

# **San Juan Plan Revision Desired Future Narrative – Dolores Dist. Study Group DRAFT 2 And Supporting Materials**

## **Introductory Note:**

The Draft Desired Future Narrative directly below is the result of a 5 step process. 1) Study Group participants in Cortez on June 29, 2005 provided input on the question of their desired future for the San Juan Public lands over the next 10-15 years, under the niche headings that begin each section below. All comments were recorded on flip charts. 2) The flip chart comments were integrated into a first draft Desired Future narrative using primarily the language of the original comments. 3) The Draft Narrative was broken into numbered points to make posters to provide a framework for a second round of comment at the August 11 meeting in Durango. 4) Participants at the August 4 meeting had the opportunity to write and stick on comments or additions to any and all of the poster comments. 5) The stick-on comments were integrated into the first narrative draft to produce Draft 2 directly below.

Some of the Draft 2 narrative reflects general agreement about the desired future among Study Group participants, while other parts of the narrative reflect significant differences of opinion. The resulting draft is not intended as a consensus statement, but rather as a rendering of the full range of opinion among Study Group participants.

Directly following the Draft 2 narrative is all of the supporting information from each step in the process leading to Draft 2 including flip chart notes, Draft 1, Posters, Poster Notes and Draft 2 with the changes highlighted in blue.

## **Desired Future Narrative – Dolores Dist. Study Group DRAFT 2** Narrative Revised to Incorporate Poster Exercise Additions at 8-4-05 Meeting

### **Diversity of Uses/Working Lands**

We are seeking a plan that will provide for a future that is inclusive of all uses harmoniously - logging, recreation, access routes, and grazing, as well as wildlife, watershed and ecosystem protection. We support current management which has been working as evidenced by the values and unique features that we enjoy on our public lands. We acknowledge that traditional uses have created the access that today allows for many of the recreational uses and illustrates the importance of managing for all uses and everybody paying their fair share. We want to retain grazing permittees, and avoid crowding out this use which is important to the community. Good grazing management and monitoring to protect creeks and wildlife, reduce fire danger, control weeds and protect forest health is the key to retaining and expanding responsible grazing as a key part of our agricultural economy and culture.

We don't want to see recreation or any single use crowd out traditional uses. We realize the need to educate people about multiple use so that management is not determined on the basis of any single use or agenda. It is important to include a socio-economic piece in the vision that acknowledges how public lands contribute to the economy of local communities for example: grazing, timber, recreation, tourism, hunting etc. We need to restore an economic focus to the plan. The multiple uses must be economically viable and not just token.

We acknowledge that the Plan needs to go beyond current management to address the impacts from increasing population on public lands. Forest restoration, forest health, wildlife conservation and watershed management need to be given a higher priority in the plan than in the past.

We need to stay ahead of increasing motorized ATV use to prevent degradation. Some are concerned that if access is too limited, a large amount of use can be concentrated in too limited an area. Others support a strategy that would make better use of areas close to population centers by building more and better trails close to the towns allowing for a large number of trail miles to be packed into fairly small areas if thought out well in advance.

We need to stop the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails because of the erosion they cause. "F" areas that allow off trail motorized use need to be eliminated. Some emphasize keeping existing roads and making sure that an adequate number of roads is authorized, while others emphasize having the minimum number of roads. Public comment should be open when roads are authorized or de-authorized.

It is important that we do more to manage for wildfire, and use logging as a tool to reduce heavy fuels and ladder fuels to avoid crown fires, so we don't burn up important renewable resources or degrade our scenic assets. We should also take advantage of natural fire when conditions permit.

We need to make sure that oil and gas development doesn't become a deterrent to traditional uses such as grazing and hunting as has happened elsewhere in the San Juan Basin by restricting oil and gas leasing to only those areas that would not degrade other uses and values. We are concerned that some areas are protected from oil and gas development while others are overrun, and about the connection between oil and gas development and BLM revenues. We need to make sure that oil and gas development, and other ground disturbing activities don't cause the proliferation of weeds. Weed management needs to be supported by monitoring and enforcement. Oil and gas installations should be required to preserve dark skies.

We would like to see sound science used in making management decisions, that will stand up to appeals and that can be used to make decisions about designations that have long been up in the air such as WSAs. Monitoring methods need to be understood by those affected and designed to be fully reflective of conditions, rather than being structured around the convenience of the agency monitor. One application of science should be the best available research on

controlling thistle, and other noxious weeds. We should develop strategies for better policing and stiffer penalties for damaging public lands coupled with information and education.

### **Recreation**

We wish to manage recreation carefully and within the resource capacity so that recreation does not become an extractive industry. We would like to see the plan address the proliferation of roads and the closure and reclamation of redundant roads so we don't have an explosion in the number of roads over the next 20 years. Roads should be limited to those that are absolutely necessary and kept within the parameters of the road maintenance capacity and budget. We recognize that limiting access concentrates impacts on areas that remain open, and that roads play a role in preventing and fighting wildfires. The roads that are kept open should be kept in repair so people don't need to drive off. A plan is needed for increased education, enforcement, stiffer penalties with regard to closed roads, and the illegal creation of new roads and trails.

We don't favor a future of big investments in recreational amenities. We would like to see recreation on the San Juan Public lands remain more undeveloped, rather than turn them into a city park. Paving or grading FS and BLM roads may be making access too easy some places on public lands. Construction of new "urban" facilities should not be emphasized. The visitor should expect a more natural experience. We would like to avoid fees for recreation use except in already developed areas.

To the extent that new amenities need to be developed to manage the increasing number of visitors, we would like to see these located adjacent to major corridors and already developed trailheads and parking lots, not in dispersed backcountry recreation areas. For roads that are going to get heavy use, we need scheduled road maintenance and dust abatement so we can better manage for the economic benefits of hunters and tourists.

Some of us feel that private landowners should not be able to block historic access through private land to the forest, others assert that private property rights include the right to control access.

We see the importance of having places for all user groups to enjoy, and that ATV opportunities help an aging population experience the land. However ATV users are not just older people, and as ATV use continues to expand, the quality of other uses are interfered with, in particular by the noise, which could be limited by requiring low noise machines, and limiting roads and trails on which ATVs are allowed. While we are concerned about the impacts of unmanaged off-road vehicle use, we realize that any recreation use, overdone, can impact the health of the ecosystem including damage caused by erosion from mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding and motorcycles. It should also be recognized that riders do most of the volunteer maintenance.

While some of us would like to have dedicated trails to separate uses and resolve conflicts among incompatible uses, others of us prefer not to see the segregation of

recreational uses, and like multiple use trails combined with resolving conflicts and minimizing resource damage through a strong user stewardship ethic. The user stewardship approach is especially relevant on the west end of the forest, since it is hard to enforce or limit motorized use to routes in flat wide open areas. Motorized vehicle ATV users should financially participate in some way (e.g., an allocation of their license fees) so that dollars are available to enforce use in these flat areas. We desire a future in which user groups continue to help with maintenance of trails and educating the public. We recognize that these groups do a lot to help enhance the experience for wide variety of users.

We see a future in which we must work together to manage well. We must be proactive in trying to reduce conflicts between users, ahead of major problems. Public lands can't be managed by volunteers only. We would like to see more agency staff in the field. Perhaps more office personnel and staff can be moved to the field. Some of us believe that uses that cause expenses to manage should pay a fee, and this includes recreation with something like an NPS Golden Eagle Pass. Others feel that recreation management is paid for in the form of taxes and that fees are only appropriate in areas with special amenities such as campgrounds. There is a need for public education and working with Congress to allocate the necessary funding.

We need to plan for a future that adapts management in a way that is mindful of growth and its impacts. For example where trails go through grazing areas there should be cattle guards or more user friendly gates. We need to get a handle on unsafe target shooting which threatens the safety of people and livestock. We need to find a way to make irresponsible hunters more accountable for the mess they leave behind. We would like to see more and better signage.

### **Diverse Landscapes**

We have some of the best landscapes in the world. The diversity provides good migration paths for wildlife, the protection of which should be a high priority in making management decisions without undue external influence such as the Wildland Project. These diverse habitats need to be protected if they are to be maintained for future generations. We need to provide wild places for wildlife while taking advantage of the contributions traditional uses and economies can make to forest health and wildlife habitat.

Some of us see control of predators (such as bears, lions, and coyotes) as beneficial to the protection of sensitive species such as sage grouse, and recognize the role of humans in managing wildlife populations. Others see these predators as an important part of the ecosystem and would prefer to see natural cycles and natural selection be allowed operate without controls. Still others oppose focusing on single species and think species such as the sage grouse should manage on their own. There are also concerns about mitigating the impact of oil and gas development on wildlife. Wildlife may need to be its own category and decisions about predators need to be decided by sound science and with the involvement of CDOW.

## **Undeveloped Country**

We wish to protect and maintain undeveloped areas from gradual long term degradation. We don't want to see humans dominate and manage all areas, and recognize the intrinsic value of wildlife. We value areas where natural processes and natural sounds dominate and interconnected wildlife corridors and habitat are protected. We see these areas as contributors to ecosystem health and as some of our most valuable renewable resources in times of change on other parts of the landscape as well as assets which, along with dark skies, attract people to the area.

While we would like to keep the unroaded areas unroaded, some of us are O.K. with temporary access to manage for ecosystem health and reduce wildfire hazards, followed by closure and rehabilitation. Others think that temporary roads never go away, and don't want new roads under any circumstances. Still others are concerned that areas considered as roadless actually have traditional roads, and that access promotes public awareness and value of these areas. Some of us oppose future Wilderness designation as too restrictive and would like Wilderness Study Area designations removed if Congress doesn't act on them in the next 10 years possibly by converting them to limited use areas which still allow for practical management of established uses. Others suggest that a mix of Theme 1 and Theme 2 allocations along with visual protections and wilderness designation are the most practical means of protection, and should be maximized. Some are concerned about external influences such as the Wildlands Project on local planning, while others don't see the Wildlands Project as a threat. Some would like to see mountain biking allowed in Wilderness areas on designated trails.

## **Scenery**

We want to maintain and promote our scenic assets for the future including the purchase of areas such as the historic mining sites on Red Mountain Pass, which also avoids future condo development. Others are opposed to government acquisition of private property. Preserving scenery is important to our tourist based economy.

We desire a future which minimizes negative visual impacts on our scenic areas resulting from large scale residential, resort and industrial development. We would like to see Federal and local government coordinate to control negative visual impacts resulting from the scale, height and siting of development. Oil and gas activity also needs to be managed to mitigate damage to scenery using directional drilling and other techniques.

## **Clean Air and Water**

We desire a future in which the agencies are pro-active in protecting watersheds especially with fuels treatments and better access to reduce the risk of wildfires that could damage key areas such as the watershed into McPhee Reservoir. We would like to see roads rehabilitated right after hunting season to minimize erosion and protect water quality. Others would like to see restrictions and information used to limit hunting season damage from occurring in the first place, or year round restrictions on motorized use in critical watershed areas.

We wish to preserve watersheds in the high country including the reduced density of deadfall, reduced wildfire danger, and easier access to build more ponds/reservoirs so we have more storage capacity and water available. We desire a plan that supports agency cooperation in protecting our Colorado water rights, while protecting water dependent uses on public lands and avoiding inter-basin transfers.

We wish for agencies to continue to participate in inter-agency discussions, that would result in cleaner air by controlling power plant emissions as well as, clean water and adequate stream flows in our area, to protect these community assets.

### **Heritage Resources**

We would like to see more funding to improve oversight and completion of contract work on the Federal Lands. We would also like to foster continued site stewardship, and see the stewards as doing a good job

We don't want to see heritage resources trump local traditions to the extent that our ranchers become relics, while recognizing that ranchers have a responsibility for good land stewardship and taking care of fragile desert ecosystems. We believe it is important to retain the heritage of grazing, mining and timber rather than placing all the emphasis on research and preservation of pre-Puebloan heritage.

### **Citizen Stewardship**

We see increasing citizen participation in the planning process as beneficial, and want to see the input used. This Study Group process has been inclusive, has brought diverse people together and should be built into the management approach of the San Juan Public Lands on an ongoing basis. We recognize that diversity was limited to those that were willing and able to attend meetings, and attendance was complicated by changes in meeting dates. The recreational and extractive emphasis of icons, may have polarized discussions. There is also a need to supplement opinions expressed with scientific data to arrive at policies.

We encourage the BLM and FS to continue to improve relationships with volunteers who are playing an important role on the public lands. An attitude of openness to volunteers and sign up sheets in each office will encourage volunteerism. We would like to see these volunteer contributions receive more recognition and appreciation so other public land users will be aware.

We would also like to improve inter-agency communication and reduce bureaucratically driven time delays for project work, while ensuring required environmental analysis is completed. Meetings should be open and not geared to special interests, and after a reasonable amount of time decisions should be made.

We believe that volunteers need educational support for their efforts to monitor and protect public lands. We also feel that volunteers can't and shouldn't do professional work, and that under-funding of agency staff can reach a level where it becomes a disincentive to volunteers. Volunteers can be most effective if they are well managed and given responsibilities that are suited to their capabilities.

## **Supporting Materials: Desired Future Narrative**

### **Integrated Desired Future Flip Chart Notes Dolores Dist., June 29, 2005**

#### **Diversity of Uses/Working Lands**

The plan needs to look at impacts from the increasing population on public lands. Forest restoration needs to be a larger part of public land management (forest health, wildlife conservation, etc.).

Exclude the Wildlands Project from San Juan public lands area – we are capable of managing our resources locally.

Watersheds need to be given a higher priority in the plan.

We need a restored economic focus in the plan.

We need better policing/penalties for damaging public lands.

- Retain grazing permittees; don't crowd out this use of public lands because it economically important to community.
- Support current management, because the management the past 100 years must have been working since we still have all these values and unique features.
- Important to manage fire; don't want to see fire burn up important renewable resources. Managing fire also helps maintain scenery.
- Important for public lands to be inclusive of all uses harmoniously—logging, recreation, access routes, grazing, etc.
- Important to acknowledge that traditional uses have created the access that today allows for some recreation opportunities. Important to manage lands for all uses.
- Important to include a socio-economic piece in the vision that acknowledges how public lands contribute to the economy of local communities, e.g., grazing, timber, recreation tourism, hunting, etc.
- Don't want to see recreation or any single use crowd out traditional uses.
- Need to educate people about multiple uses and management opportunities on public lands so as to avoid having lands managed or emphasized for a single use (i.e., a narrow minded agenda).

Take away WSA's, if not turned into wilderness in 10 years.

- I'm in favor of multiple use.
- The proliferation of unauthorized trails should be a concern because you can't manage them and they cause erosion.
- I would caution against the development of oil and gas to the detriment of other traditional uses such as grazing and hunting. It's happened in the San Juan Basin. Grazing and hunting are being driven out.
- Oil and gas development causes weed problems because the land is disturbed. Farmington and Utah are examples of this. Cheatgrass is especially bad.
- Oil and gas installations should be required to preserve dark skies.
- Weeds are proliferating even where there is no oil and gas development.
- Multiple use is why we have the public lands that we do.

## **Diverse Landscapes**

Diverse habitats need protection if they are to be maintained for future generations.

- We have the best landscape in the world.
- There are good migration paths for wildlife because of the diverse landscapes.

## **Recreation**

Recreation can be almost an extractive activity and needs to be more tightly managed (e.g., demand created by the NY Times article about SW Colorado public lands).

Public lands can't be managed by volunteers only – competent staff are needed.

We'll ruin the resource if we don't manage well and work together.

Recreation on the San Juan public lands should remain more “undeveloped” – construction of new “urban” facilities should not be emphasized; instead, the visitor should expect to have a more natural experience.

The plan should address the current proliferation of roads so that we don't have an explosion of them in 20 years.

Paving and/or grading of FS and BLM roads may be making access too easy in some places on the public lands.

- Manage recreation carefully and within resource capacity. Concerned about the increase of recreation use because it can be destructive to the resources. Off-road vehicle use is a concern, but any recreation use over done can impact the health of the ecosystem.
- Technology and thus opportunities in recreation are changing; they can be good if not overdone.
- Important to maintain ATV opportunities because they help an aging population experience the lands. Need to educate users to follow the rules in order to keep the experience good for all.
- Continue using recreation user groups for maintenance of trails and educating the public; they do a lot and help enhance the experience for all users.
- Important to have places for all user groups to enjoy the lands.
- Concerned about the damage and erosion caused by mountain biking.
- Don't want to see segregation of recreation uses, nor big investment in developing recreation amenities.
- Develop amenities along major corridors and already “developed” areas, such as trailheads, parking lots; not in dispersed, backcountry recreation areas.
- Anything that causes an expense to manage or provide an opportunity (e.g., recreation) should pay a fee to help maintain that opportunity (you'd have to pay to do that activity on private land).
- Would like to see more agency staff in the field; their presence reduces bad behavior.
- Hard to enforce or limit motorized use to routes in flat wide open areas.
- Need to be mindful of growth and how it impacts the area. People can out-use the forest, need to allow and plan for growth and adapt management. For example, with the increase of people using the forest that often left gates open, we are now installing cattle guards on trails to reduce impact to grazing.

### **Make hunters more accountable for their mess**

- Unmanaged target-shooting is a concern. It's a danger to cattle and people both. It often happens near trails, without appropriate backstops.
- The majority do handle handguns safely. It's just a small minority that doesn't.
- Unsafe target-shooting occurs more often than would happen if it were just a tiny minority doing it.
- Have dedicated trails so you don't have conflicts between different types of users.
- Where trails and roads go through grazing allotments, there should be more user-friendly gates.
- Be proactive in trying to reduce conflicts between users ahead of time.
- More and better signage would be good.
- Don't over-manage recreation sites to provide an excuse to charge fees. They amount to double taxation.
- I already pay for my public lands through taxes. Fees for areas with extra amenities, such as campgrounds, are OK.
- User fees are good. Everyone should have to pay.

### **Undeveloped Country**

We must protect and maintain undeveloped areas.

We need to avoid/protect fragmentation; the plan should emphasize interconnectedness – this is very important for wildlife.

Exclude the Wildlands Project from local planning.

- Keep unroaded areas unroaded, but a temporary road is okay when the resource needs to be managed to improve the health of the ecosystem. Close and rehabilitate road after the management is finished.
- Appropriate to have some areas that are never entered and never managed. Important to have natural areas where natural processes dominate.
- Wildlife has an intrinsic value and it's important to have large unroaded, undeveloped and unmanaged areas that provide habitat and ecosystems important for wildlife. Humans and human uses of the land are not the only factor; don't want to see humans dominate and manage all areas.
- Because things are always changing, we may need to manage areas to sustain the ecosystem (even in the undeveloped/unmanaged areas).
- Do not develop any more "permanent" roads.
- Do not develop any more roads at all (not even temporary) especially in unroaded areas.

**Don't restrict our public lands any more. Enough wilderness areas**

- The dark skies here are an unusual and very important asset.
- Have undeveloped pieces as big as possible to provide wildlife corridors, biodiversity..
- Wildlife is adaptable. The animals will live with you. Just look at skunks.
- Undeveloped country is a huge asset – many people come here because of it.
- Protect undeveloped areas – they're unique and special.
- Most areas that are Theme 1 or 2 are hard to access. Minimize visual blight in those areas.

## **Scenery**

We need more proactive research by the Federal agencies into any proposed industry that would negatively impact scenic resources on public lands.

Coordination is needed among Federal and local governments in controlling negative visual impacts to public lands [e.g., the height of new private development projects affecting nearby viewsheds].

Visual impacts from oil and gas activity [pipelines, pumpjacks, compressor stations, etc.] need to be tightly managed to mitigate damage to the scenery, via directional drilling and other techniques.

## **Maintain and promote scenic assets in future**

- The purchase of areas like the mining sites on Red Mountain Pass that are being purchased by the Land and Water Trust is very good for the public – they could all be condos otherwise. Preserving scenery is important to a tourist-based economy.

## **Air and Water**

Save the water for Colorado.

The plan should advise against/prevent any inter-basin diversions.

Federal agencies need to be more pro-active in protecting watersheds.

- Important to protect the quality of these resources.

Preserve watersheds in high country! More fuels treatments to protect water quality, i.e. density of dead fall

Easier access to build more reservoirs so we have more water available.

Create better road access to be able to fight fires more effectively

- Agencies should continue to participate in discussions, pressure the EPA, etc., for cleaner air in this area.
- I'm concerned about potential wildfires around McPhee that would cause silt to wash into the reservoir. It is good to inventory areas that are important for clean water and try to prevent wildfires there.
- Keep it clean.

## **Heritage Resources**

More staff and funding are need to improve oversight of contract work on Federal lands.

Let's not let heritage resources trump our local traditions – let's not let our ranchers become relics.

- Important to retain the post-European heritage of grazing, mining, and timber. These uses are threatened, yet we seem to place more emphasis on research and preservation of pre-puebloan heritage.
- Continue to foster site-stewardship. The stewards do a good job.



## **Citizen Stewardship**

- An increase in citizen participation in the planning process would be beneficial.
- It is important for BLM and FS to continue to improve relationships with volunteer groups, who are playing an important role on public lands.
- Better publicity and increased awareness is needed regarding the contributions that volunteer groups make on public lands. The level of their contributions are often not known about or appreciated by many users of public lands.
- Volunteers can't and shouldn't do the professional work. When underfunding reaches a certain level, the lack of regular agency staff becomes a disincentive to volunteers.

- General agreement that it is appropriate for user groups to help maintain public lands.

Develop public involvement even more fully...get more people involved. Need to educate volunteers so they can help monitor and protect public lands.

- We should be grateful for groups like the Backcountry Horsemen, wild-horse advocates, etc. Stewardship here is phenomenal.

## **New Category/Issue/Comment:**

This kind of public process should be built into the management approach to San Juan public lands on an on-going basis. (stewardship)

- Wildlife should definitely be a category.
- These categories are all good ones.

## **General Comments**

- The planning process has been good and inclusive. It has brought diverse people together. (stewardship)
- Private landowners should not be able to block historic access through private land to the forest.

Try to lessen bureaucracy - time intensiveness of project work.

Regarding resource damage from hunting, rehabilitate roads immediately after hunting season to protect water resources.

Consider more logging to minimize fire danger. Improves forest health.

More schedule A road maintenance for tourists, especially in popular tourist areas.

Keep away from fee's on public lands (not including already developed areas)

Better communication between public land agencies

Better management of sage grouse areas by increased control of predators, i.e. coyotes

Consider mag. Chloride on some more popular roads, for dust control and improved maintenance

Decrease bear population

Increase weed control. Look at better studies for controlling bind weed and thistle. Spray preferred over bug control, which seems to increase problem.

More education to rec. users regarding multiple use on trails to minimize conflicts.

Use sound science in making decisions.

## Desired Future Narrative Dolores Dist. Study Group Draft 1 Based on Flip Chart Notes, Cortez, June 29, 2005

NOTE:

Phrases Highlighted in **Bold Font** provided the basis for posters that follow

### Diversity of Uses/Working Lands

We are seeking a **plan** that will provide for a future that is **inclusive of all uses** harmoniously-**logging, recreation, access routes, grazing, etc.** We support **current management has been working as evidenced by the values and unique features that we enjoy** on our public lands. We **acknowledge** that **traditional uses have created the access that today allows for** many of the **recreational uses** and illustrates the importance of managing for all uses. We want to **retain grazing permittees, and avoid crowding out this use which is important to the community.**

We don't want to see recreation or any single use crowd out traditional uses. We realize the need to **educate people about multiple use** so that **management is not determined on the basis of any single use or agenda.** It is important to include a **socio-economic** piece in the vision that **acknowledges** how **public lands contribute to the economy of local communities** for example **grazing, timber, recreation, tourism, hunting etc.** We need to restore and economic **focus** to the **plan.**

We acknowledge that the Plan needs to go **beyond current management to address the impacts from increasing population on public lands. Forest restoration, forest health, wildlife conservation and watershed management** need to be given a **higher priority** in the plan than in the past. It is important that we do more to **manage for wildfire, and use logging as a tool, so we don't burn up** important **renewable resources** or **degrade** our **scenic assets.**

We need to stop **the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails** because of the **erosion they cause.** We need to make **sure that oil and gas development doesn't become a deterrent to traditional uses such as grazing and hunting as** has happened elsewhere in the **San Juan Basin.** We need to **make sure that oil and gas development, and other ground disturbing activities don't cause the proliferation of weeds.** Oil and gas installations should be required to **preserve dark skies.**

We would like to see **sound science used in making management decisions,** including the best available research on controlling thistle, and other noxious weeds. We should develop strategies for **better policing and stiffer penalties for damaging public lands.**

### Recreation

We wish to **manage recreation** carefully and **within the resource capacity** so that recreation does **not become an extractive industry.** We would like to see

the plan **address the proliferation of roads** so we **don't have an explosion in the number of roads over the next 20 years.**

We **don't favor a future of big investments in recreational amenities.** We would like to see recreation on the San Juan **Public lands remain more undeveloped.** **Paving or grading FS and BLM roads may be making access too easy some places** on public lands. **Construction of new "urban" facilities should not be emphasized.** The visitor should expect a more natural experience. We would like to **avoid fees for recreation use except in already developed areas.**

To the extent that new amenities **need to be developed to manage the increasing number of visitors,** we would like to see these **located adjacent to major corridors and already developed trailheads and parking lots, not in dispersed backcountry recreation areas.** For roads that are going to get heavy use, we need scheduled road maintenance and dust abatement. **Private landowners should not be able to block historic access through private land to the forest.**

We see the importance of having **places for all user groups to enjoy, and that ATV opportunities help and aging population experience the land.** While we are **concerned about the impacts of unmanaged off-road vehicle use,** we realize that **any recreation use, overdone, can impact the health of the ecosystem including damage caused by erosion from mountain biking.**

While **some of users would like to have dedicated trails to resolve conflicts among users, others of us prefer not to see the segregation of recreational uses, and would like to resolve conflicts and minimize resource damage** through a strong user stewardship ethic. The **user stewardship** approach is especially **relevant on the west end of the forest,** since it is **hard to enforce or limit motorized use to routes in flat wide open areas.** We desire a future in which **user groups continue to help with maintenance of trails and educating the public.** We recognize that these groups do a lot to help enhance the experience for wide variety of users.

We see a future in which we must **work together** to manage well. We must be proactive in trying to **reduce conflicts** between users, **ahead of major problems.** **Public lands can't be managed by volunteers only.** We would like to see **more agency staff in the field.** Some of us believe that **uses that cause expenses to manage should pay a fee, and this includes recreation.** **Others feel that recreation management is paid for in the form of taxes and that fees are only appropriate** in areas with **special amenities such as campgrounds.**

We need to plan for the future that **adapts management** in a way that is mindful of **growth and its impacts.** For example where trails go through **grazing areas** there should be **cattle guards or more user friendly gates.** We need to get a

handle on **unsafe target shooting** which threatens the safety of people and livestock. We need to find a way to make **irresponsible hunters** more **accountable for the mess** they leave behind. We would like to see more and better signage.

### **Diverse Landscapes**

**We have some of the best landscapes in the world. The diversity provides good migration paths for wildlife. These diverse habitats need to be protected** if they are to be maintained **for future generations**. We would like to see **better management of Sage Grouse areas by increased control of predators e.g. coyotes**). We would like to **decrease the bear population**. **Wildlife may need to be its own category**.

### **Undeveloped Country**

We wish to **protect and maintain undeveloped areas**. We **don't want to see humans dominate and manage all areas**, and **recognize the intrinsic value of wildlife**. We **value areas where natural processes dominate** and **interconnected wildlife corridors and habitat are protected**. We see these areas as **contributors to ecosystem health in times of change** on other **parts of the landscape** as well as assets which, along with dark skies, **attract people to the area**.

While we would like to **keep the unroaded areas unroaded**, some of us are **O.K. with temporary access to manage for ecosystem health**, followed by closure and rehabilitation; while **others don't want new roads under any circumstances**. Some of us **oppose future Wilderness designation as too restrictive** and would like Wilderness Study Area designations removed if Congress doesn't act on them in the next 10 years. Others suggest **Theme 1 and Theme 2 allocations with visual protections** are the most practical means of protection. Some are **concerned about external influences such as the Wildlands Project** on local planning.

### **Scenery**

We want to **maintain and promote our scenic assets** for the future including the **purchase of areas such as the historic mining sites on Red Mountain Pass**, which also **avoids future condo development**. Preserving scenery is important to our **tourist based economy**.

We desire a future which **minimizes negative visual impacts on our scenic areas resulting from large scale residential, resort and industrial development**. We would like to see **Federal and local government coordinate to control negative visual impacts** resulting from the scale, height and siting of development. **Oil and gas** activity also needs to be managed to mitigate **damage to scenery** using directional drilling and other techniques.

### **Clean Air and Water**

We desire a future in which the **agencies are pro-active in protecting watersheds** especially with **fuels treatments and better access to reduce the risk of wildfires that could damage key areas such as the watershed into McPhee Reservoir**. We would like to see **roads rehabilitated right after hunting season to minimize erosion and protect water quality**.

We wish to **preserve watersheds in high country** including the **density of deadfall**, and create easier **access to build more ponds/reservoirs** so we have more water available. We desire a plan that supports **Agency cooperation in protecting our Colorado water rights and avoiding inter-basin transfers**.

We wish for **Agencies to continue to participate in inter-agency discussions**, that would result in cleaner air in our area.

### **Heritage Resources**

We would like to see **more funding to improve oversight and completion of contract work on the Federal Lands**. We would also like to **foster continued site stewardship**, and see the **stewards as doing a good job**

We don't want to see **heritage resources trump local traditions to the extent that our ranchers become relics**. We believe it is **important to retain the post-European heritage of grazing, mining and timber rather than placing all the emphasis on research and preservation of pre-Puebloan heritage**.

### **Citizen Stewardship**

We see **increasing citizen participation in the planning process as beneficial**. This **Study Group process has been inclusive, has brought diverse people together** and should **be built into the management approach of the San Juan Public Lands on an ongoing basis**.

We encourage the **BLM and FS to continue to improve relationships with volunteers who are playing an important role on the public lands**. We would like to see these **volunteer contributions receive more recognition and appreciation so other public land users will be aware**. We would also like to **improve inter-agency communication and reduce bureaucratically driven time delays for project work**.

We believe that **volunteers need educational support for their efforts to monitor and protect public lands**. We also feel that **volunteers can't and shouldn't do professional work, and that under-funding of agency staff can reach a level where it becomes a disincentive to volunteers**.

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## **Desired Future Dolores District Study Group Posters Framework for August 4, 2005 Study Group Stick on Comments**

### **Diversity of Uses/Working Lands**

1. Plan inclusive of all uses: logging, recreation, access routes, grazing etc.
2. Current management has been working as evidenced by the values and features we all enjoy.
3. Traditional uses created access that today allows for recreational uses
4. Retain grazing permittees, avoid crowding out an important community use
5. Educate people about multiple use-avoid management by single use agenda
6. Socio-economic focus in plan – acknowledge economic contributions to community: grazing, timber, recreation tourism, hunting etc.

### -----Poster 2 Diversity of Uses/Working Lands

7. Go beyond current plan to address impact population increase on public lands – higher priority on restoration, forest health wildlife conservation, watershed management.
8. Logging as tool to manage wildfire risk – don't burn up renewable resources, or degrade scenic assets
9. Stop proliferation of unauthorized roads/trails and resulting erosion
10. Insure oil and gas development is not detrimental to traditional grazing, hunting etc. as has occurred elsewhere in the San Juan Basin.
11. Insure oil & gas, other ground disturbing activities don't proliferate weeds
12. Protect dark skies
13. Use sound science to make management decisions
14. Better policing, stiffer penalties for damaging public land

### **Recreation**

1. Manage within resource capacity so recreation doesn't become an extractive industry.
2. Address proliferation of roads – to avoid explosion in # over the next 20 years
3. Don't favor future big investments in recreational amenities – public lands should remain more undeveloped

- 4 Paving/grading roads may be making access too easy in some places
- 5 Don't construct "urban facilities" – visitors should expect natural experience
- 6 Avoid fees for recreation except in already developed areas – others think users should pay for any activity that generates costs.
- 7 If amenities need developed to manage increasing visitors, should be adjacent to major corridors and already developed trailheads, parking lots etc. - not in backcountry areas

----- **Recreation Poster 2**

- 8 Roads that do get heavy use should have scheduled maintenance, dust abatement
- 9 Private owners should not block historic access to the forest
- 10 Places for all user groups enjoy - ATV opportunities help aging population experience the land
- 11 Concerned about unmanaged off-road use, but any use overdone impacts ecosystem health e.g. erosion from mountain biking
- 12 Some users want dedicated trails to resolve conflicts among users - Others want to avoid segregation and resolve conflicts, resource damage through strong user ethic
- 13 User stewardship especially relevant on west end of San Juan Public Lands – hard to enforce/ limit motorized use in flat wide open areas
- 14 User groups continue to help with trail maintenance, educating the public

----- **Recreation Poster 3 + Heritage Resources**

- 15 Work together to reduce conflicts, stay ahead of major conflicts
- 16 Public lands can't be managed by volunteers only – more agency presence
- 17 Manage for the impacts of growth e.g. cattle guards, user friendly gates on trails, controls on dangerous target shooting, hunter clean up requirements, better signage

**Heritage Resources**

1. More funding to improve oversight and completion of contract work on Public lands
2. Foster continued site stewardship – site stewards are doing a good job
3. Don't allow heritage resources to trump local traditions to the extent that ranchers become relics.
4. Important to retain post-European heritage of grazing, mining, timber rather than placing all the emphasis and research on pre-Puebloan heritage

**Diverse Landscapes, Undeveloped Country**

1. We have some of World's best landscapes – diversity provides interconnected migration paths/habitat for wildlife
2. Diverse habitats need protection for future generations – wildlife may need to be its own category – recognize intrinsic value of wildlife

3. Better management of sage grouse areas by predator control (e.g. coyotes) - decrease bear population
4. Protect/maintain undeveloped areas – don't want human dominance everywhere
5. We value areas where natural processes dominate as contributors to ecosystem health in times of change elsewhere on landscape – these areas attract visitors
6. Keep unroaded areas unroaded – some o.k. with temporary ecosystem health treatment access, others want no temporary roads whatsoever
7. Some oppose future Wilderness as too restrictive, want WSAs released after 10 years, and are concerned about external influenced such as the Wildlands Project.
8. Some want Theme 1 or 2 with visual protections as a practical way to protect undeveloped country

### **Scenery, Clean Air and Water**

1. Maintain/promote scenic assets, purchase historic mining sites e.g. Red Mountain pass which avoids condo development, supports tourism economy
2. Minimize visual impacts of large scale residential, resort, industrial, oil and gas development – will require federal/local land use cooperation
3. Proactive Agency protection of watersheds – fuels treatments and access in key areas such as McPhee watershed
4. Road rehabilitation after hunting season to minimize erosion/protect water quality
5. Protect watersheds in high country including, reduced density of deadfall, easier access to build more ponds
6. Agency cooperation in protecting Colorado water rights, and avoiding inter-basin transfers
7. Support agency participation in inter-agency discussions that would result in cleaner air in our area.

### **Citizen Stewardship**

1. Increasing citizen participation in planning process is beneficial
2. Study Group process has been inclusive, brought diverse people together, should be built into San Juan management process on an ongoing basis
3. Encourage BLM/FS to continue with improved volunteer relationships – they play an important role on public lands
4. Volunteers should receive more recognition/appreciation so other public land users are aware of their contribution
5. Improve inter-agency communication – reduce bureaucratically driven time delays for project work
6. Volunteers need educational support for efforts to monitor and protect public lands
7. Volunteers shouldn't do professional work – under-funding of agency staff could reach a level so as to become a disincentive for volunteers.

**Desired Future Dolores District Study Group Posters**  
**August 4, 2005 Study Group Stick on Comments**

**RECREATION**

- 1 Manage within resource capacity so recreation doesn't become an extractive industry.**
- 2 Address proliferation of roads – to avoid explosion in # over the next 20 years**
  - Keep roads open and in fair repair so people do not drive off roads.
  - Develop plans for increased enforcement of and education about closed roads.
  - Roads don't go away. Limit any more roads to only those absolutely necessary.
  - Maybe stiffer fines or penalties of some sort for persons using or making illegal trails. Signs and education don't always help; maybe more patrolling.
  - Roads that are developed provide access for fire prevention and fighting.
  - Understand that reducing access concentrates problems and damage into smaller and smaller areas.
  - Address proliferation of roads and the constraints in the federal land manager's road maintenance capacity and budget. This is the real issue.
  - Close redundant roads and heal the scars.
- 3 Don't favor future big investments in recreational amenities – public lands should remain more undeveloped**
  - Developed recreation turns the forest into a city park at the expense of other users.
- 4 Paving/grading roads may be making access too easy in some places**
  - Are we interested in tourism, hunters, etc.? If yes, then roads need to be good for easy access.
  - As an ATV rider, we don't like to ride on paved roads.
- 5 Don't construct "urban facilities" – visitors should expect natural experience**
- 6 Avoid fees for recreation except in already developed areas – others think users should pay for any activity that generates costs.**
  - Unless Congress allocates additional funding for agencies, continue to charge fees for amenities provided.
  - An effort should be made to educate public about how increased funding for forest and BLM lands can be obtained.

- I agree that users should pay for any activity that generates costs. I would like to see something like the NPS Golden Eagle pass be able to be used as payment for some of these situations.
- 7 If amenities need developed to manage increasing visitors, should be adjacent to major corridors and already developed trailheads, parking lots etc. - not in backcountry areas**
- 8 Roads that do get heavy use should have scheduled maintenance, dust abatement**
- 9 Private owners should not block historic access to the forest**
- Difficult to resolve, but a big problem. What legal options are there?
  - Private owners should have every 5th amendment right to block access.
  - Would like to have Forest Service help keep historic roads open.
  - Private property rights are the cornerstone of our Constitution. Property owners should control access.
  - If access was public in previous time, it should remain so; there should be no legal reason why this should change.
  - Private property rights should be protected at all costs. The public has no right to dictate access across private property.
- 10 Places for all user groups enjoy - ATV opportunities help aging population experience the land**
- ATV users should have a place, but the noise does not deserve a place. Require muffler, low noise machines.
  - Noise of motorized users travels for miles. Other users don't interfere with experience quality of motorized users.
  - ATV use is out of control and getting bigger; must be kept to a few roads and trails.
  - Aging population does not appear to be the population that uses ATV's, even though this sounds like a good reason to allow ATV's.
- 11 Concerned about unmanaged off-road use, but any use overdone impacts ecosystem health e.g. erosion from mountain biking**
- Good, well marked trails help eliminate people from going off trail. Good signage is a big help in control.
  - There is no proof or study done that mountain biking creates more erosion/damage to a trail than hiking. Mountain biking should not be singled out here. Anyone using the trail will impact it. In Montezuma County mountain bikers, horse riders and motorcyclist do most of the maintenance aside from the FS.
- 12 Some users want dedicated trails to resolve conflicts among users - Others want to avoid segregation and resolve conflicts, resource damage through strong user ethic**

- Some areas need to be segregated, as some uses are incompatible.
- Leave as multi-use. No one group is more privileged than others. Need to have a more open mind on multi-use trails.
- Separate conflicting uses.

**13 User stewardship especially relevant on west end of San Juan Public Lands – hard to enforce/ limit motorized use in flat wide open areas**

- Motorized vehicle ATV users should financially participate in some way (e.g., an allocation of their license fees) so that dollars are available to enforce use in these flat areas.

**14 User groups continue to help with trail maintenance, educating the public**

**15 Work together to reduce conflicts, stay ahead of major conflicts**

**16 Public lands can't be managed by volunteers only – more agency presence**

- Perhaps more office personnel and staff can be moved to the field.

**17 Manage for the impacts of growth e.g. cattle guards, user friendly gates on trails, controls on dangerous target shooting, hunter clean up requirements, better signage**

**Other**

- Statements 1-7 are all excellent and correct summaries of discussion.
- There are some areas that actually increased use and destruction with more management, e.g., Sand Canyon. Management of recreation areas is not necessarily a good solution. Perhaps maintaining and little less accessibility would have actually managed this area better.

## **HERITAGE RESOURCES**

**1 More funding to improve oversight and completion of contract work on Public lands**

- More funding with real money; not IOU's and Federal Reserve notes.

**2 Foster continued site stewardship – site stewards are doing a good job**

- Have sign-up volunteer program for stewards. FS in the past has nixed this idea.

**3 Don't allow heritage resources to trump local traditions to the extent that ranchers become relics.**

- Ranchers must be better land stewards. Grazing on desert landscapes is wrecking much of the ecosystem.

- 4 Important to retain post-European heritage of grazing, mining, timber rather than placing all the emphasis and research on pre-Puebloan heritage**
- Don't use "post-European heritage"
  - Amen to this statement. The Wildlands Project, IUCN, UN and all related tax exempt foundations are making giant strides with tax payers money.
  - The past 200 years (grazing, mining, timber, etc.) are our culture and should receive the utmost protection. The pre-puebloan craze has become a huge burden at the expense of all other people.
  - Ranchers are a part of this heritage.

**Other**

- I support statements 3 and 4 completely.

**CITIZEN STEWARDSHIP**

**1. Increasing citizen participation in the planning process is beneficial**

- Quit changing the dates! After they have been published.
- Provide signup sheets in each public office for volunteers.
- If you put it into use.

**2. Study group process has been inclusive, brought diverse people together, should be built into San Juan management process on an ongoing basis**

- Fully support public input for planning management policy. Policy formulation should however be finalized by considering scientific data and empirical research-not by opinion
- In many ways the study group process has been productive. However, the sticker icons were overly recreation and extraction based and pitted different user groups against each other, sometimes preventing productive discussion
- Not sure if this is a totally diverse group. Some cannot make all the meetings. But the same can be said for election. Apathy is a bad thing. Maybe diverse among those that show up or can make it.

**3. Encourage BLM/FS to continue with improved volunteer relationships – they play an important role on public lands.**

- Forest Service has not been too encouraging in past

**4. Volunteers should receive more recognition appreciation so other public land users are aware of their contribution.**

- What volunteers are you talking about?
- I don't feel that most volunteers expect more recognition – I speak as a volunteer
- I agree on this, there is not enough recognition for these people

**5. Improve interagency communication – reduce bureaucratically driven time delays for project.**

- While ensuring that appropriate and required environmental analysis is completed
- Not enough can be said. Massive bureaucracies such as decisions and designation that change from year to year or never change – i.e. WSA – how long can you study?
- The agency should not allow special favors for special interest groups. Special meetings versus public meetings delays the process and make it unfair.

**6. Volunteers need educational support for efforts to monitor and protect public lands.**

- Volunteers shouldn't be involved in protecting public lands-they are not educated by resource management experience!
- Volunteers need more than Ed. Support if they are going to monitor they need a lot of ed and experience if they are going to do a meaningful job
- What does this mean. To many volunteers monitoring would be a mess. Seldom do 2 people see the same thing.
- Volunteer know what they are doing most of the time
- I do not understand what this means. To monitor properly does not need to be a volunteer.
- We need to understand that public lands are to be cared for by all who use it not a exclusive job of FS or BLM
- It's the general public that needs education on erosion, littering, etc...

**7. Volunteers shouldn't do professional work – under funding of agency staff could reach a level so as to become a disincentive for volunteers**

- If volunteers are interested in doing some of the work I would rather they do it and save the taxpayers money.

- We certainly do not want anything under funded! We can operate to infinity with fiat currency
- This is an important point – it is very hard to manage volunteers – therefore they should not do critical activities

### **X comments**

- Agree with all of the above and hope that follow through continues i.e. the public continues to be able to participate on all levels.
- Excellent summary statements that represent the comments made.

### **Diversity of Uses/Working Lands**

- 1 Plan inclusive of all uses: logging, recreation, access routes, grazing etc.
  - This should also include “uses” such as wildlife, watersheds, healthy ecosystems etc.
- 2 Current management has been working as evidenced by the values and features we all enjoy.
  - Current management is not working. The resources must be protected and in most cases it means more restrictive management.
- 3 Traditional uses created access that today allows for recreational uses
  - Traditional uses created access that today’s recreationalists enjoy. (At a cost to traditional commodity revenue) So now our recreationalists need to step up to the plate and pay where their use incurs federal costs – no more whining.
  - But with increased population, we may have reached a limit on everyone creating more access.
- 4 Retain grazing permittees, avoid crowding out an important community use
  - This is a major part of the ag community –Good Thing!!
  - I agree, but only if the grazing is done responsibly, respect health of the forest & wildlife. ( Not sure where this comment fits best)
  - Please be sure that each diverse group is required to help manage monetarily or by stewardship, according to their impact on the landscape.
  - Grazing permits and permittees should be expanded by good management planning.

- Retain grazing permittees but make them do more to keep cows out of the creeks and breaking down stream banks increasing the sediment loads— There is too much heavy grazing and not enough vegetative monitoring.
  - Grazing contributes to our local economy, culture. As well as promoting forest health and reducing the fire danger.
  - Have them control the weeds they brought in.
- 5 Educate people about multiple use-avoid management by single use agenda
- Needs to be worked hard.
- 6 Socio-economic focus in plan – acknowledge economic contributions to community: grazing, timber, recreation tourism, hunting etc.
- Needs to be put into practice.
  - The new definition of multiple-use seems to be a token timber sale every few years. Drilling that is so restrictive the oil companies deal off shore or private property. Next seems to be grazing, a token # of cows. Look at what happened to the price of fuel and building materials, food next. The public deserves better.
- 7 Go beyond current plan to address impact population increase on public lands – higher priority on restoration, forest health wildlife conservation, watershed management.
- Need to anticipate increases in motorized/ ATV travel and stop it before it leads to resource degradation.
  - Restoration & land health needs to be top priority in all management decisions.
  - Forest restoration is a mis-nomer—restore to what? The forest does not need to be restored just developed.
  - To allow for increased population we need to allow access. Don't "shove" large numbers of people into small areas. There is room for everyone and everything.
- 8 Logging as tool to manage wildfire risk – don't burn up renewable resources, or degrade scenic assets
- Allow fires to burn when possible- natural process is best.

- Fire use is a better tool for restoring and maintaining vegetative resources than logging & grazing.
- Too much emphasis is put on fire as a management tool. Livestock can work as well in many cases.
- The management plan needs to rethink the fire mitigation needs/ requirements in the P/J woodlands.
- I absolutely agree- Logging in such forms as pre- commercial thinning, timber stand improvement and such measures will go a long way to reducing the heavy fuels and the likely hood of crown fires forming in the areas of ladder fuels.

## 9 Stop proliferation of unauthorized roads/trails and resulting erosion

- “ F” areas must be eliminated. Out of control!
- Authorize some new trails. There are a lot of public lands around Cortez and Dolores and not very many trails.
- Roads should be limited to the ones needed for forest administration and all users (ranchers, recreation etc.) Unneeded roads should be closed.
- Who determines when a road or trail is un authorized? What determines it?
- Need to eliminate areas with unlimited off road use. (current”F” areas, etc.)
- Don’t destroy old roads.
- Definitions of “erosion” need to be determined through scientific observation, not the input of lay persons who may have selfish agendas.
- We need to involve the public comment into the process of deciding which roads / trails are “un-authorized”.
- Need to make better use of areas close to population centers. Get after building more and better trails close to the towns. A huge number of trail miles can be packed into fairly small areas if thought out well in advance.

## 10 Insure oil and gas development is not detrimental to traditional grazing, hunting etc. as has occurred elsewhere in the San Juan Basin.

- Restrict O&G leasing to only those areas that would be compatible and would not degrade any other use or value.
- Some areas are highly protected and others i.e. San Juan Basin are overrun by the oil & gas. What is the sound science other than Oil & Gas needs? Much money to BLM comes from the San Juan Basin . If no Oil & Gas would it be the same.

#### 11 Insure oil & gas, other ground disturbing activities don't proliferate weeds

- The certain element of people that are so concerned about ground breaking activities such as oil & gas, grazing etc. Would do by diminishing their use of such disturbing products.
- There is a current lack of monitoring for weed proliferation and enforcing rules.

#### 12 Protect dark skies

#### 13 Use sound science to make management decisions

- This is very important, to have for a real management decision.
- It appears sound science is not usually used or only portions used and others ignored. What is the sound science of keep in a WSA forever? Let's make decisions or change designations.
- AMEN! Not three different "non- compatible" methods for reading transects. Not clustering transects for the convenience of the monitor. –Dave Fulks, Taylor Mesa Allotment.
- Establish procedure to prevent management works from being appealed / stopped by radical environmental groups.

#### 14 Better policing, stiffer penalties for damaging public land

- I agree! Need more law enforcement on public lands.
- More & active Law Enforcement needed! Spread too thin.
- Education and Information goes much better than a few isolated penalties. Penalties only serve to make others more irritated with the " heavy hand" of government. How many people ever get fined for littering the highways?

#### **Other ;**

- I support 8,9,& 13.

- 7-14 Excellent summaries of the points we made.
- I support 1,3,4,5,6.

## **Diverse Landscapes, Undeveloped Country**

### **1 We have some of World's best landscapes – diversity provides interconnected migration paths/habitat for wildlife**

- Protecting historic rights and uses will help maintain some of these desired outcomes 1 through 8
- The wildlife connection route should not be in any way tied to the “Wildland Project” or similar projects.
- Without the Wildland Project and the United Nations and IUCN.
- Increasing the interconnected nature of these landscapes should be very high on all the Management Decisions.
- This is an excellent summary of our discussions.

### **2 Diverse habitats need protection for future generations – wildlife may need to be its own category – recognize intrinsic value of wildlife**

- Wildlife need wild places.
- We do need some protection but grass, trees and animals can all be harvested to benefit us now while at the same time protecting and managing for future generations.
- Wildlife should be given a higher priority over use of the land for oil and gas development.
- Wildlife should be better managed, too many predators (bears, lions, etc.) DOW should be paying grazing fees also.
- This is an excellent summary of our discussions.

### **3 Better management of sage grouse areas by predator control (e.g. coyotes) - decrease bear population**

- Predators are an important part of the ecosystem. Wolves, coyotes, bears should not be “controlled.”
- We need to recognize natural cycles. There may be “too many” bears now, but that may change naturally.
- Wildlife concerns are related to the total ecology of the area. Please involve DOW and other concerned groups.
- Management of wildlife will/may be counterproductive in maintaining natural selection type areas. Undeveloped should be also unmanaged.
- Coyotes make healthier grouse!
- Allow natural predation to continue!
- Predator control is rarely sound scientifically. Other factors are the real issue.
- Let Sage Grouse manage on their own. No funds should be spent on any one species.

- Man should be recognized as the predator he is and be used for the betterment of all wildlife.
- 4 Protect/maintain undeveloped areas – don't want human dominance everywhere**
- Include protection of natural sounds.
  - Without the Wildlands Project, UN, IUCN.
  - This is an excellent summary of our discussions.
- 5 We value areas where natural processes dominate as contributors to ecosystem health in times of change elsewhere on landscape – these areas attract visitors**
- Natural landscapes are the most valuable renewable resource. Everyone benefits one way or another. Slow degradation that never lets up and is difficult to detect is the greatest long-term threat.
  - This is an excellent summary of our discussions.
- 6 Keep unroaded areas unroaded – some o.k. with temporary ecosystem health treatment access, others want no temporary roads whatsoever**
- There is no such thing as a temporary road. Keep roadless areas roadless.
  - The management plan needs to preserve and protect any and all roadless areas. The increased human pressure will only tend to reduce this component.
  - Roadless areas are a hazard and of little benefit to anyone. Future generations will not value our resources if they are unaware of them.
  - Roads are needed for fire protection.
  - Does this mean to restrict ATV's on unroaded areas?
  - Do they take into account old traditional roads? Many so called roadless areas are not really roadless. Let's not close the ones that aren't roadless.
  - In the undeveloped country one the [that] use [uses] thisland must have Inc. [insurance, incorporation?] to cover any accition [action] or injury old [?] John Doe does not need to pay for
  - Temporary roads never go away. Therefore they are a bad idea.
  - This is an excellent summary of our discussions.
- 7 Some oppose future Wilderness as too restrictive, want WSAs released after 10 years, and are concerned about external influenced such as the Wildlands Project.**
- Increase WSA's and Areas I and II.
  - Eliminate WSA sooner.
  - Please get rid of WSA. It appears to be more of a loophole that its intended purpose. Change to limited use but don't close to previous traditional uses.
  - Call it "wilderness" or "primitive area" or "roadless" area, the important thing is to not let man's permanent presence permeate in all areas. It is the greatest gift for future generations.

- Disagree with this statement – outside influences (corporate, etc.) control the timing.
  - I don't believe that wilderness is too restrictive for many areas. Sometimes it's the only way to protect land.
  - What is the Wildlands Project? Unclear if this is actually a threat.
  - Modify wilderness areas to include mountain biking on designated trails.
- 8 **Some want Theme 1 or 2 with visual protections as a practical way to protect undeveloped country.**  
This is an excellent summary of our discussions.

## **Scenery, Clean Air and Water**

1. **Maintain/promote scenic assets, purchase historic mining sites, e.g., Red Mountain Pass, which avoids condo development, supports tourism economy.**
  - Government already owns too much land. Don't purchase any more.
  - Purchase of private land should be excluded for any reason.
  - I thought that the U.N./ Agenda 21 – sustainable development, that all federal agencies are subscribed to, wanted everyone to live in condos! No private-land purchases, especially with federal currency..
  
2. **Minimize visual impacts of large-scale residential, resort, industrial, oil and gas development – will require federal/local land-use cooperation.**
  - Keep the federal out.
  
3. **Proactive Agency protection of watersheds – fuels treatment and access in key areas such as McPhee watershed.**
  - Restrict motorized access to critical watersheds – which applies to most every watershed in planning area.
  -
  
4. **Road rehabilitation after hunting season to minimize erosion/protect water quality.**
  - Why not just limit travel to avoid the need for rehab? Back to foot/horse, not 4WD and ATV!
  - Better road maintenance year-round. Repair roads rather than just patch..
  - More info to hunters, etc., during hunting seasons on road closures, etc., would be helpful.
  
5. **Protect watersheds in high country including reduced density of deadfall, easier access to build more ponds.**
  - Ponds should include storage capacity.
  - Don't ignore fire damage associated with deadfall.

- Also protect roadless areas (no new roads) which are key to clean water for domestic use.
- Watersheds are best protected by leaving them alone – do not remove deadfall or increase access.
- How would deadfall be limited? It is a natural event. Does this mean more thinning? Unclear!
- Watershed protection also means reduced trees and forage that are depleting the water resources.

## **6. Agency cooperation in protecting Colorado water rights and avoiding inter-basin transfers.**

- BLM and the USFS need to be aggressive and committed in protecting water-dependent uses of the public lands FIRST and SECONDLY where feasible work within Colorado water law. There will be instances where these conflict.

## **7. Support Agency participation in inter-agency discussions that would result in cleaner air in our area.**

- All government agencies should use influence to control power-plant emissions impacting federal lands.
- Dirty air, dirty water, or lack of instream flow is a crime against everyone. Creates a huge debt on our community.
- Clean air should be a major concern and should be managed without political favoritism or all the other efforts will be for nothing.
- General comment on scenery, clean air, clean water: Scenery does not belong here.
- 1-7 are good points and an accurate summary of the discussions I heard.

## Desired Future Narrative – Dolores Dist. Study Group DRAFT 2

Narrative Revised to Incorporate Poster Exercise Additions at 8-4-05 Meeting

NOTE: Changes to Draft 1 based on poster notes are highlighted in blue font

### Diversity of Uses/Working Lands

We are seeking a plan that will provide for a future that is inclusive of all uses harmoniously-logging, recreation, access routes, and grazing, **as well as wildlife, watershed and ecosystem protection**. We support current management has been working as evidenced by the values and unique features that we enjoy on our public lands. We acknowledge that traditional uses have created the access that today allows for many of the recreational uses and illustrates the importance of managing for all uses **and everybody paying their fair share**. We want to retain grazing permittees, and avoid crowding out this use which is important to the community. **Good grazing management and monitoring to protect creeks and wildlife, reduce fire danger, control weeds and protect forest health is the key to retaining and expanding responsible grazing as a key part of our agricultural economy and culture.**

We don't want to see recreation or any single use crowd out traditional uses. We realize the need to educate people about multiple use so that management is not determined on the basis of any single use or agenda. It is important to include a socio-economic piece in the vision that acknowledges how public lands contribute to the economy of local communities for example grazing, timber, recreation, tourism, hunting etc. We need to restore and economic focus to the plan. **The multiple uses must be economically viable and not just token.**

We acknowledge that the Plan needs to go beyond current management to address the impacts from increasing population on public lands. Forest restoration, forest health, wildlife conservation and watershed management need to be given a higher priority in the plan than in the past.

**We need to stay ahead of increasing motorized ATV use to prevent degradation. Some are concerned that if access is too limited, a large amount of use can be concentrated in too limited an area. Others support a strategy that would make better use of areas close to population centers by building more and better trails close to the towns allowing for a large number of trail miles to be packed into fairly small areas if thought out well in advance.**

We need to stop the proliferation of unauthorized roads and trails because of the erosion they cause. **"F" areas, off trail motorized use need to be eliminated. Some emphasize keeping existing roads and making sure that an adequate number of roads is authorized, while others emphasize having the minimum number of roads. Public comment should be open when roads are authorized or de-authorized.**

It is important that we do more to manage for wildfire, and use logging as a tool **to reduce heavy fuels and ladder fuels to avoid crown fires**, so we don't burn up important renewable resources or degrade our scenic assets. **We should also take advantage of natural fire when conditions permit.**

We need to make sure that oil and gas development doesn't become a deterrent to traditional uses such as grazing and hunting as has happened elsewhere in the San Juan Basin by restricting oil and gas leasing to only those areas that would not degrade other uses and values. We are concerned that some areas are protected from oil and gas development while others are overrun, and about the connection between oil and gas development and BLM revenues. We need to make sure that oil and gas development, and other ground disturbing activities don't cause the proliferation of weeds. Weed management needs to be supported by monitoring and enforcement. Oil and gas installations should be required to preserve dark skies.

We would like to see sound science used in making management decisions, that will stand up to appeals and that can be used to make decisions about designations that have long been up in the air such as WSAs. Monitoring methods need to be understood by those affected and designed to be fully reflective of conditions, rather than being structured around the convenience of the agency monitor. One application of science should be the best available research on controlling thistle, and other noxious weeds. We should develop strategies for better policing and stiffer penalties for damaging public lands coupled with information and education.

### **Recreation**

We wish to manage recreation carefully and within the resource capacity so that recreation does not become an extractive industry. We would like to see the plan address the proliferation of roads and the closure and reclamation of redundant roads so we don't have an explosion in the number of roads over the next 20 years. Roads should be limited to those that are absolutely necessary and kept within the parameters of the road maintenance capacity and budget. We recognize that limiting access concentrates impacts on areas that remain open, and that roads play a role in preventing and fighting wildfires. The roads that are kept open should be kept in repair so people don't need to drive off. A plan is needed for increased education, enforcement stiffer penalties with regard to closed roads, and the illegal creation of new roads and trails.

We don't favor a future of big investments in recreational amenities. We would like to see recreation on the San Juan Public lands remain more undeveloped, rather than turn them into a city park. Paving or grading FS and BLM roads may be making access too easy some places on public lands. Construction of new "urban" facilities should not be emphasized. The visitor should expect a more natural experience. We would like to avoid fees for recreation use except in already developed areas.

To the extent that new amenities need to be developed to manage the increasing number of visitors, we would like to see these located adjacent to major corridors and already developed trailheads and parking lots, not in dispersed backcountry recreation areas. For roads that are going to get heavy use, we need scheduled road maintenance and dust abatement so we can better manage for the economic benefits of hunters and tourists.

Some of us feel that private landowners should not be able to block historic access through private land to the forest, others assert that private property rights include the right to control access.

We see the importance of having places for all user groups to enjoy, and that ATV opportunities help and aging population experience the land. However ATV users are not just older people, and as ATV use continues to expand, the quality of other uses is interfered with in particular by the noise, which could be limited by requiring low noise machines, and limiting roads and trails on which ATVs are allowed.

While we are concerned about the impacts of unmanaged off-road vehicle use, we realize that any recreation use, overdone, can impact the health of the ecosystem including damage caused by erosion from mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding and motorcycles. It should also be recognized that riders do most of the volunteer maintenance.

While some of us would like to have dedicated trails to separate uses and resolve conflicts among incompatible uses, others of us prefer not to see the segregation of recreational uses, and like multiple use trails and to resolve conflicts and minimize resource damage through a strong user stewardship ethic. The user stewardship approach is especially relevant on the west end of the forest, since it is hard to enforce or limit motorized use to routes in flat wide open areas. Motorized vehicle ATV users should financially participate in some way (e.g., an allocation of their license fees) so that dollars are available to enforce use in these flat areas. We desire a future in which user groups continue to help with maintenance of trails and educating the public. We recognize that these groups do a lot to help enhance the experience for wide variety of users.

We see a future in which we must work together to manage well. We must be proactive in trying to reduce conflicts between users, ahead of major problems. Public lands can't be managed by volunteers only. We would like to see more agency staff in the field. Perhaps more office personnel and staff can be moved to the field. Some of us believe that uses that cause expenses to manage should pay a fee, and this includes recreation with something like an NPS Golden Eagle Pass. Others feel that recreation management is paid for in the form of taxes and that fees are only appropriate in areas with special amenities such as campgrounds. There is a need for public education and working with congress to allocate the necessary funding.

We need to plan for the future that adapts management in a way that is mindful of growth and its impacts. For example where trails go through grazing areas there should be cattle guards or more user friendly gates. We need to get a handle on unsafe target shooting which threatens the safety of people and livestock. We need to find a way to make irresponsible hunters more accountable for the mess they leave behind. We would like to see more and better signage.

### **Diverse Landscapes**

We have some of the best landscapes in the world. The diversity provides good migration paths for wildlife, the protection of which should be a high priority in making management decisions without undue external influence such as the

**Wildland Project.** These diverse habitats need to be protected if they are to be maintained for future generations. We need to provide wild places for wildlife while taking advantage of the contributions traditional uses and economies can make to forest health, wildlife habitat.

Some of us see control of predators (such as bears, lions, and coyotes) as beneficial to the protection of sensitive species such as sage grouse, and recognize the role of humans in managing wildlife populations. Others see these predators as an important part of the ecosystem and would prefer to see natural cycles and natural selection be allowed operate without controls. Still others oppose focusing on single species and think species such as the sage grouse should manage on their own. There are also concerns about mitigating the impact of oil and gas development on wildlife. Wildlife may need to be its own category and decisions about predators need to be decided by sound science and with the involvement of CDOW.

### **Undeveloped Country**

We wish to protect and maintain undeveloped areas from gradual long term degradation. We don't want to see humans dominate and manage all areas, and recognize the intrinsic value of wildlife. We value areas where natural processes and natural sounds dominate and interconnected wildlife corridors and habitat are protected. We see these areas as contributors to ecosystem health and as some of our most valuable renewable resources in times of change on other parts of the landscape as well as assets which, along with dark skies, attract people to the area.

While we would like to keep the unroaded areas unroaded, some of us are O.K. with temporary access to manage for ecosystem health and reduce wildfire hazards, followed by closure and rehabilitation. Others think that temporary roads never go away, don't want new roads under any circumstances. Still others are concerned that areas considered as roadless actually have traditional roads, and that access promotes public awareness and value of these areas. Some of us oppose future Wilderness designation as too restrictive and would like Wilderness Study Area designations removed if Congress doesn't act on them in the next 10 years possibly by converting them to limited use areas which still allow for practical management of established uses. Others suggest that a mix of Theme 1 and Theme 2 allocations with visual protections and wilderness designation are the most practical means of protection, and should be maximized. Some are concerned about external influences such as the Wildlands Project on local planning, while others don't see the Wildlands Project as a threat. Some would like to see mountain biking allowed in Wilderness areas on designated trails.

### **Scenery**

We want to maintain and promote our scenic assets for the future including the purchase of areas such as the historic mining sites on Red Mountain Pass, which also avoids future condo development. Others are opposed to government acquisition of private property. Preserving scenery is important to our tourist based economy.

We desire a future which minimizes negative visual impacts on our scenic areas resulting from large scale residential, resort and industrial development. We would like to see Federal and local government coordinate to control negative visual impacts resulting from the scale, height and siting of development. Oil and gas activity also needs to be managed to mitigate damage to scenery using directional drilling and other techniques.

### **Clean Air and Water**

We desire a future in which the agencies are pro-active in protecting watersheds especially with fuels treatments and better access to reduce the risk of wildfires that could damage key areas such as the watershed into McPhee Reservoir. We would like to see roads rehabilitated right after hunting season to minimize erosion and protect water quality. [Others would like to see restrictions and information used to limit hunting season damage from occurring in the first place, or year round restrictions on motorized use in critical watershed areas.](#)

We wish to preserve watersheds in high country including the reduced density of deadfall, [reduced wildfire danger](#), and easier access to build more ponds/reservoirs so we have more [storage capacity and](#) water available. We desire a plan that supports Agency cooperation in protecting our Colorado water rights, [while protecting water dependent uses on public lands](#) and avoiding inter-basin transfers.

We wish for Agencies to continue to participate in inter-agency discussions, that would result in cleaner air [by controlling power plant emissions as well as, clean water and adequate stream flows](#) in our area, [to protect these community assets.](#)

### **Heritage Resources**

We would like to see more funding to improve oversight and completion of contract work on the Federal Lands. We would also like to foster continued site stewardship, and see the stewards as doing a good job

We don't want to see heritage resources trump local traditions to the extent that our ranchers become relics, [while recognizing that ranchers have a responsibility for good land stewardship and taking care of fragile desert ecosystems.](#) We believe it is important to retain the heritage of grazing, mining and timber rather than placing all the emphasis on research and preservation of pre-Puebloan heritage.

### **Citizen Stewardship**

We see increasing citizen participation in the planning process as beneficial, [and want to see the input used](#) . This Study Group process has been inclusive, has brought diverse people together and should be built into the management approach of the San Juan Public Lands on an ongoing basis. [We recognize that diversity was limited to those that were willing and able to attend meetings, and attendance was complicated by changes in meeting dates. The recreational and extractive emphasis of icons, may have polarized discussions. There is also a need to supplement opinions expressed with scientific data to arrive at policies.](#)

We encourage the BLM and FS to continue to improve relationships with volunteers who are playing an important role on the public lands. [An attitude of openness to volunteers and sign up sheets in each office will encourage](#)

**volunteerism.** We would like to see these volunteer contributions receive more recognition and appreciation so other public land users will be aware.

We would also like to improve inter-agency communication and reduce bureaucratically driven time delays for project work, **while ensuring required environmental analysis is completed. Meetings should be open and not geared to special interests, and after a reasonable amount of time decisions should be made.**

We believe that volunteers need educational support for their efforts to monitor and protect public lands. We also feel that volunteers can't and shouldn't do professional work, and that under-funding of agency staff can reach a level where it becomes a disincentive to volunteers. **Volunteers can be most effective if they are well managed and given responsibilities that are suited to their capabilities.**