

Study Group Theme Comments for Silverton, Weminuche, and Animas Valley: Columbine Meeting 6/15 and 6/28

Theme Area #: A

Theme 2

Comment

(Comments 8 through 11 all apply to the Silverton area.) The town of Silverton promotes unrestricted ATV use – maybe there should be guides. You also need more enforcement.

8. D. The theme 2 needs to also address improving and protecting water quality.

7. D. Regulations may be appropriate to manage use and protect sites in the area.

6. D. Theme 2 is good because the area needs to have a management plan that is proactive and addresses specific management of the area to protect the historic sites and recreation experience and to address conflicts, such as access through and development of private in-holdings.

5. D. After inventorying routes there should be a process to evaluate whether all the routes are needed (especially since the road network was developed for mining and now used primarily for recreation). Is there proliferation, should some routes be restored to protect historic sites or better manage the recreation use and

4. D. San Juan County has identified and designated many of the roads and trails in this area as county roads. Currently the county has been having meeting and asking the public to bring in information to identify routes for this inventory because there are many trails not identified on the map; need to work with FS/BLM to

3. D. Important to keep road and trail access; don't need to develop new roads, but keep what is existing.

2. D. Area needs to protect access through private track mining claims; if owners develop on their track the BLM should require that existing public access is kept.

1. D. In the Theme 2 important to address recreation, summer cabin use/access and protection of metal mining rights/opportunities.

Agree -- need enforcement of ATVs to get them to stay on the road

While the Theme 2 designation is probably ok, some areas should be designated for heavier recreation use
Existing roads should be Theme 4. Also see comment Numbers, 2-4

Better signage is necessary to protect the landscape from damage. Signs may not be visually appealing, but are better than a damaged environment.

Want to maintain existing sheep grazing permits in Eureka and California gulch; don't change those

Winter non-motorized use, outdoor education and historic values should be emphasized in the '2' area along Highway 550 to Red Mountain Pass. The San Juan and Uncompahgre Forest Plans should be coordinated in this area.

Discourage commercialization of the 4 wheel drive and ATV industry - locals ok but no outsiders using roads/trails to make \$

I like the Theme 2 designation, but signs could educate the public about the great job the BLM has done with restoration and water quality.

There are historic structures in the Stoney Pass area that should be preserved

See if the Colorado Division of Wildlife could assist with enforcement.

If this is made a Theme 2, there should be controls of off-road ATV use, which is damaging the fragile alpine environment.

There is too much dispersed camping because there are no developed campgrounds.

A '2' designation on BLM around the town should emphasize historic values and carefully balance motorized recreation activities with preservation.

All the proposed theme designations look reasonable and appropriate.

In favor of moving from 4 to 2 to maintain beauty and b/c intense uses need to be regulated; ok to have all those users but needs to be regulated

In favor of 4 to 2, b/c of historical values

Making this Theme 2 is a great idea.

Intense ATV use, not staying on road creating erosion and safety issues. Some evidence of law enforcement, but licensing ATVs would help.

Maintain jeeping for elderly persons who can't get out and walk -- (concern that 2 is too low)

Theme Area #: A1

Theme 2

Comment

This area should be a Theme 4 because there are special "active recreation" permits here (Chris George)

Theme Area #: A2

Theme 2

Comment

E. Need to make travel consistent with the Rio Grande NF. There is lots of illegal ATV use coming in from the Rio Grande side. Riders are tempted to link Maggie and Minnie Gulch (there's only a ½ mile between them). The Rio Grande NF allows motorized use up E. Coal Cr. to Cataract Lake. The Rio Grande also allows

Theme Area #: A3

Theme 2

Comment

Use acquisition or easement to protect river area from development to maintain fishing access and avoid obstruction of waterways.

Theme Area #: B

Theme 4

Comment

Would like to keep in motorized for snow mobiles -- I'm a member of the Silverton Snowmobile Club

Keep sheep permits in there, though

Manage the Animas Valley corridor so as to help protect wildlife.

Motorized/Non-Motorized boundaries are vague and unenforceable.

Theme Area #: B1

Theme 4

Comment

Would like to see it be a Theme 3 due to non-motorized concerns/interest in winter (on Molas)

Molas Lake: Motorized and non-motorized uses should be separated and supported by winter enforcement presence. The non-motorized component of the current separation is too small.

Some type of segregation is needed on Molas -- give us one area; give snowmobiles another -- it's not fair, all we get is the hole of the donut around Andrews Lake-- This is the most scenic highway in Colorado that is open in winter and it's over-run with motorized

There is support for non-motorized winter travel here (ie cross country skiing and snowshoeing)and not allowing motorized travel here because currently there is not easily accessible non-motorized terrain. Easily accessible terrain is primarily terrain that is available from the highway.

Theme Area #: B2

Theme 4

Comment

Oppose land trade with Tamarron. Find some other way to acquire in-held parcels. This is a popular recreation area, good wildlife habitat/corridor, has historic toll road, one of the few pieces of NF land that goes all the way across the Valley, and has unique characteristics similar to proposed RNA in # 2 above. Avoid

Theme Area #: C

Theme 4

Comment

Lots of roadside camping. This occurs because the campground is full.

Concerned about dispersed camping impacts past the South Mineral Cr. Campground; specifically resource degradation between the road and the creek in the falls area. Perhaps signage could be improved and physical barriers put in. Or might the Campground need more sites to meet demand?

There is lots of camping past the S. Mineral Cr. Campground and recreation use; 4 makes sense for the whole corridor.

South Mineral is more appropriate for developed camping and is already heavily used.

For South Mineral, 4 is fitting, depending on how it's regulated and managed

Theme Area #: C and B1

Comment

The '4' designation for Mineral Creek and Molas Passl is overly expansive. It should be limited in area – there is much off-road damage from recreational use here. The Federal agencies should consider these '4' designations to be easements within the larger '3' area.

Theme Area #: D

Theme 3

Comment

I recommend a '1' rather than a '3' in this area for the following reasons: roadless, great wildlife habitat, lynx are present, moose, extensive tundra. Private inholdings should be a high priority for acquisition.

Keep livestock in the area

Land trades for in-holdings should be used to avoid development or blackmail, for example in the Ice Lake Area.

11. G. Keep theme 3 and boundary as is because this area has a natural setting with recreation, hiking, skiing, etc. Don't want to see mining development and impacts in this area.

10. G. Like the theme 3 area boundary as it is; don't combine with Theme 2 or make a 5 for mining potential because this is a wild alpine area.

In Theme 3, good as is - don't build more roads

Ensure vehicles stay on roads

Theme Area #: D1

Theme 3

Comment

I. There is mining potential in the Sultan Mountain and Putman Basin area; Theme in this area should retain opportunity for mining. Combine with Theme 2 area.

Theme Area #: E

Theme 8

Comment

Maintain public access to Purgatory Flats and Trail, which is controlled by DMR.

Theme Area #: E1

Theme 8

Comment

Limit the ski resort's expansion into the Cascade area.

All of Cascade Creek up to the headwaters is beautiful and should continue to be preserved.

Reduce size of Theme 8 area to current ski area foot print. The Northern portion should be added to adjacent Theme 3 with the recognition that there is considerable recreation that must be managed in Cascade Creek.

Theme Area #: F

Theme 1

Comment

Domestic sheep are overgrazing the Highland-Mary area.

Sheep grazing is doing resource damage (erosion).

There needs to be better management of grazing, especially sheep-grazing, on various sites on the Weminuche landscape. Much of it has been degraded by grazing.

The Chicago Basin area needs more management of recreation.

Theme Area #: F and D

Comment

West Needles and Lime Creek: domestic sheep grazing threatens health of Bighorn sheep.

Theme Area #: F1

Theme 1

Comment

The development plan at Emerald Lake is not appropriate. If you can do it there, you can do it anywhere..

The development plan is appropriate because of the pre-existing water rights.

If someone wants to build a dam there, they should have to use shovels and horses, not anything mechanized..

Theme Area #: 6

Theme 5

Comment

Change 4 to a 3 and balance between motor and non-motor

Most of the Theme 4 bubble should be narrowed to follow the River corridor and added to Theme 1

Support theme 5 in this area.

Theme Area #: Gen

Comment

Land trades should be used as much as possible to avoid development or blackmail and protect visual quality to the entire landscape.

Print and television ads for off-road vehicles in wilderness areas are contributing to serious environmental damage and should be stopped.

With motorized uses, there is a great need for enforcement by Federal agencies.

In '4' areas and elsewhere, the Forest Service cannot continue to permit conflicting uses (e.g., snowbiles and cat skiing).

We understand the concept of multiple use but when one or more individual uses start to cause damage the Federal agencies should step in to protect the land. Wasn't the Forest Service established to protect?

"Recreation" is an overly broad term – it really breaks down into motorized and non-motorized uses.

Theme Area #: I

Comment

Extend theme 2 to take in these areas because they are all part of the caldera geological formation and related outcrop that lends itself to being managed similarly. The remaining theme 3 area is different geologically and resource-wise.

Theme Area #: J

Theme 2

Comment

Theme 2 RNA makes sense: very unique geologic features and vegetation, limited access.

Theme Area #: K

Theme 8

Comment

BLM should discuss this '8' designation with San Juan County to anticipate unintended consequences for/on private land development around the '8' area. Accommodations should be made for future growth of the ski area.

Skiing is good - -but concern that area will have real estate development

If the current operation fails, this area should be a Theme 5. We are not comfortable with a permanent designation of a developed ski area, but we are ok with the current ski hill operation.

'8' designation is appropriate because this is a contained areas and thus impact is limited. It is good for the local economy. I have concerns about impacts to alpine tundra elsewhere, however.