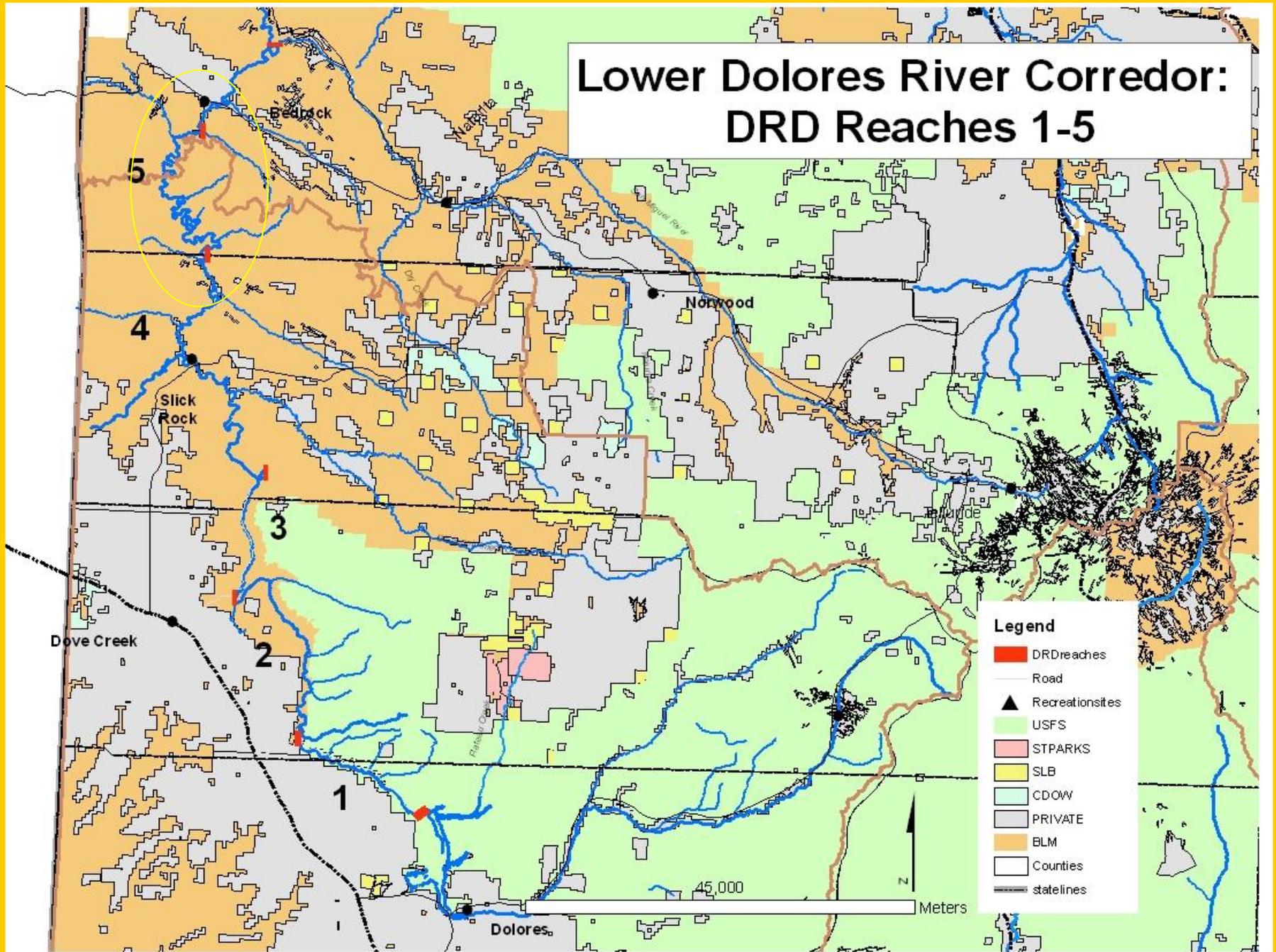


# Reach 5: Current Management, Status and Concerns

Big Gypsum Valley Bridge to Wild  
Steer Canyon

# Lower Dolores River Corridor: DRD Reaches 1-5



# 1990 Dolores River Corridor Plan

## Overall Goals and Objectives

1. Protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Corridor while allowing compatible uses.
2. Maintain or improve the existing quality of riparian and wildlife habitat by identifying and implementing management opportunities and strategies. Determine the present condition and ecological structure of riparian and aquatic communities. Identify areas which provide unique habitat features for species considered relic or unusual to region.
3. Provide full protection to threatened and endangered species. Determine distribution of and identify all areas that provide habitat for federally listed, state listed, and BLM sensitive species to ensure the continued existence of such species and the conservation of their habitats.
4. Coordinate with CDOW for management of wildlife and fisheries resources within the corridor.
5. Protect and enhance cultural resource values by identifying significant cultural resources and paleontological sites and performing necessary documentation. Identify and implement appropriate management actions.
6. Conduct planning for the Dolores River within a “regionalized system of rivers” context.
7. Maximize availability of impounded water released for river management opportunity by coordinating with DWCD.
8. Provide for recreational opportunities in the fall and winter seasons in addition to standard spring/summer activities.
9. Maintain primitive and semi-primitive experience opportunities by limiting and/or distributing visitor use and commercial guide/outfitter use.
10. Protect those public lands which are utilized intensively as recreational sites by exploring the need for and feasibility of withdrawing from mineral entry.
11. Develop recreation sites as prescribed in the Dolores Project ES, the Dolores River Downstream Site Report (as modified) and in accordance with BLM's MOU with BOR and USFS.
12. Minimize potential conflicts with recreational use of public lands by working closely with private landowners and users. Maintain options to develop BOR funded sites if private enterprise chooses to close area to public.
13. Ensure consistent and/or complementary management of adjacent lands, especially in terms of commercial use and facility maintenance/management by coordinating with the US Forest Service and the Lone Dome Mgt. Plan
14. Reaffirm BLM's support for the inclusion of the Dolores River into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System (as per recommendation in the 1976 Dolores River Wild and Scenic River Report). \*\*\*this objective was mistakenly omitted in the original handout\*\*\*

# Reach 5: DRD Science

## Overview

- Dolores Canyon WSA
- Low gradient, Highly sinuous
- Steep canyon walls
- Accessible by foot or boat
- Few to no trout
- Cottonwoods not a major component

## Summary:

- Reduction in high flows reduces habitat for natives
- Riparian changes at Coyote Wash:
  - above - natives, below- tamarisk dominates
- Warm water fish, difficult to monitor.  
Management for “monitoring flows” important.



Jim Siscoe

## Top Research Needs:

- Community composition of fish populations?
- How does sediment input from upstream affect habitat?
- Are strategies for habitat improvements from Big Gypsum Valley applicable to the lower Reach 5?

## Recent Partner Efforts:

- 2007 CDOW fish sampling through canyon
- 2009 Dolores River Restoration Partnership Implementation Plan

# Reach 5: Wild and Scenic Eligibility Classifications

- **Reach 5 (Little Gypsum Bridge to where river exits the WSA) = “Wild”**
- **End of Reach 5 to Bedrock (~2.5 miles) = “Recreational”**
- **Coyote Wash (lower 7.6 miles) = “Wild”**
- **Bull Canyon (lower 1.4 miles) = “Wild”**
- **(upper 4.9 miles) = “Scenic”**
  
- **Recreational.**
  - most impacted by human activity.
  - readily accessible
  - may have had some impoundment or diversion
- **Scenic**
  - no impoundments
  - primitive and undeveloped
  - roads may cross. do not run parallel
- **Wild**
  - most natural
  - no dams
  - shoreline is primitive
  - Generally only trails

## **Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)**

- ORV = a unique, rare or exemplary feature that is significant at a regional or national scale.
- Eligible streams = free-flowing and possess one or more ORV.

# Reach 5: ORVs and Top Management Topics

- Recreation ORVs:
  - Rafting
  - Hike to pools (Bull Canyon segment)
  - Hike sandy wash (Coyote Wash segment)
- Archeology ORV
- Fish ORV
  - Roundtail Chub
- Ecological ORV
  - NM Privet
  - Eastwood's Monkey flower
  - Kachina Daisy (Coyote Wash segment)
- Scenary ORV (cliffs and linear canyons)
- Geology ORV (linear canyons)

- Significance
- Specific Goals/Objectives
- Current Management
- Status/Trends
- Problems/Concerns

# Reach 5:

## Questions for Consideration

- What is your input on the management goals and objectives? Are there goals or management objectives missing?
- What are your groups' ideas about how the DPLO should manage this reach?

Specifically address:

1. Similar to all reaches, should the outfitter and guide permits have reserved campsites?
  2. Should we withdraw lands in the Dolores River Wilderness Study Area from mineral entry? (this means they would no longer be available for oil/gas, uranium or other mineral exploration and extraction) or is a No Surface Occupancy Stipulation enough protection?
  3. Should the Big Gypsum Recreation site be maintained as is, improved, or decommissioned? This is one of the main boat launches servicing Reach 5.
  4. How should the Dolores Office coordinate river management with the downstream offices (Uncompahgre BLM (Montrose) and Grand Junction BLM)?
  5. If (when) tamarisk is removed from the main Dolores and associated tributaries; how active (or passive) should the subsequent restoration efforts be?
  6. How should the illegal OHV access into the Dolores Wilderness Study Area be managed/enforced? Coyote Wash, Bull Canyon, and areas west of Silvey's Pocket are being impacted.
  7. How should the cultural sites currently being impacted from rafters be protected?
  8. Should there be additional interpretation at Indian Henry's Cabin located in Bull Canyon?
  9. According to the 1990 Dolores River Corridor Plan, water managers is to provide a minimum raftable release of 800 cfs. How should the water managers balance both rafting with flushing flows for management of other resources (riparian, fisheries, etc.)?
  10. If you were granted one wish for the Dolores River, what would it be?
- Overall, what management/protection tools might be recommended in these reaches? (Especially "so as not to diminish" the ORV's)



[www.geocommunicator.gov](http://www.geocommunicator.gov)

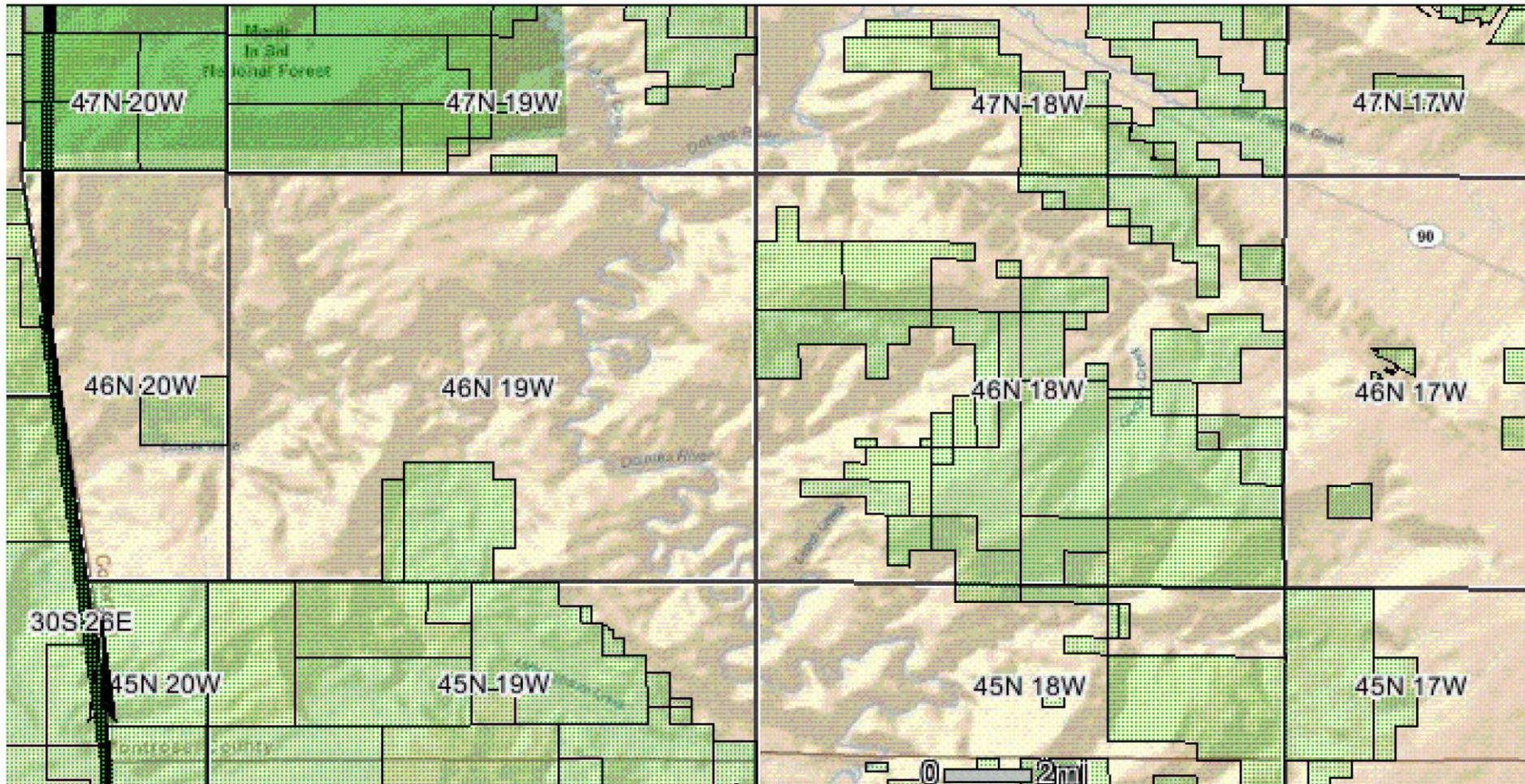


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# Reach 5: Federal Oil and Gas Leases



([www.geocommunicator.gov/blmMap/](http://www.geocommunicator.gov/blmMap/) as of 9/6/09)



9/6/2009



No warranty is made by the BLM for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.

# Reach 5:

## Current Management Objectives (1990 Plan)

- To be essentially free from human evidence.
- Motorized vehicle use prohibited in WSA.
- To maintain high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of others, with not more than 3 group encounters per day between users.
- To ensure an environment which offers a high degree of risk and challenge, closeness to nature, and self-reliance.
- Backcountry use levels and management of resources will be dependent upon maintaining natural ecosystems which allow for natural ecological changes.
- Consumption of renewable resources will be managed subject to the protection of backcountry recreation values.
- Recreational activities occurring in this unit include river running, fishing, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, picnicking, camping, viewing scenery, photography, and nature study.
- Frequency of managerial contact with users is very low.
- No-surface-occupancy stipulations.
- Will be managed consistent with criteria used to recommend “Wild” classification status as per the findings in the 1976 Dolores River Wild and Scenic Rivers Study Report.
- Management actions should consider potential impacts to future Wild and Scenic River Act designation possibilities.
- Continue to manage the Dolores River Canyon Wilderness Study Area consistent with BLM’s “Wilderness Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review” (IMP) until such time as Congress decides upon final wilderness designation or non-designation.

# Rafting

## Significance

- One of most popular and beautiful rafting areas in SW CO.

## Goals and Objectives Specific to Reach

- Isolation from the sights and sounds of others.
- Offer a high degree of risk and challenge, closeness to nature and self reliance.

## Current Management

- Resource Protection
  - Example: Require fire pans and pack out ashes. No collecting of firewood, or driftwood for fires.
- Visitor Services
  - Example: Groups must not enter the WSA portion of the canyon on a Friday or Saturday.
- Permits/Allocation of Use
  - Example: Whitewater Season (April 1-June 18) Total weekly commercial allotment = 4 launches.
- Bureau of Reclamation
  - Example: Manage excess supply for rafting and provide a minimum release of 800cfs as long as possible



Courtesy of Rick Ryan

# Rafting

## Status/Trends

- In 2008 (good rafting year):
  - Gypsum Valley had 114 launches
  - campsites downstream of Coyote Wash.
  - Several reports/complaints around social carrying capacity

## Problems/Concerns

- Social Carrying Capacity of the river: especially in WSA and at Bedrock take-out.
  - Coyote Wash one day there were seven groups camping, all in sight and sound of one another.
  - Complaints about loud parties and drinking, fireworks, and dogs running loose.
- ATV use in Coyote Wash (within WSA)
- Small groups using large campsites.
- Takeout at Bedrock needs improvement.



Courtesy of Rick Ryan

# Hiking in Bull Canyon and Coyote Wash

## **Significance**

Bull Canyon = Pothole pools

Coyote Wash = Flat sandy bottom of the wash, vertical canyon walls = rare hiking experience

## **Goals and Objectives Specific to Reach**

- Isolation from the sights and sounds of others.
- Offer a high degree of risk and challenge, closeness to nature and self reliance.

## **Current Management**

- Lower portion of Bull Canyon is in Wilderness Study Area, and will be managed to retain its wilderness character.
- Resource Protection
- Visitor Services
- Permits/Allocation of Use
- No competitive events within the WSA.

## **Status/Trends**

- Hiking opportunity in the WSA, four-wheel-drive and ATV use on the roads outside WSA.
- Bull Canyon: active uranium-leasing in the vicinity.
- Oil and gas potential is high at the upper reaches of both Coyote Wash and Bull Canyon

## **Problems/Concerns**

- “Social carrying capacity” : can reach “saturation” on weekends and holidays
- OHV use in Coyote Wash

# Archeological Resources

## Significance

- 11,000 years record of human use
- Sacred sites

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach

- None.

## Current Management

### General

- Example: Develop and interpret for public education, enjoyment, and resource protection.
- 1990 Corridor Plan outlined **Interim** management measures, pending completion of field work for inventory, Cultural Resource Project Plan, and a Cultural Resource Synthesis.

### Reach Specific

- Example: Petroglyph panel near Bull Canyon is near high-use campsite; interpret and protect.

## Status/Trends

- As of Toll 1977, 11 sites in Reach 5.
- Inventory, and Plan not completed for lack of funding.
- Funding now secured.

## Problems/Concerns

- Impacts and Disappearance of artifacts
- Limited funding.
- Lack of thorough survey
- Lack of consistent monitoring



# New Mexico Wild Privet

## Significance

- Only known to occur in CO and UT. CO: only in Dolores River Basin.

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach (1990 Plan)

- None

## Current Management (1990 Plan)

### General

- Example: Initiate restoration activity on degraded sites.

### Specific: Riparian

- Example: Manage grazing to maintain or improve the condition of the riparian community.

## Status/Trends

- Common.
- Trends unknown.

## Problems/Concerns

- Requires high water table (Lyon 2006)
- Changes in water table (Lyon 2006)
- Invasives (tamarisk and Russian knapweed)



# Eastwood's Monkey Flower

## Significance

- Only found in canyon lands of the 4 Corners
- BLM Sensitive Species

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach

- None.

## Current Management

- No specific management program.

## Status/Trends

- 2 occurrences in Reach 5: Coyote Wash and Slick Rock Canyon at Anderson Mesa
- Trends: Unknown

## Problems/Concerns

- Difficult to monitor.
- Drying of seeps supporting hanging gardens. Activities such as mining, energy development, water projects etc. could affect water supplies to habitat ([www.natureserve.org](http://www.natureserve.org)).
- Invasive species.
- Disturbance of gardens by hikers.



Photo by C. Crawford (© 1999 from  
Rare Plant Field Guide (Spackman et al 1997).

# Kachina Daisy



Photo by Peggy Lyon

## Significance

- Estimated total number of plants: ~ 7600
- BLM Sensitive Species
- Coyote Wash hosts CO's largest population (out of 3)

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach (1990 Plan)

- None.

## Current Management (1990 Mgt Plan)

- *Example: Inventory and monitor the distribution of federally and state listed species and candidates.*
- However: as of 1993, no longer an ESA candidate species.

## Status/Trends

- 1 occurrence in Reach 5 in Coyote Wash
- Trends: unknown

## Problems/Concerns

- Difficult to monitor.
- Drying of seeps supporting hanging gardens. Activities such as mining, energy development, water projects etc. could affect water supplies to habitat ([www.natureserve.org](http://www.natureserve.org)).
- Invasive species.
- Disturbance of gardens by hikers.

# Roundtail Chub

## Significance

- Absent from ~45% of historical range in upper Co River Basin (Bezzarides and Bestsger 2002)
- BLM Sensitive Species List, State Species of Special Concern.
- Rangewide Conservation Agreement and Strategy by 5 States completed in 2006

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach

- None.

## Current Management

### General

- Example: Inventory aquatic and riparian habitats to the Montrose District Boundary

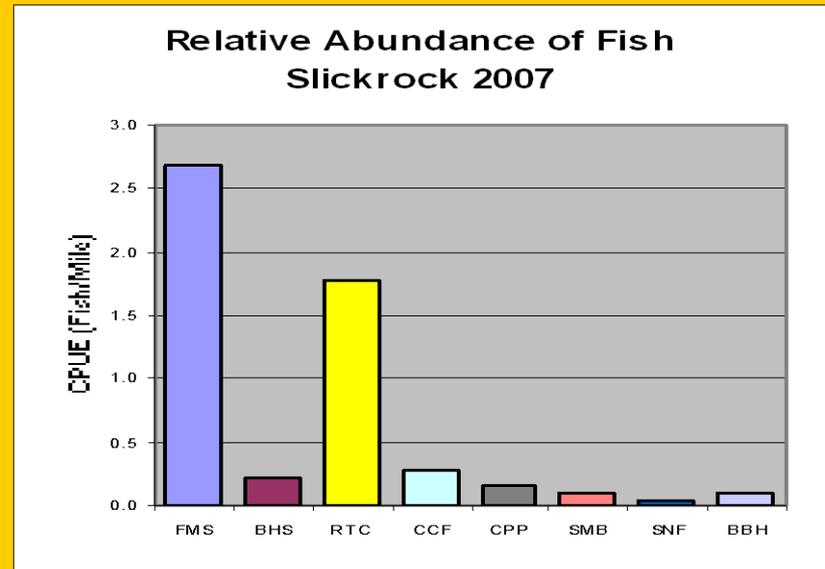
### Specific to Aquatic Wildlife

- Example: Establish permanent monitoring sites.

## Status/Trends

## Problems/Concerns

- Difficult to monitor.
- Where are they spawning and what flows support.?
- Shortened spills and reduced baseflows.
- Predation by non-native fishes.



# Canyon Tree Frog

## Significance

- Colorado Species of Special Concern
- BLM Sensitive Species
- Breed in canyon pools

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach

- None.

## Current Management (1990 Plan)

### General

- Example: Inventory aquatic and riparian habitats to the Montrose District boundary.

### Specific to Aquatic Wildlife

- Establish permanent aquatic habitat monitoring sites.

**Status:** 4 occurrences in Reach 5

**Trend:** Unknown

## Problems/Concerns

- Specialist needs temporary or permanent pools [www.natureserve.org](http://www.natureserve.org).
- Amphibians can be sensitive to contaminants in water.



California Academy of Sciences

# Geology

## **Significance**

- Dramatic Dinosaur Age cliffs.
- Northerly flow
- Speed of the downward cutting of the river.

## **Goals/Objectives**

- Conduct paleontological overview and protect from collection.

## **Current Management**

- No surface occupancy
- Interpret, monitor and protect dinosaur tracks near La Sal Creek Rapid.

## **Status/Trends**

- Geologic time...

## **Problems/Concerns**

- Any?

# Scenery

## Significance

- Scenic values enhance recreation.
- Cliffs, canyons

## Goals/Objectives Specific to Reach

- none.

## Current Management

- No-surface-occupancy stipulations
- No OHV use.
- No gravel removal
- Control incompatible mineral at recreation sites.

## Status/Trends

- No man-made changes.

## Problems/Concerns

- Mineral exploration/extraction at Bedrock rec. site.

# Top Management Questions for Reach 5

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