dialogue be convened to address suitability and other issues and concerns

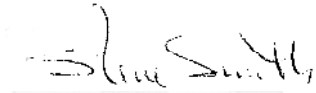
related to the Dolores River on a broader geographic scale, as resources, impacts, and opportunities do not begin and end at the boundaries of BLM field offices or other administrative units. The following is a list of specific considerations from the stakeholder group regarding this new collaborative process:

1. The new collaborative process should include broad representation from individuals and groups similar to (but not restricted to) those who have participated in this collaborative process, representing similar interests within the larger geographic focus of the new effort.
2. Understanding that BLM cannot convene such a group, the stakeholders recommend that the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) convene the group, and that staff from BLM field offices in the Dolores River watershed and Roy Smith actively participate in the collaborative process.
3. The stakeholders recommend that the new collaborative group clarify the geographic reach of its work and suggest that the group consider addressing all of the Dolores River (from McPhee Dam to the state line), all of the San Miguel River, and whatever tributaries to these rivers seem appropriate and necessary to the larger stakeholder group for a meaningful discussion.
4. The stakeholders recommend that the new collaborative group identify a definite deadline for completion of its work and suggest that the new group consider July 1, 2014 as its deadline. If there are no recommendations from the new collaborative group by the deadline identified in that process, BLM should undertake formal reconsideration (including broad stakeholder engagement) of whatever suitability decisions your field office makes regarding the eligible segments of the Dolores River and consider appropriate RMP amendment.
5. The stakeholders are not making a recommendation to BLM regarding suitability for any eligible portions of the Dolores River in the Grand Junction Field Office, as we believe discussions regarding suitability for these segments should be addressed in the larger dialogue outlined above. Further, stakeholders agreed not to comment individually on the question of suitability for the mainstem segments of the Dolores within the Grand Junction Field Office Resource Management Plan process. The stakeholders understand that this means that the existing National Park Service finding of suitability on the Dolores River between Gateway and the state line would remain in effect while the collaborative discussions are underway.

The stakeholders in the collaborative process thank the Grand Junction Field Office for the ongoing assistance provided by staff who have generously shared their time to answer questions and to help the group understand BLM's RMP revision process and the wild and scenic inventory and analysis.

Sincerely,

The Lower Colorado River Wild and Scenic
Stakeholder Collaborative
(Participants listed below.)



Steve Smith
The Wilderness Society



Larry W. Clever
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Ute Water Conservancy District



Michael Preston, General Manager
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John Stout
Land Owner on the Little Dolores above Pot Holes

F.A. Wise

F.A. Wise
Little Dolores Ranch

Susan Treece

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