

DRAFT (as of 7/06/05)

Governmental Water Roundtable Process Desired Outcomes for the San Juan Public Lands Center Plan Revision Process

Introduction:

Initial lists of desired outcomes for the Roundtable Process were prepared by the San Juan Public Lands Center (SJPLC) and also by the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). Michael Preston of the Fort Lewis College, Office of Community Services will serve as the Round Table facilitator. Preston has drafted this integration of the desired outcomes from these three entities organized under the Four Desired Outcomes drafted by the SJPLC. The three entities have agreed on Desired Outcome #3 (water issues organized and understandable). Desired Outcome #4 (issues outside of the scope of the plan revision process) provides a place for issues that can best be resolved outside of the Plan Revision process.

A revised draft, including input from participating Roundtable organizations and others, will be developed for review at the May 10 Roundtable meeting as a springboard for the engagement of meeting participants. The meeting participants will be given the opportunity to validate and add to the list of desired outcomes at the meeting. A more refined version of this draft will be shared with participating entities after the May 10 meeting.

Desired Outcome #1 - The Agencies and Participating Organizations will develop a mutual understanding of key local issues related to water on Federal Lands.

(Some of the following early identified local issues may not be issues that are addressed in National Forest/Public Land management plans and may move to Desired Outcome #4, upon discussion by the Roundtable)

1. Will there be criteria and processes established in the San Juan Forest/Public Land Plan Revisions to evaluate and administer existing and future water usage facilities on the Forest, especially in considering new and renewed Special Use Permits, FERC licenses and Ditch Bill Easements, including any potential for bypass flow requirements? If yes, what ideas can the Roundtable contribute towards shaping the plan? Key issues include:
 - a. Will, and if yes how will, the Plan Revision process address existing water facilities on Forest/Public Land, including those for both irrigation and other uses?
 - b. The process whereby modifications to existing water facilities may be made, or new irrigation and other water facilities may be established, on Forest/Public Land.
 - c. Will, and if yes how will the Forest/Public Land plan revisions address:
 - 1) Facilities on the Forest which were established before the creation of the Forest,

- 2) Changes in the permits for water facilities which are all or partially located on the Forest land but for which there is no change to diversion location or amount, and
 - 3) Obtaining new Special Use Permits for water facilities located all or partially on the Forest land, but for which the diversion is not on Forest land nor are any streams on Forest land impacted.
 - 4) [Additional Items to be added by Steve Harris]
- d. How any operations and maintenance plans that may be required in relationship to Forest/Public Land permits for water facilities on Public Land will be administered and established.
 - e. How the Forest/Public Land plan revisions could incorporate Colorado's In-Stream Flow ("ISF") Program, and how the ISF could be utilized to meet Forest/Public Land resource goals
 - f. The water quality criteria to be utilized by the Public Land Agencies in Plan revisions. Will the standards set by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission or will other standards be used?
 - g. How permitting for uses other than water facilities on USFS land, such as livestock grazing and timbering, interrelates with water issues.
 - h. How water and water-related resources can be protected while still accommodating a broad range of land management activities such as recreation, fuels reduction, grazing, wildlife habitat protection, timber harvest, energy development, water development, and watershed restoration.
 - i. Whether any areas of Forest land remain for study for special designation, such as wilderness areas or wild and scenic river designations.
 - j. Whether there are locations on Federal land needing special emphasis for water-related issues such as municipal watersheds, gold medal waters and areas with sensitive or endangered fish species, special wildlife needs, or a water-quality emphasis. If special water emphasis areas are identified, what are concerns about current and future land management practices? Can the process of identifying special emphasis areas be adaptable enough to target new opportunities as an increased knowledge base develops.
2. Will, and if yes, how will the plans address a collaborative framework for resolving longstanding litigation over USFS reserved water rights in Water Division 7?
 3. How revisions can be sensitive to and address any water compact issues identified by the State of Colorado, and others.
 4. How endangered species issues can be addressed by the Revisions, in cooperation with the State of Colorado and others.
 5. Will the Plans discuss the need for any water use limitations for the Piedra "Wilderness Study" area ?

6. What are the water-related plans of the Roundtable Participants that might affect Federal lands during the life of the upcoming land management plans?
7. Clarification of language in the existing plans:
 - a. The term “favorable conditions of waterflow.”
 - b. “Special Use Permits, easements, rights-of-way, and similar authorizations for use of NFS lands shall contain conditions and stipulations to maintain instream or bypass flows necessary to fulfill all National Forest uses and purposes”. FLPMA 3-47.
 - c. “Water Quality”

Desired Outcome # 2 – The Roundtable process will develop ideas that will be used in shaping the land management plans.

8. Key elements of a policy framework have been put in place that may support the collaborative shaping of San Juan Forest/Public Land Plan Revisions:
 - a. The MOU between USFS Region 2 and Colorado DNR and CWCB dated April 16, 2004 (Workbook). Could the provisions of this MOU be used for the other Resource Management Plan?
 - b. “Four Cornerstones” for managing water resources – USDA discretionary review March 21, 2003 (Workbook)
 - c. Forest Service directives for Ditch Bill easements, dated June 30, 2004 (Workbook).
9. How USDA positions set forth in letter from USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey to Senator Allard, January 19, 2005 (Workbook) might apply to the Forest Plan Revision.
10. How could Plan revisions incorporate the following concepts identified in Colorado’s Statewide Water Supply Initiative designed to identify and meet Colorado’s water needs for 2030 and beyond, as developed by the various SWSI basin roundtables including the SWSI San Juan Basin Roundtable:
 - a. Identifying stream segments or ecological areas for flow prioritization or enhancement;
 - b. Developing an objective and reproducible framework for evaluating, quantifying and prioritizing environmental and recreational goals;
 - c. Building from existing authorities for the CWCB’s ISF Program to implement the concepts of “conserve, protect, and restore” the water dependent natural environment.
 - d. Prioritizing the need for ISF and natural lake protection to coincide with SWSI related plans.
 - e. Using the ISF Program to help provide regulatory stability to assist water suppliers meet permitting requirements; and
 - f. Identifying and utilizing federal and other funding opportunities.

- g. Identifying issues that may need to be addressed in the Plan Revisions related to projects discussed in the SWSI Report.
11. Review the “Pathfinder Project Steering Committee Report” (Workbook), which was prepared as part of the Grand Mesa–Uncompahgre-Gunnison (GMUG) Forest Plan Revision process. How could the Plan revisions incorporate those elements which are determined appropriate for the Revisions?

Desired Outcome # 3 – The roundtable process will help the Agencies produce land management plans and other products that are understandable and organized in a manner that makes finding water-related information relatively easy.

12. Develop an outline of steps to be followed in complying with water related requirements established in the Plan Revisions.

Desired Outcome # 4 – The Roundtable process will identify issues of concern that are outside the scope of the plan revision process that might be addressed through ongoing dialogue in another forum.