

**Northwest Colorado Stewardship (NWCOS)
Special Designations and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics Subcommittee
May 31, 2005
Meeting Summary**

Action Items

Keystone	Take Josh Pollock off listserv; add Jacob Smith in his place. [Facilitator's Note: This change has been made.]
BLM/Jeremy	Check to see if the Class I Cultural Overview is a public document. If so, let subcommittee know and tell Keystone how to access it for posting to the NWCOS website.
Vanessa Cameron	Send Rangely Field prairie dog data to Brad Petch, Jeremy Casterson, and Kristi Parker.
BLM/Jeremy	Re-evaluate 6/15 deadline for comments on wilderness characteristics determinations. [Facilitator's Note: This deadline was changed to July 8.]
BLM/Jeremy	BLM will aim to provide NWCOS with its determinations on the assessment of wilderness characteristics on the Citizens Wilderness Proposal (CWP) lands by June 24. [Facilitator's note: This draft meeting summary was posted on June 27, at which time Keystone had not yet received the assessment of wilderness characteristics from BLM. We will notify NWCOS when the information is available.]
NWCOS	Comment on the BLM determinations of the CWP proposals by close of business on July 8. People submitting comments are encouraged to specifically note what they disagree with and provide evidence to the contrary. Given how busy BLM staff are right now, those submitting comments are discouraged from mailing their entire file cabinets of information to BLM unless this is essential.
NWCOS	Submit ALL proposals for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) to Jeremy by June 15. [Facilitator's Note: Due to a mix-up between this deadline and the deadline for comments on the CWP proposals (above), BLM has extended this deadline to July 8.]
BLM	Review Ann Oliver's list of plants and assess possibility and means of protecting them. [Facilitator's note: Since this meeting, BLM has determined that their current approach for addressing rare plants is sufficient and thus, this issue will not be a main focus of the RMP. BLM welcomes a discussion about rare plants with interested participants outside of NWCOS subcommittees.]
Keystone and NWCOS	Hereafter, refer to this subcommittee by its new name, Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs), in order to bring clarity to its focus on resources not on management tools (such as special designations).

Attendance

David Blackstun (intermittently), Steve Bonowski, Vanessa Cameron, Jeremy Casterson, Jeff Comstock, T. Wright Dickinson, Rick Hammel, John Husband (intermittently), Suzanne Jones, Jim May, Wes McStay, David Morris, Reed Morris, Claire Moseley, Ann Oliver, Brad Petch,

Marianna Raftopoulos, Beverly Rave, Rob Schmitzer, Renee Taylor, Jane Yazzie, Kristi Parker Celico, and Heather Bergman.

Agenda Items (Each item is discussed below.)

- Criteria for alternative development
- Data needs
- Discussion of alternatives document
- Next steps

Criteria for Alternative Development

The group reviewed a list of criteria that participants were encouraged to keep in mind during their discussion of alternatives for the Resource Management Plan (RMP). The approved the following list (which includes the group's additions):

- Goalposts as wide as possible, within reason (legally possible)
- Combination of alternatives represents full range of options
- Each alternative is implementable/affordable (though the group agreed that something must be obviously unaffordable to not be considered)
- Range of alternatives recognizes the specific unique areas within the Little Snake Resource Area (LSRA) and supports the uniqueness while allowing for multiple use. (Management for "Best/Predominant Use" of an area, and determining what other uses can be accommodated.)
- Range of alternatives incorporates adaptive management, when appropriate
- Follows all existing laws about valid existing rights, multiple use, environmental laws, etc.
- Must be an RMP-level decision

The subcommittee agreed not to assume that all existing policies were written in stone, because some of these policies (or certain aspects of them) may be negotiable. The group also discussed the extent to which the RMP can drive funding for the LSRA (i.e., if something is written into the RMP, will its inclusion assure that funds are provided to fund it). When John Husband was consulted on this, he said writing something into the RMP will not guarantee funding for it, but that it will be easier to do something later if it is in the RMP, even if funds for it are expected to come from outside of BLM (i.e., from stakeholder partnerships).

Data Needs

Jeremy Casterson of BLM reviewed BLM's criteria for creating an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). There are three criteria that must be met: relevance, importance, and need for special management action to protect special resources. Any ACEC proposal that meets relevance and importance criteria will be included in at least one RMP alternative, and its effects on other resources will be included in the impacts analysis. There is no minimum or maximum size for an ACEC. Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and Outstanding Natural Areas (ONAs) are considered types of ACECs. At this point, the only ACEC proposals to be included in the RMP are those for a sage grouse ACEC and a prairie dog ACEC, though BLM encouraged NWCOS/members of the public to submit proposals for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern that they would like considered in this draft RMP by no later than June 15. [Facilitator's Note: This deadline was later moved to July 8, due to a mix-up between this deadline and the CWP comment deadline.]

Discussion of Alternatives Document

The group brainstormed a list of areas/values that might need special protection, but struggled with how to achieve that protection. Ultimately, it became clear that the subcommittee has difficulty moving forward because “special designations” are a management tool and not a resource (unlike the topic areas of other subcommittees, such as energy and vegetation). This naming problem causes the group to focus on special designations as the only way to protect special resources, when there are in fact other management tools available. For this reason, the group decided to rename and reorient itself. From now on, both the name and focus of this subcommittee will be Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs). This name change will allow the group to use any of the variety of management tools available to protect any areas they think merit special attention.

The group did make some changes to the alternative matrix during its discussion. The changes that the group agreed upon, as well as some ideas that were discussed but not agreed upon, are recorded in a revised version of the alternative matrix, which is available at <http://nwcoss.org/Resources/BLM%20Documents/Draft%20Alternatives%206-01-05.pdf> or at <http://nwcoss.org/44201.html> (in the middle of the page, under “Alternatives”).

Next Steps

[Facilitator’s Note: The following discussion of Next Steps actually occurred at the Travel and Recreation Management Subcommittee Meeting on June 1, which was the last in a series of subcommittee meetings held between May 27 and June 1. It is repeated here because it applies to all subcommittees.]

Prior to discussing what the next steps for the subcommittees should be, the group briefly shared their ideas on what’s going well in subcommittee meetings and what could be changed. The list of what’s going well included getting to the substantive issues, having Booz Allen Hamilton represented in meetings, having John Husband and BLM staff in meetings, making progress in discussions, having a better understanding of how BLM writes RMPs and how hard it is to do so. The list of areas where change might be useful included getting things done faster, stretching out BLM’s deadline, working in smaller groups, keeping momentum, prioritizing topics, giving specific topics for discussion to participants in advance, being more goal-oriented, and possibly doing a pretend land assessment to increase awareness.

The group agreed to have Keystone propose a series of smaller working groups to the Planning Committee. The idea is that smaller groups could tackle specific issues and then bring their work product back to the full subcommittee for discussion. It was believed that this might help the group to accomplish more and proceed at a faster pace. After this discussion, the group agreed to a revised meeting schedule, in which subcommittees will be meeting again on July 6 and 7. Exact scheduling details will be distributed to NWCOS as soon as they are available.