RC Ref#150(L-15)

BLM 2000

Record of Decision

The Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan

January 2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
TAOS FIELD OFFICE

BLM/NM/PL-00-004-1220

REPLY REFER TO:
1617 (NM-020) P

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Taos Field Office
226 Cruz Alta Road
Taos, New Mexico 87571

La Jara Field Office
15571 County Road T5
La Jara, Colorado 81140

January 4, 2000

Dear Reader:

This document contains the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final Rio Grande Corridor Coordinated Resource Management Plan (Final Plan). The Final Plan (available in late January 2000) provides management guidance for public lands along the Rio Grande in New Mexico (Taos Field Office) and in Colorado (La Jara Field Office), and also amends the Taos Resource Management Plan. The plan provides a vision for managing the natural resources in the corridor from La Sauses, Colorado to Velarde, New Mexico, and is the result of over 5 years of work with individuals, community groups, the outfitting industry and federal, state and local governments. The Final Plan is a refinement of the Proposed Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement published in August, 1998.

Copies of the Plan will be available in late January upon request, however, we encourage you to view the document online at ***www.nm.blm.gov*** or at local public libraries to help conserve our natural resources. To request a copy, contact either:

1) Taos Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 226 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, New Mexico 87571 (or call 505-758-8851);

2) La Jara Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, 15571 County Road T5, La Jara, Colorado 81140 (or call 719-274-8971).

The planning process for the Rio Grande Corridor Coordinated Resource Management Plan is concluded with the signing of the Record Of Decision approving the Taos Resource Management Plan amendments and the activity-level management direction outlined in the Final Plan.

Thank you to those who participated in the planning process. There will be many opportunities for public involvement in implementing this plan. Continued public involvement in implementing planned actions will allow us to effectively manage the public lands and resources in the Rio Grande Corridor.

Sincerely,

M. J. Chavez 1/4/2000
M. J. Chavez — Date
State Director, New Mexico

Ron Huntsinger 1/4/00 — Carlos Pinto 1/4/2000
Ron Huntsinger — Date
Taos Field Manager

Carlos Pinto — Date
La Jara Field Manager

RECORD OF DECISION

The purpose of this document is to approve the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decisions to amend the Taos Resource Management Plan, as well as decisions to manage the public lands along 94 miles of the Rio Grande and some 42.7 miles of its tributaries. The plan includes 123,750 acres of public lands within the BLM's La Jara Field Office (formerly San Luis Resource Area) and Taos Field Office in south-central Colorado and north-central New Mexico.

DECISIONS AND RATIONALE

1) New Mexico State Director - The decision is to approve Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendments described in the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan. There were no changes, other than minor clarifications, to the RMP amendments described in the Rio Grande Proposed Plan and Final EIS for the Taos Field Office. Protests received on the Rio Grande Corridor Proposed Plan did not provide any new information or data that would lead us to the conclusion that there were errors in the proposed amendments.

2) La Jara Field Manager - The decision is to select and approve the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan for the La Jara Field Office. No protests were received, and there were no changes to management actions described in the Rio Grande Proposed Plan and Final EIS;

3) Taos Field Manager - The decision is to select and approve the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan for the Taos Field Office, with a few modifications or clarifications to the Rio Grande Corridor Proposed Plan as follows that were based upon informal protest responses received in October, 1998:

BOATING MANAGEMENT

Outfitter percentage cap - There will be no cap on the percentage of available allocation any outfitter could have. The proposal to limit the percentage of total allocation that any 1 outfitter could obtain on a segment has been dropped, since no evidence has been presented that would suggest at what percentage a competitive market would be compromised. Consolidation of existing permits will be handled on a case-by-case basis, following existing permit transfer guidelines.

Firepans - Only boaters planning to have an open fire need to carry a firepan to contain the fire. There is no need to carry a firepan if a fire is not planned.

Thresholds - The prescriptions appended to thresholds ("x" days for 2 consecutive years) was deleted for all river segments. BLM will monitor boating use throughout the season, and work with outfitters, private boaters, residents, and other recreation users on a recurring basis to determine whether adjustments can/should be made to resolve new concerns, or better meet the guidelines established for each segment.

Outfitter Multi-segment Use - Permits issued to outfitters specify the river segment in which they are allowed to conduct business. Four river segments will be allocated (La Junta, Taos Box, Orilla Verde (through Pilar only) and Racecourse). For trips that originate in one segment and continue into another segment, launch requirements for both segments must be adhered to (for example, a Taos Box trip continuing through Pilar must use one of their allocated launches to continue down river). The only exception is for authorized La Junta segment outfitters that continue into the Taos Box segment after 12:00 p.m; use continuing through the Taos Box in this situation will not count toward historical use in the Taos Box, since this use will generally fall outside the allocated time period.

Ute Mountain segment (launches) - 2 launches per day will be allowed, whether private or outfitted, on a reserved first-come basis. The total number of people per day can not exceed 16. Only 1 launch can be an

overnight trip. This change recognizes that the majority of trips on this segment have small group sizes (generally less than 6 people), allowing more flexibility for day and overnight use. The total number of people in the segment (32 people per day) would not change.

Razorblades and Upper Box (launches) - 1 launch per day will be allowed for an overnight trip. No additional restrictions will be placed on private/outfitted boating until monitoring shows that daily use exceeds 32 people per day. This change recognizes that the majority of trips on this segment have small group sizes (generally less than 6 people), allowing more flexibility for day and overnight use. The total number of people in the segment (32 people per day) would not change.

La Junta (private launches) - 1 launch for an overnight trip would be allowed per day, all overnight trips must be reserved in advance. No additional restrictions would be placed on private boating until monitoring shows that daily use exceeds 32 people per day. This change recognizes that the majority of trips on this segment are day trips and have small group sizes (generally less than 6 people), allowing more flexibility for day and overnight use. The total number of people in the segment (32 people per day) would not change.

La Junta (outfitter launch size) - Outfitted groups would be limited to 2 launches of up to 16 people each per day, guides included. Of the 2 launches, 1 may be used for an overnight trip, with no more than 16 people (passengers + guides), and must be reserved in advance. Outfitters can occasionally exceed the group size on day trips through use of a pool (up to a maximum of 21 person group size, 10 times total per season, first-come basis). Limiting group sizes to 16, including guides, helps preserve the wild character of the Rio Grande between Lobatos and John Dunn Bridges. In this part of the canyon campsites are small in size and number. Restrictions on group size and the number of encounters per day were originally developed in the 1984 River Management Plan, based upon a primitive Recreation Opportunity Class (ROS). Commercial and private boating activities mixed with shoreline use by hikers and fishermen all contribute to the type of experience. This subjective process is commonly used for management of designated wilderness or management for a wilderness-type experience. Since group sizes on this segment rarely have exceeded a total of 16 in the past, this should still provide ample opportunities for the occasional larger group for day trips.

Taos Box (pool) - Outfitters can occasionally exceed the day-use group size through use of a pool of 15 (up to a maximum of 40 passenger group size, on weekdays only, first-come basis for booked trips). The addition of a pool adds flexibility for outfitters to accommodate occasional larger groups on weekdays. Private boating use has historically been low during the weekdays. This pool may be eliminated or modified if monitoring shows a need to reduce congestion.

Taos Box and All Lower Gorge Segments (overlimit fees) - Outfitters would be allowed to book an extra 4 passengers on the Taos Box and all Lower Gorge river segments. A fee would be imposed to remove any profit incentive, and the extra passengers would not be counted towards an outfitters' historic use. Not counting such use into an outfitter's historic use data base further removes any incentive for using this measure. This overlimit may be eliminated if monitoring demonstrates a need.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (shoulder seasons) - Shoulder seasons will extend from March 1 to May 14 and August 15 to October 14. Extending the spring shoulder season to include the month of March gives more opportunities to the public during school spring vacations. During public meetings it was noted that the public was willing to accept an extended shoulder season in exchange for minimal winter use.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (summer season) - Summer season extends from May 15 to August 14, and the Labor Day weekend. Extending the summer season until August 14 allows outfitters to include a month (July 16-August 14) that represents 20% of their overall use. By including Labor Day weekend in this season the last busy weekend of the summer provides the public with more opportunities without significant disruptions to residents.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (winter season) - Number of passengers would be limited to 50/week from October 15 - February 28. This restriction gives the residents a season in which very little outfitted use would occur and provides for the occasional outfitted trip. This should not negatively impact outfitters or residents as there is virtually no demand for use during this period.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (time of day) - Outfitted trips may pass Orilla Verde Campground only between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. This adjustment has been made to resolve protests from 3 outfitters who provide trips to customers not wanting a whitewater float trip. Since they may be launching from Taos Junction Bridge or Lone Juniper as late as noon, they need the 3:00 pm cutoff to accommodate these trips.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (launches, summer) - Allowable outfitted passenger numbers will be 300 per day during the summer season when river flows are 2000 cfs or less. The Orilla Verde/Pilar and Racecourse segments will initially have a combined pool of 50 on weekend days and 100 on weekdays, available on a first-come basis and only with confirmed reservations. This pool replaces outfitter trading and could be adjusted in size on an annual basis. Each outfitter will be allowed a total of 32 passengers per day with a maximum of two launches per day per outfitter. Group size will be limited to 32 passengers, except where augmented by the pool. Augmented launches may not exceed 50 passengers on weekends and 90 passengers on weekdays. Where augmented launches exceed 40 passengers, these launches must be staggered in 10 minute intervals. When thresholds are exceeded on the Orilla Verde through Pilar segment and/or the Racecourse segment, both segments would be allocated together due to the interconnectedness of the segments. When river flows exceed 2000 cfs an additional 1 launch per outfitter may be relocated upstream from Quartzite. This would change the allowable outfitted passenger numbers to increase to 450 per day when river levels exceed 2000 cfs. Changing the number of allowable outfitted passengers floating through Pilar to 300 when flows are under 2000 cfs and 450 when flows are above 2000 cfs allows for more opportunities for outfitters and the outfitted public. Residents were willing to accept more outfitted use during the summer season in order to have a winter season with very little outfitted use, a quiet zone and outfitted use restricted to a 6 hour period daily. The use of a pool will increase the public's flexibility through Pilar for occasional convention groups.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (launches, shoulder) - No more than 120 outfitted passengers per day would be allowed to float through Pilar during the spring and fall shoulder seasons. This additional use provides additional opportunities for the public while maintaining a relatively low level of use travelling through the community of Pilar.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (launches, winter) - Between October 15 and February 28/29, 50 outfitted passengers per week would be allowed to pass through Pilar. Outfitters would be able to accommodate the occasional winter trip without significant impacts to the residents, other users or wildlife.

Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (allocations) - If the prescribed daily limits are exceeded, the corresponding days (adjusted annually for the day of the week) would be allocated for the following 5 seasons for both the Orilla Verde/Pilar and Racecourse segments, basing percentages upon that year and the previous 4 year period. Although it was stated when this planning effort began that allocations would be based upon 1990-1994 data, it was determined that the use of more recent data would be appropriate to reflect the current situation. In addition, some of the river use data reported to BLM has been found to be in error. Outfitted passenger numbers allowed to travel through the Orilla Verde/Pilar segment are included as a part of the total numbers allowed in the Racecourse allocation. Since all trips passing through Pilar will share the river with boaters downstream as well as the takeout at County Line the passenger numbers for these two river segments are inter-related. If passenger numbers through Pilar were not part of the Racecourse allocation, then the Racecourse carrying capacity (described below) would be exceeded on a regular basis.

Racecourse (carrying capacity) - The carrying capacity of the Racecourse is currently assumed to be 1,050 boaters per day, 600 of which are outfitted passengers. When outfitted use exceeds 600 passengers per

day, specific allocations will be made to each outfitter for those days for the following five years to ensure that the carrying capacity is not exceeded. Carrying capacity is based upon the amount of congestion on the river and physical space available at the launch and takeout areas. A maximum of 150 boaters per hour for seven hours results in 1,050 boaters per day. Outfitted boating is limited to the 7 hour window but private use is not. The acceptable level of congestion varies considerably among river users. Based upon high-use days in the past, 150 boaters per hour allows for a safe level of use, but this level approaches congested conditions that are not acceptable to some private boaters and anglers. The Final Plan acknowledges that varying levels of recreation use and experiences will be accommodated throughout the corridor, and the Racecourse is considered to be the segment that can allow the greatest degree of use with the fewest conflicts. It is possible that more efficient use of launch points will reduce the perceived level of crowding. By allocating use when numbers exceed 600 outfitted passengers per day, problems can be addressed before they escalate. Outfitters acknowledged the need to adjust use at Quartzite to accommodate increased use from upstream launches.

Racecourse (allocations) - See Orilla Verde/Through Pilar (allocations) section above.

Racecourse (pool) - Most commercial launches will be limited to 40 passengers, however occasional larger groups up to 90 passengers could be accommodated through the use of the following: a) combined launches, where an outfitter may use all of his/her daily allocation in one launch on weekdays only, will be encouraged during the noon launch window; b) using the BLM pool, where BLM would administer a pool of 50 passenger spaces on weekend days and 100 on weekdays (combined total for trips through Pilar and the Racecourse). This pool would be used to enlarge groups or for additional launches. By allowing outfitters to enlarge launches through the use of combined launches and a pool system, they are given more flexibility to book occasional large school groups or conventions.

Racecourse (launch window) - Outfitted launches would be allowed only from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. This launch period assumes concentrated commercial use for 7 hours and then leaves the river to other users such as private boaters, anglers etc. Some users would be displaced altogether if high use extends into the late afternoon or evening hours. Since few private boaters or other river users occupy the river sites during the 8:30-9:00 am period, impacts from extending the window would remain low.

Racecourse (facilities) - The Pilar North Parking Area will be re-designed and landscaped with improved changing and toilet facilities only if the expanded parking area at the Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center can not accommodate the load.

Bosque (high water trips to Lover's Lane) - During high water periods when river levels exceed 2000 cfs between May 15 and August 14, outfitters will be allowed to extend one Racecourse per day trip into the Bosque segment as far as Lover's Lane. Group size would correspond to the Racecourse segment group sizes. These trips would not count toward the Bosque daily limit of 50 passengers. Approximately 50% of all Racecourse use during this high water period would use Lover's Lane as a takeout, except at river levels over 4000 cfs. Flows over 4,000 cfs restrict passage at the Pilar Bridge, and as a result, most groups launch at Quartzite rather than in Orilla Verde, and may take out at Lovers Lane. By specifying the river level of 2000 cfs as the beginning of high water, residents are assured that outfitted trips will not use this part of the Bosque until there is a real need. Flows on average (3 weeks per year) do not frequently exceed 2000 cfs.

Bosque (County Line to Embudo Station or Embudo South, main season) - Except for high water use taking out at Lover's Lane, outfitted use between County Line and Embudo Station or Embudo South would be limited to 50 passengers per day between March 1 and October 14. All trips for outfitters authorized to use this segment (except for high water trips originating above County Line and ending at Lovers Lane) would count toward the daily limit of 50 passengers. The use season of March 1 to October 14 allows outfitters opportunities to run a limited amount of passengers daily from the school spring break period in March through the busy summer season and into the fall foliage time. The 50 passengers per day limit assures local residents that boating use will never reach high levels.

Bosque (County Line to Embudo Station or Embudo South, winter) - 50 outfitted passengers per week will be allowed in the Bosque segment from October 15 to February 28/29. This winter season provides a 4 month period with very limited outfitted boating, since public demand during this period is extremely low.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Editorial Clarification - The Proposed Plan identified incorrect Visual Resource Management Class (VRM) acreage on page 2-15. The correct acreage, as properly described on page 2-40 of the Proposed Plan, is 4,789 acres for Class II and 10,716 acres for Class III.

Editorial Clarification - The Proposed Plan carried forward the VRM classifications identified in the 1994 Amendment to the Taos Resource Management Plan. The Final Plan provides further clarification of the VRM prescriptions for this area. If acquired, the area on the rim north of the Arroyo Hondo drainage and bounded by NM-68, the east rim of the Rio Grande Gorge and private lands to the north will be managed under VRM Class I guidelines to maintain critical scenic values. All campgrounds and day use facilities are below the rim, and will be managed as VRM Class III. The remainder of the recreation area will be managed as VRM Class II.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

The BLM will study the interaction between streamflow and riparian-aquatic habitat. The Taos Field Office and La Jara Field Office will continue to work with BLM's National Applied Resource Science Center to study stream channel morphology and flows in order to assess the habitat's ability to provide for fish and wildlife resources, consistent with goals of state wildlife agencies, and determine where in the planning area these goals can be reasonably achieved;

BLM will take the lead to initiate a water resources group which will be encouraged to meet annually, composed of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, Colorado Division of Water Resources (Division 3), Colorado Division of Wildlife, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council, Rio Grande Corridor Advisory Committee, Rio Grande Restoration, New Mexico Environment Department, Colorado State Health Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U. S. Geological Survey to explore water quantity and quality issues in the planning corridor.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Route 132H will remain open if state lands underlying the route are acquired, since Route 132J (formerly 132C east) does not connect with Route 132H as originally depicted on Map 7 of the Rio Grande Corridor Proposed Plan. Route 132H was proposed to be closed if state lands were acquired due to erosional concerns. BLM will work with user groups to implement best management practices for this route to mitigate erosional concerns. Route 132J will be closed, for the lack of a destination and watershed protection.

Route 132K was re-labeled as a separate segment from Route 132H and will remain open for mining claim and recreational access.

BLM will pursue a right-of-way to provide for public access to the parking area near the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Rio Embudo. This action clarifies the intent to allow for public use and enjoyment of this area, while protecting sensitive riparian resources from off highway vehicle impacts.

CASUAL USES

The Final Plan does not contain specific prescriptions for commercial hot air balloon activities. A separate environmental analysis of the proposals related to special recreation use permits for commercial hot air balloon operations is ongoing. Additional public input will be requested prior to any decisions on these proposals.

ALTERNATIVES

Four alternative management plans were described and analyzed in the Draft Rio Grande Corridor Plan (Draft Plan). These alternatives resolved nine planning issues that were identified by BLM and the public. Each alternative presented a different management strategy ranging from an emphasis on resource use to a priority for environmental protection. Under Alternative A, the no action alternative, multiple-use management would have continued in the same manner as currently exists. Alternative B would have provided an emphasis on sustaining or improving biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. Alternative C would have given preference to developed recreation opportunities and other resource uses. Alternative D, the preferred alternative, was designed to maintain and enhance ecosystem health while optimizing recreational opportunities and other resource uses.

Following public and internal BLM comments on the Draft Plan, several changes were incorporated to formulate the Proposed Plan/Final EIS. The decision is essentially the Proposed Plan described in the Final EIS, with a few modifications that resulted from protests received on the Final EIS.

ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER STUDY

In addition to the four alternatives described in the Draft Plan, two additional proposals were considered but eliminated from further analysis:

1) The Colorado Environmental Coalition (CEC) submitted a "Citizens Management Alternative for protecting the biological diversity and ecosystem health on the Rio Grande River Corridor". Many of the CEC proposals were included in the scoping results and were considered during the development of the four alternatives. Other proposals that were considered but eliminated were outside the scope of this planning effort.

2) The Rio Grande Restoration submitted a "Proposed Streamflow Enhancement Amendment" to the Rio Grande Corridor Plan. The amendment proposed that BLM immediately conduct instream flow studies as a basis for federal reserved water rights claims, and provide for augmentation from the Closed Basin Project in Colorado of late summer streamflows on the Rio Grande. The proposal as written would have had detrimental thermal impacts to cold water species, and was eliminated. BLM instead has committed to continue to work with water managers from Colorado and New Mexico to develop long-term solutions to the complex water management issues, and to work with BLM's National Applied Resource Science Center to obtain information on the relationship between streamflow and riparian and aquatic habitat.

MITIGATION AND MONITORING

Some decisions in the Final Plan will require additional consideration of affected resources prior to implementation. All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that adverse impacts are mitigated in a manner consistent with the prescriptions in the Final Plan. These prescriptions may be supplemented during environmental analysis for site-specific actions. Monitoring is discussed is specific resource sections of the Final Plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public opinion has been thoroughly sought since the inception of this plan in 1994. Public participation efforts were described in detail on pages 5-4 and 5-5 of the Proposed Plan. A summary of that public involvement process, as well as the inclusion of an additional opportunity to provide input that is not a normal part of the process, the informal protest period, follows:

- Preparation of a public participation plan;
- Federal Register notices of intent and availability;
- Numerous formal and informal meetings with stakeholders, with many of the meetings conducted by contracted facilitators;
- Interaction with citizen work groups in communities near the Rio Grande;
- Planning updates and informational mailings;
- Formal public hearings and a total of 177 days (including 2 extensions) to review the Draft Plan/EIS;
- Numerous briefings with neighborhood associations and local, county, and state agencies;
- A 30-day protest (for RMP-level actions) and informal protest (for Activity-level actions).

PROTEST RESOLUTION

Four protests and 32 informal protests were filed during the protest period that ended October 5, 1998. All of the protests and informal protests were considered in the preparation of this Record of Decision. There were no changes added to the Final Plan based on the four protests that were forwarded to the Director of the BLM for resolution. The protests dealt only with RMP-level actions, while the informal protests related to activity-level actions. Several changes were included in the Final Plan based upon the informal protests. The majority of the informal protests addressed boating management.

BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Throughout the process BLM has consulted informally and formally with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended. The BLM prepared a Biological Assessment (integrated within the FEIS) on the probable affects of implementation of the actions identified in this plan on threatened and endangered species for review by the USFWS.

Following that review, USFWS issued a biological opinion on BLM's Biological Assessment. The Service provided concurrence with the BLM determinations of "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" for endangered or threatened species occurring or potentially occurring within the planning area. This completes the formal Section 7 consultation process.

CONSISTENCY

There are no known or identified inconsistencies with the plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies and of state and local governments. The 60-day Governor's consistency review period ended September 30, 1998. No inconsistencies were identified. A concern was identified by Walter Bradley, Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico relating to the economic impact of reducing the number of outfitters providing recreational services. This issue was resolved upon further clarification to Cecilia Abeyta at a BLM Resource Advisory Committee meeting that any reduction in the number of outfitters would be through attrition only, and that losses (up to the defined carrying capacity) would be absorbed by other outfitters.

CONCLUSION

The Record of Decision constitutes the Bureau of Land Management's final action on approving the Taos Resource Management Plan amendments and activity-level management direction as contained in the Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan. Any person adversely affected by a decision of the BLM in implementing any portion of this Plan may appeal that action to the Interior Board of Land Appeals pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4, at the time the action is proposed for implementation.

APPROVALS

1) Taos Resource Management Plan amendments:

M. J. Chávez
State Director, New Mexico
Bureau of Land Management

1/4/2000
Date

2) La Jara Field Office activity-level planning:

Carlos Pinto
La Jara Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management

1/4/2000
Date

3) Taos Field Office activity-level planning:

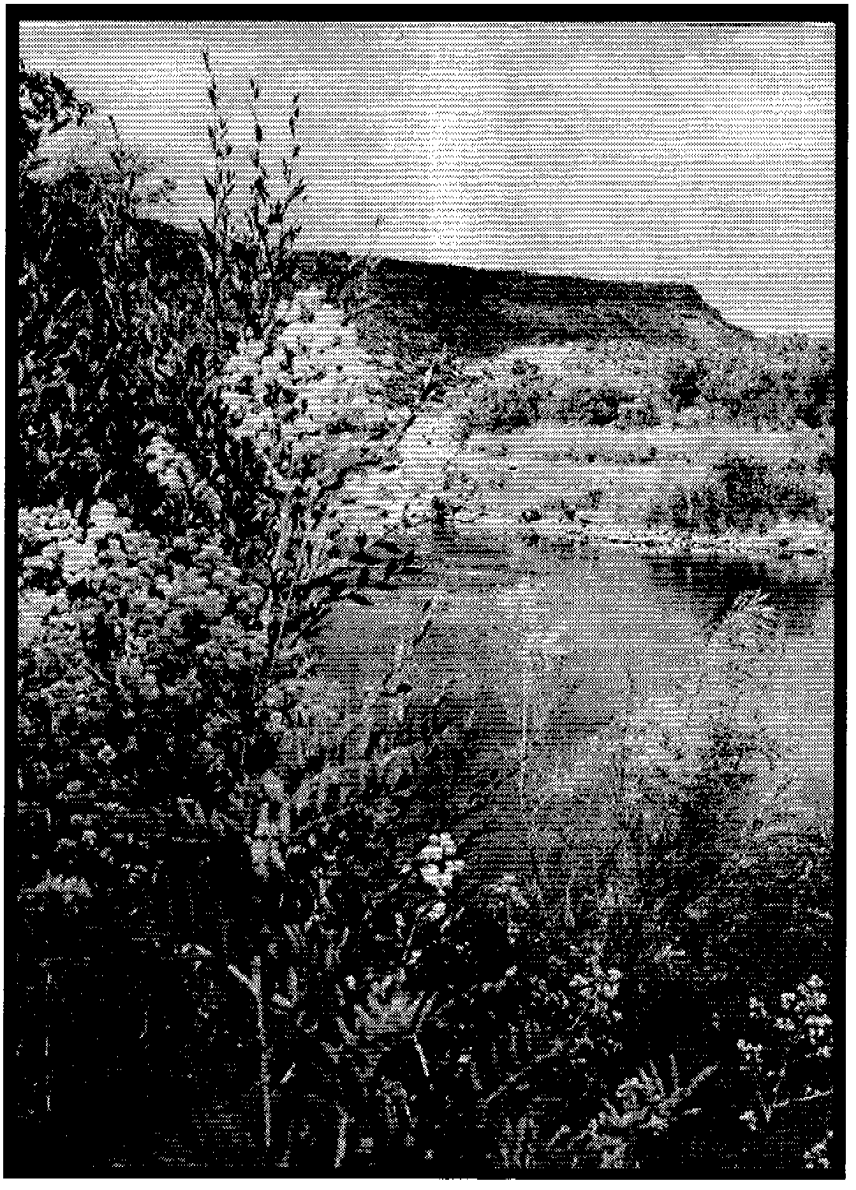
Ron Huntsinger
Taos Field Manager

1/4/2000
Date

L-15

THE RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR FINAL PLAN

JANUARY 2000



U.S DEPARTMENTOFTHEINTERIOR
BUREAUOFLANDMANAGEMENT
NEW MEXICO/COLORADO

The Bureau of Land Management...
Is responsible for the balanced management of the public lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, a combination of uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness, and natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

BLM/NM/PL-00-003-1220

REPLY REFER TO:
1617 (NM-020) P

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Taos Field Office
226 Cruz Alta Road
Taos, New Mexico 87571

La Jara Field Office
15571 County Road T5
La Jara, Colorado 81140

January 4, 2000

Dear Reader:

This document is the final version of the Rio Grande Corridor Plan, which provides management guidance for public lands along the Rio Grande in New Mexico (Taos Field Office) and in Colorado (La Jara Field Office) and amends the Taos Resource Management Plan. The plan provides a vision for managing the natural resources in the corridor from La Sauses, Colorado to Velarde, New Mexico, and is the result of over 5 years of work with individuals, community groups, the outfitting industry and federal, state and local governments. The enclosed final version of the Rio Grande Corridor Plan is a refinement of the Proposed Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement published in August, 1998.

The planning process for the Rio Grande Corridor was concluded with the January 4, 2000 signing of the Record of Decision approving the Taos Resource Management Plan amendments and the activity-level management direction outlined in the Final Plan.

We appreciate the effort many of you have made to participate in the planning process. There will be many opportunities for public involvement in implementing this plan. Continued public involvement in implementing planned actions will allow us to effectively manage the public lands and resources in the Rio Grande Corridor.

Sincerely,

Ron Huntsinger
Taos Field Manager

Carlos Pinto
La Jara Field Manager

Final Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan
and Taos Resource Management Plan Amendments

THE RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR FINAL PLAN

January 2000

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico/Colorado

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Need 1-1
Planning Process 1-1
Public Participation 1-3
Implementation 1-3
Life of the Plan 1-3
Description of the Planning Area 1-6

CHAPTER 2 - SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT

In Colorado:
San Luis Hills ACEC 2-2
Rio Grande Corridor Special Recreation Management Area/ACEC 2-3
In New Mexico:
Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers 2-5
Wild Rivers Recreation Area 2-7
Orilla Verde Recreation Area 2-10
Lower Gorge ACEC 2-12
Copper Hill ACEC 2-14

CHAPTER 3 - RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Access 3-2
American Indian Coordination 3-8
Land Ownership and Realty Actions 3-9
Livestock Management 3-14
Minerals 3-24
Prehistoric and Historic Resources 3-25
Public Education 3-26
Riparian Resources 3-27
Scenic/Visual Resources 3-29
Watershed (Soils, Vegetation and Water Resources) 3-31
Wild & Scenic Rivers 3-34
Wilderness 3-36
Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management 3-37

CHAPTER 4 - RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Special Recreation Use Permits 4-2
Boating Management 4-3
Casual Uses 4-10
Fishing 4-10
Camping/Picnicking 4-11
Trails 4-11

MAPS

Map 1 - Planning Area Location 1-4
Map 2 - Planning Units 1-5
Map 3 - Planning Area ..... in back pocket
Map 4 - Wild and Scenic River Review Areas ..... in back pocket
Map 5 - Mineral Materials Sites ..... in back pocket
Map 6 - Route Designations ..... in back pocket
Map 7 - Grazing Allotments ..... in back pocket

Map 8 - Recreation Sites ..... in back pocket

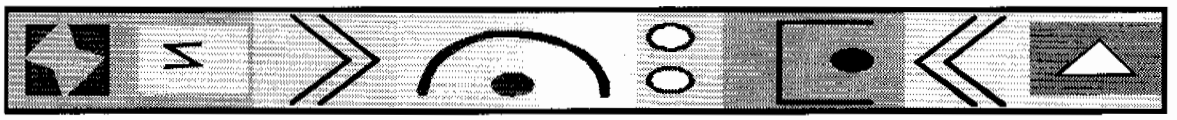
TABLES

Table 3-1 Rio Grande Corridor Route Designations 3-3
Table 3-2 State and Private Lands/Minerals Proposed for Acquisition 3-10
Table 3-3 Schedule for Allotment Monitoring 3-14
Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans 3-16
Table 3-5 Riparian Monitoring 3-28
Table 3-6 Visual Resource Management Classes 3-29
Table 3-7 Visual Resource Management Classes Assigned to the Planning Area 3-30
Table 3-8 River Segments Managed for Wild and Scenic Values 3-35
Table 3-9 Road Densities 3-37
Table 3-10 Wildlife Monitoring 3-38
Table 4-1 Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Upper Gorge 4-6
Table 4-2 Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Lower Gorge 4-7
Table 4-3 Existing/Planned Trails in the Rio Grande Corridor 4-12

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Abbreviations and Acronyms A1-1
Appendix 2 List of Preparers A2-1
Appendix 3 Wild & Scenic River Study A3-1

CHAPTER 1



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Rio Grande Corridor Final Plan describes strategies for managing the public lands and allocating resources along 94 miles of the Rio Grande and some 43 miles of its tributaries (refer to Maps 1 and 2). The document describes amendments to the Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP - 1988, also amended in 1991 and 1994). The Final Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement were prepared according to the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The Record of Decision for the Final Plan was signed on January 4, 2000, and is available from the Taos and La Jara Field Offices.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Rio Grande Corridor planning area includes public land within the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) La Jara Field Office (formerly San Luis Resource Area) in south-central Colorado and Taos Field Office (formerly Taos Resource Area) in north-central New Mexico. BLM managers in Colorado and New Mexico recognized the interdependence of the people, land and natural resources along the northern portion of the Rio Grande and the efficiencies of a single, cooperative, coordinated resource planning effort. So this document is a little different than the usual because it includes two very different levels of BLM planning. Through this document the BLM prepared an activity-level coordinated resource management plan for the public land within the Rio Grande Corridor, and also amended the Taos RMP. The San Luis RMP is not being amended.

Planning efforts for the Rio Grande Corridor formally began in 1994, but the Final Plan is the result of extensive public participation that began many years earlier. Changes in recreation use and public demand, wildlife habitat, and ecosystem caused concerns have caused the BLM to take a comprehensive look at its management of public land within the Rio Grande Corridor. Additional factors contributing to the decision to prepare this plan included RMP prescriptions for both field offices, new management proposals that would not have been in conformance with the Taos RMP and Public Law 103-242 (May 4, 1994). This Wild & Scenic River legislation added a 12-mile segment of the Rio Grande (from the Taos Junction Bridge to just below the County Line Recreation Site) to the National Wild & Scenic River system. The legislation also mandated a suitability study of a 7.6-mile segment of the Rio Grande below the County Line Recreation Site to the Velarde Diversion Dam for consideration as a possible addition to the National Wild &Scenic River System. Studies for these segments were not included in the Taos RMP.

PLANNING PROCESS

The overall objective of resource management planning as prescribed by the BLM Planning Regulations (Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1600) is to provide a sound basis for systematically evaluating and deciding uses of the public lands. The BLM develops three types of plans: RMPs (and RMP Amendments), Activity Plans (such as coordinated resource management plans), and Project Plans. This planning process included both an amendment to the Taos RMP and an activity-level plan for the Rio Grande Corridor planning area.

The process focused on planning issues, which are significant problems, concerns, or opportunities that strongly affect management direction. Issues were identified by the general public, American Indian tribes, other federal agencies, state and local governments; and BLM staff and managers. The following issues became the focal point of this plan:

Issue 1: In New Mexico only, determine the suitability of and protective measures for the wild and scenic qualities of the Rio Grande, Rio Embudo, and 12 streams are legislative and planning mandates.

Issue 2: Protection of riparian areas; conflicts with recreation, grazing, other resource uses and with the development of recreational facilities.

Issue 3: Soils, vegetation, water quality, and terrestrial and aquatic habitat are adversely affected by recreation, grazing, mining, construction, and other soil-compacting and surface-disturbing activities.

Issue 4: Historical and archaeological resources are adversely affected by other resource uses.

INTRODUCTION

Issue 5: Scenic quality is threatened by human activities and development.

Issue 6: Recreation is a major and growing use of the planning area that often conflicts with other public and private resource uses.

Issue 7: Providing opportunities for commercial and personal uses of public land in the planning area conflicts with protecting natural and scenic resources.

Issue 8: The public requires access to and through public land; however, this access has resulted in unauthorized use of private land, degradation of natural resources, and conflicts among users.

Issue 9: Determining proper levels of resource interpretation and public education regarding resource use.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

In addition to the issues identified above, BLM worked closely with the public to develop desired future conditions for the planning area. Following is a brief description of how the land and its uses would likely appear to an observer 15 or more years in the futureC what the desired future condition of the planning area would be with implementation of the Final Plan.

Protection and Enhancement of Natural, Historic, Archaeologic and Scenic Resources

The landscape supports a diverse, healthy, natural system represented by native communities of vegetation with no increase in exotic plant species. Critical and crucial habitats have been maintained and enhanced. Vegetative modifications and use restrictions have improved the health of the land, including habitat, watershed function, and soil stability. Approximately 95 percent of the total riparian area is in proper functioning condition, and the acreage of riparian areas has increased. Al-though increased human presence has influenced vegetative communities and wildlife populations, the impacts on these resources have been mitigated.

Scenic quality continues to be highly valued, enjoyed by visitors and residents, and has been main-tained or enhanced throughout the area. Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes have been assigned to protect critical viewsheds. A number of archaeological and historic sites have been identified, documented, stabilized, and interpreted in response to increased visitation.

Recreation and Facility Development

A variety of high-quality recreational opportunities exist. BLM constructed new or remodeled facilities to blend in with the natural landscape at the Lobatos Bridge, Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde recreation areas, and selected Lower Gorge sites. These facilities are now farther from the river/shoreline. In some areas, facilities have been eliminated to meet resource needs.

Although access to the Rio Grande is limited in some areas, visitors continue to find opportunities for solitude. Recreational use is restricted in some locations and managed to maintain uncrowded conditions. BLM actions to control recreational use and access (e.g., signing, public information, enforcement, and allocations) have resulted in reduced conflict between users, landowners and native species.

The Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde recreation areas and selected parts of the Racecourse Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) accommodate intensive levels of recreation use; are clean, safe, attractive, well-maintained; and provide access for public land users (including those with disabilities). The demand for full-service camping is met by private industry on private land.

Opportunities for Commercial and Personal Uses

These uses within the corridor are compatible with sustained biodiversity, a healthy ecosystem, and scenic quality. The BLM provides recreational opportunities and emergency services, protects natural resources and cultural values, and resolves user conflicts in partnership with local governments, state and federal agencies, tribal governments, and private landowners

Public Access

Public access to the Rio Grande has been limited, but is provided in other areas where impacts on wildlife and riparian vegetation are minimal.

Interpretation and Public Education

The BLM shares responsibility for stewardship with residents, communities, visitors, and providers of commercial recreation services to benefit public and private land. The presence of agency staff on the ground enhances public safety and customer service.

INTRODUCTION

From the issues and the desired future condition statements, a Draft Plan was formulated, presenting four alternative approaches to managing the public lands in the Rio Grande Corridor. Following the conclusion of the comment period on the Draft Plan in October 1997 and the subsequent analysis of the comments, a Proposed Plan was released in September 1998. The Proposed Plan included a mixture of the actions/prescriptions from various alternatives presented in the draft. The protest period for the Proposed Plan ended in October 1998 and minor adjustments were made to develop the Final Plan. There were no changes to the RMP amendments outlined in the Proposed Plan.

The issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Plan completes the planning process. The next steps are implementation of the actions, preparation of individual project plans, and monitoring/evaluating the results so necessary adjustments in our implementation can be made to better achieve the desired future condition.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public opinion has been sought frequently sought since the inception of this plan in 1994. Public participation efforts are described in detail on pages 5-4 and 5-5 of the Proposed Plan. A summary of the public involvement process follows:

- Preparation of a public participation plan;
- Federal Register notices of intent and availability;
- Numerous formal and informal meetings with stakeholders, with many of the meetings conducted by contracted facilitators;
- Interaction with citizen work groups in communities near the Rio Grande;
- Planning updates and informational mailings;
- Formal public hearings and a total of 177 days (including 2 extensions) to review the Draft Plan/EIS;
- Numerous briefings with neighborhood associations and local, county, and state agencies; and
- A 30-day protest period (for RMP-level actions) and informal protest period (for Activity-level actions). The informal protest period was an additional opportunity for public input that is not a normal part of the process.

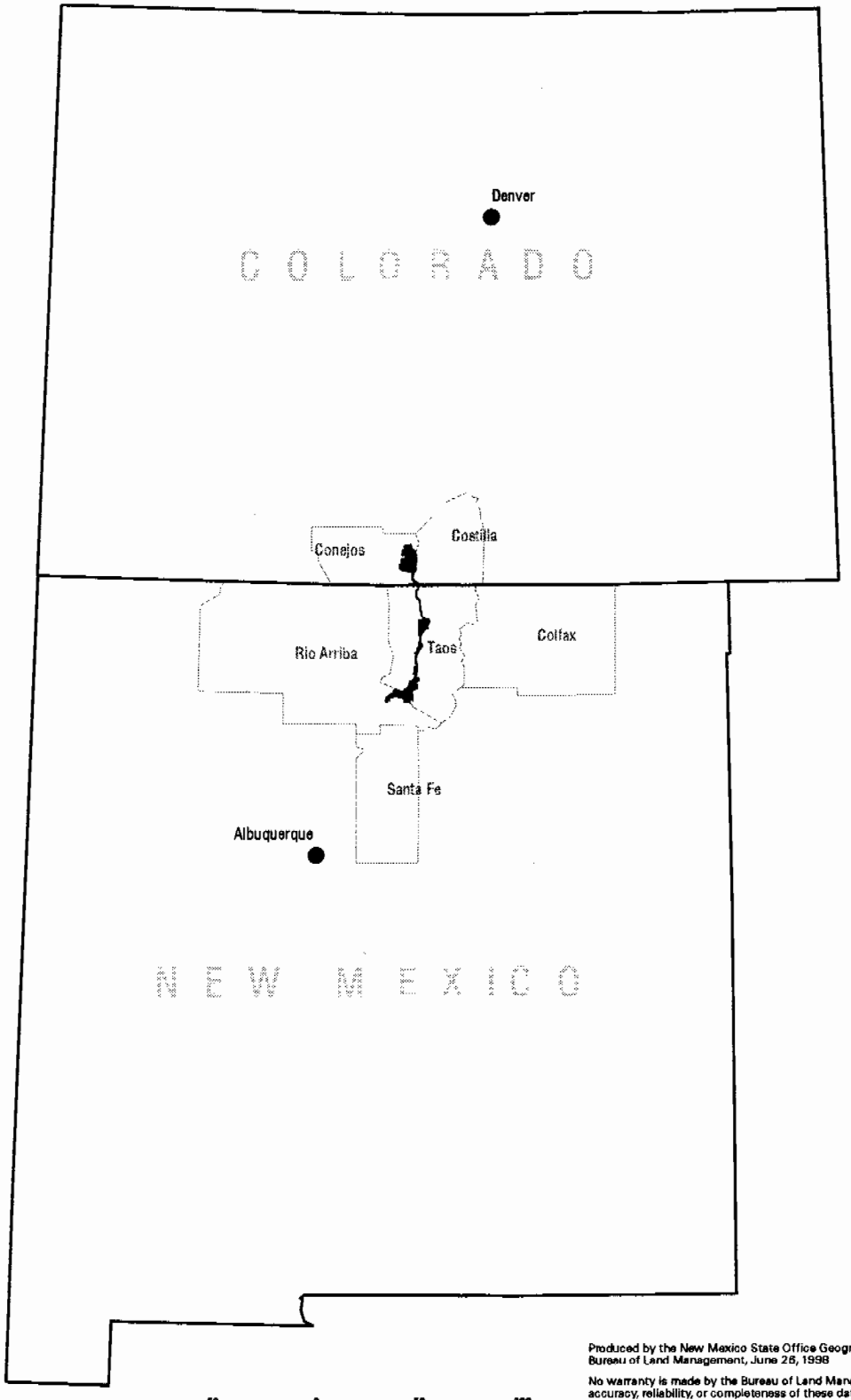
IMPLEMENTATION

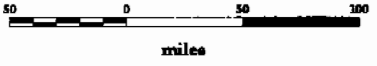
Progress on the Final Plan's implementation will be reported annually to the public. Persons adversely affected by the implementation of a specific action may appeal the implementation of that action. Appeals must be made to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (in accordance with 43 CFR 4.400-4.704) when the action is proposed for implementation.

LIFE OF THE PLAN

The life of the plan is expected to be 15 years. The Final Plan attempts to provide for adaptive management as additional or unexpected challenges surface and new information becomes available. The success of adaptive management will be determined by the willingness of stakeholders to work together to resolve conflicts.

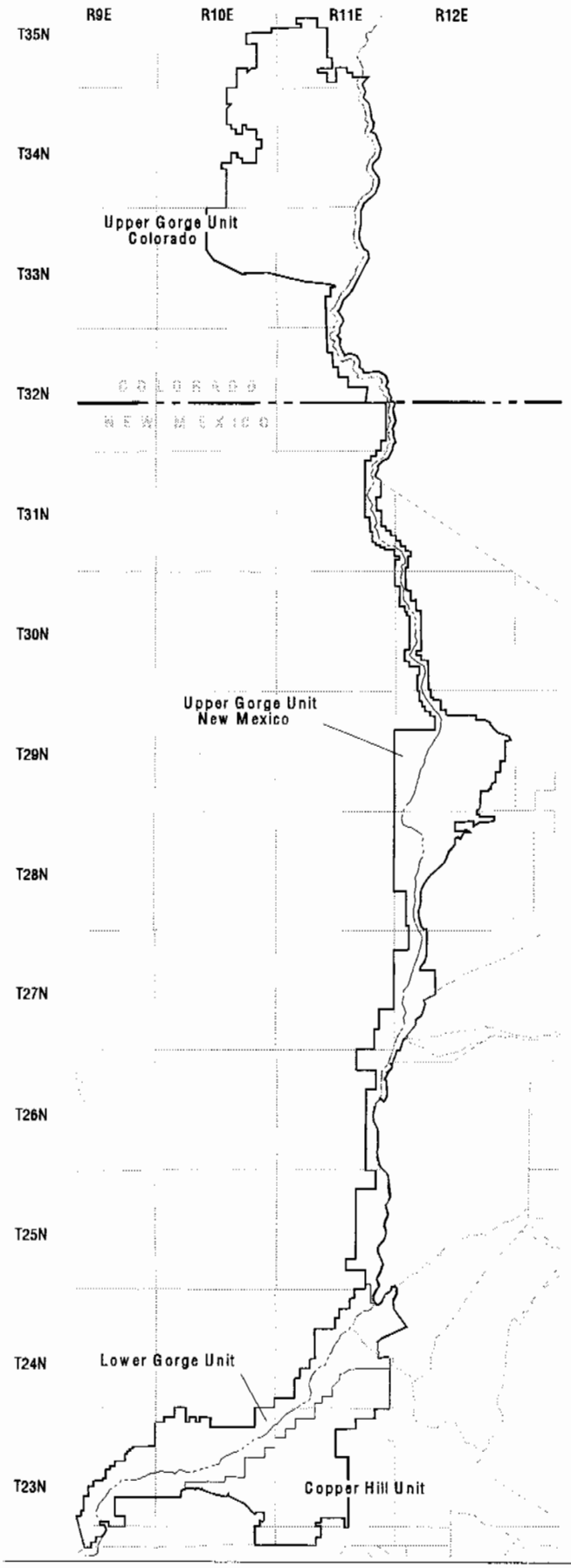
Map 1
Planning Area Location
Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan





Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, June 26, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 2

Planning Units

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

Planning Area Boundary

Unit Boundary

State Boundary

Rio Grande

Township and Range or Grant Line

5 0 5 10 15
miles

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, August 03, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

Upper Gorge

The Upper Gorge begins at the La Sauses Cemetery in Colorado, 22 miles north of the Colorado-New Mexico state line, and extends for about 47 miles along the Rio Grande to its confluence with the Rio Pueblo. In the northern part of the unit, the Rio Grande flows past cliffs as high as 100 feet. The San Luis Hills are the main geographic feature to the west, rising up to 900 feet above the plateaus surrounding the river. To the east are private lands (not included within the planning area).

Eight miles north of the state line, the Lobatos Bridge marks the beginning of the Rio Grande Gorge. Here the river cuts into the lava flows characteristic of the Taos Plateau. By the time the river reaches New Mexico, the gorge is 200 feet wide and about 150 feet deep. In the Wild Rivers area, the gorge is nearly 0.5 mile across and 800 feet deep. Consequently, access in this section always has been limited to a few foot trails descending into the gorge and even fewer roads suitable for vehicles. Limited access and varied habitat have enabled significant populations of raptors, waterfowl, and fish to flourish. Boaters often refer to this upper part of the gorge as the "Ute Mountain Run." Lee Trail marks the last place boaters get out of the river before reaching more difficult rapids on the Rio Grande.

The Wild Rivers Recreation Area is situated along 7 miles of the rim of the Rio Grande Gorge and offers some of the area's most spectacular views. The area between Chiflo and Little Arsenic is known locally as the Upper Box. This section of the Rio Grande offers some of the most difficult Class V+ whitewater rapids in the Southwest. After these rapids the river becomes more navigable and is referred to as La Junta section (La Junta is Spanish for meeting and refers to the confluence of the Rio Grande and Red River). Springs and seeps along this section add to the flow of the Rio Grande and help maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem. Anglers hike into the canyon seeking some of the best fishing to be found on the Rio Grande.

At the John Dunn Bridge, La Junta section gives way to the Taos Box, an 18-mile-long stretch of the Rio Grande that ends at the Taos Junction Bridge. The Taos Box is a very popular Class III/IV whitewater run during spring and early summer when runoff provides adequate flows. Several historical sites and hot springs lie near the John Dunn Bridge. Wildlife and riparian values diminish as a result of natural geographic changes, but trophy-sized trout and an occasional pike are caught in this section.

Lower Gorge

The Rio Pueblo de Taos, also called the Little Rio Grande, enters the gorge just above the Taos Junction Bridge and marks the beginning of the Lower Gorge. In contrast to the Upper Gorge where access by road is limited to a few crossings, the Lower Gorge is easily accessed by state highways along its entire length. The Lower Gorge is also much wider and more open than the Upper Gorge and provides a richer riparian environment.

The Lower Gorge has three distinct segments - Orilla Verde, the Racecourse, and the Bosque. Orilla Verde Recreation Area makes up the first 5 miles of this unit, where a paved road follows the canyon on the east side of the river. This side of the river is privately owned for approximately the first 2 miles downstream of the Rio Pueblo and Rio Grande confluence. The west side is undeveloped except for the campground at Taos Junction.

The canyon opens up slightly in the Lower Gorge and is about 700 to 800 feet deep. The gradient of the river decreases significantly in contrast to the Upper Gorge. Wildlife, particularly birds, are more abundant in this wider riparian zone, and fishing and other activities increase due to the ease of access. Just downriver from Orilla Verde is the village of Pilar, where private land borders both sides of the Rio Grande for the next mile.

The river turns abruptly southwest as it leaves Pilar and enters the Racecourse, a 5mile-long reach with mostly BLM-managed lands bordering the river. NM 68, a major north-south route between Taos and Española, parallels the river south of Pilar. Near the junction of NM 570 and NM 68 is the Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center with facilities for visitors to Orilla Verde and the Racecourse. About a mile north of the NM 570/68 intersection is the Pilar North Parking Area, used primarily by customers of commercial river outfitters. Three private tracts of land are located in the Racecourse segment, one of which has several homes.

The river's gradient increases in the Racecourse section as the result of the less erosive schist and quartzite that form the walls of the gorge. Numerous

INTRODUCTION

Class III rapids exist for whitewater thrill seekers. The BLM has developed two river access and recreation sites to accommodate the heavy public use of the Racecourse sectionC Quartzite (near the beginning of the Racecourse) and County Line (at the end of the Racecourse). Between these two sites is the most heavily boated section of river in New Mexico, with boating use approaching 40,000 visitors per season.

The Bosque segment of the Lower Gorge begins at the County Line Recreation Site, where the gorge again opens up and the river passes pastoral surroundings of cottonwoods, fruit orchards, and private homes that form the communities of Rinconada and Embudo. Only a few parcels of public land exist in the next 6 miles. Boating use on this section is significantly less than on the Racecourse section and mainly consists of canoeists and rafters interested in a flat-water boating experience.

The canyon narrows and turns south for the last 2 miles of the Lower Gorge, where BLM lands predominate once again. The abandoned Chili Line Railroad parallels the river on the west bank. The old train stop at Embudo Station has been converted to a restaurant/gift shop complex where the few float trips that continue below the County Line Recreation Site leave the river. The most significant recreational use in this section is fishing. The Lower Gorge ends at the Velarde Diversion Dam.

Copper Hill

The Copper Hill area lies south and east of NM 68 and is named after Copper Hill, one of the higher peaks in this area. Several streams that drain this portion of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains characterize the unit, the most significant being the Rio Embudo. Access in much of the unit is limited by the steep, densely wooded terrain, and NM 75 is the main route.

The Embudo Box is a remote, wild section of the Rio Embudo between the NM 75 crossing and the mouth of the canyon above Cañoncito. This section of river is difficult to access and is little known except to local residents and a few avid kayakers, hikers, and anglers. The canyon possesses outstanding natural, scenic, and ecological resources.

The Agua Caliente drainage supplies irrigation water to the village of Pilar. This watershed is covered by stands of piñon, juniper, ponderosa pine, aspen, and Douglas fir, and contains noteworthy riparian habitat.

CHAPTER 2

SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT

SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT

Most actions to be implemented in the Rio Grande Corridor are described in this section, under one of the eight special management areas which cover nearly all of the planning area.

Resource Management Plans (RMPs) have been completed for the Colorado and New Mexico portions of the planning area. These broad-based plans provide general management direction for public lands and are amended periodically as necessary. The RMPs outline what uses can occur, list special restrictions when needed, and present long-term direction for specific issues such as transportation planning, land ownership adjustments, and facility development. They also identify areas of public land that warrant special consideration by BLM due to significant resources or opportunities.

The San Luis RMP, completed in 1991, provides guidance for the planning area in Colorado managed by La Jara Field Office. No changes to this RMP were made by the Rio Grande Corridor planning effort. The actions described for Colorado are designed to implement the prescriptions contained in the San Luis RMP for three designated areas: the San Luis Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Rio Grande Corridor ACEC, and the somewhat overlapping Rio Grande Corridor Special Recreation Management Area. The San Luis RMP also recommends that BLM consider a joint study and analysis in Colorado and New Mexico to determine whether the Rio Grande (41 miles in Colorado and 57 miles in New Mexico) should be recommended for designation as a National Conservation Area (no congressional action is pending).

The Taos RMP (completed in 1988, amended for oil and gas leasing in 1991, and for designation of the Orilla Verde Recreation Area in 1994) provides guidance for the planning area in New Mexico. In the Rio Grande Corridor Plan, BLM has made sev-eral amendments to the Taos RMP concerning spe-cial management areas, ACECs and recreation areas:

- The Riparian/Aquatic Special Management Area (SMA) designation is rescinded for lands within the planning area. These areas and resources will be protected by other designations or actions.

- The Wild Rivers SMA designation and the Guadalupe Mountain ACEC designations are rescinded, and replaced by an expanded Wild Rivers Recreation Area.

- The Racecourse ACEC designation is rescinded. It is replaced by the 16,351-acre Lower Gorge ACEC, which also incorporates 629 acres formerly in the Black Mesa ACEC.

- The 1988 designations for the Warm Springs SMA, Agua Caliente and Embudo Canyon ACECs and Lower Embudo SMA are rescinded. They now are included in the newly designated 17,280-acre Copper Hill ACEC.

BLM will continue to use Supplementary Rules for managing activities on public land in the Taos Field Office (*Federal Register*; May 10, 1996). These rules generally are revised every five years, with an opportunity for public input. The next revision is scheduled for 2000.

SAN LUIS HILLS ACEC (COLORADO)

The San Luis Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) covers about 36,380 acres of publicly owned land which include Flat Top Mountain and the San Luis Hills. The San Luis Hills are known for their wetlands, big-game habitat, and scenic quality.

ACCESS

Vehicle use in the ACEC is restricted to designated roads or trails, as shown on Maps 6-a and 6-b (in back pocket), and described in Table 3-1. An exception is the semi-primitive, nonmotorized portion (2,000 acres) on Flat Top Mountain, which is closed to motorized vehicles.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Livestock grazing will be managed under guidelines for Allotments 4245A, 4247, 4248, 4249, 4250, 4251, 4252, 4253, 4255, and 5256 (see Map 7 in the back pocket and Table 3-4).

MINERALS

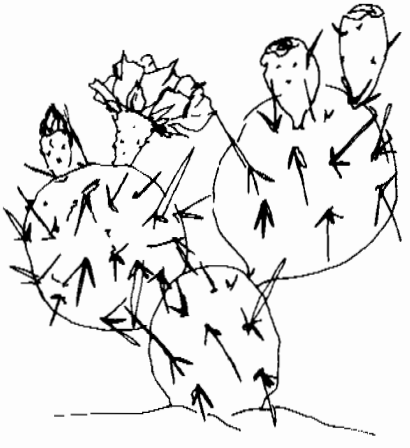
Continue to enforce the No Surface Occupancy stipulation that has been placed for oil and gas leasing and development on the semi-primitive, nonmotorized Flat Top Mountain portion (2,000 acres) of the ACEC. This same area will remain closed to mineral materials disposal.

WATERSHED

A research program for special-status plants in this ACEC will be developed.

WILDERNESS

The San Luis Hills Wilderness Study Area (WSA) is located in the southern portion of the ACEC and covers 12,300 acres. The BLM has recommended to Congress that the area is not suitable for wilderness designation. Until Congress decides whether to designate or not, BLM will manage the San Luis Hills WSA portion of the ACEC under guidance in the *Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review* (1995). No actions will be approved or new uses allowed that will impair the area's suitability for wilderness preser-vation. Valid and existing activities are allowed to affect wilderness characteristics in a WSA, if no unnecessary and undue degradation occurs.



RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR ACEC AND SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA (COLORADO)

The Rio Grande Special Recreation Management Area (4,595 public land acres) follows the river for 22 miles, beginning just south of La Sauses Cemetery and extending to the New Mexico state line. The ACEC covers much of the same area, but its boundary includes some public lands that are farther west of the river. The 4,157 acres of public lands in the ACEC were designated to provide special management for the significant natural, scenic, and recreational values along this stretch of the Rio Grande. The larger recreation management area was designated to provide river-oriented recreation opportunities and facilities needed to provide for safe visits.

ACCESS

Vehicles will be restricted to designated roads and trails, which are shown on Maps 6-a and 6-b and described in Table 3-1. All routes within riparian areas between the La Sauses Cemetery and the Lobatos Bridge (on the west side) have been desig-nated as closed to vehicle use. BLM will treat about ½ acre of these closed routes to enhance riparian vegetation recovery.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

BLM will try to acquire additional acreage and access for the SRMA by fee title methods (i.e., land exchanges or acquisitions from willing sellers) or by obtaining scenic easements (allowing landowners to retain title to the land). See Table 3-2 for state/ private lands proposed for acquisition.

BLM will terminate all waterpower site withdrawals in the ACEC, if a legislative designation is made by Congress to add this part of the Rio Grande to the national Wild and Scenic River System.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Livestock grazing will be managed under guidelines for Allotments 4245A, 4249, 4251, 4253, and 4255 (see Table 3-4).

Grazing will still be allowed in the riparian areas of the La Sauses (#4255), Piñon Hills (#4249), Mesa Common (#4251), Piñon (#4245A and B), and Flat Top (#4253) allotments at small water gaps (about 2.5 acres total). The remainder of the riparian area in these allotments would be allowed to rest until the standards for a properly functioning riparian area were met on 124.5 acres. Once the standards are met, grazing will be allowed as long as a 4-inch stubble height on herbaceous species is maintained through the May to June high-water season, or no more than 20% of the annual growth of woody riparian species is used by livestock, and the area's ecological health is maintained.

BLM will continue to work with local private and public groups to eliminate unauthorized livestock grazing in riparian areas by cattle moving from private lands on the east side of the Rio Grande.

MINERALS

Continue to apply the No Surface Occupancy stipulation to oil and gas leasing and development, continue closure of the ACEC to mineral material disposal, and maintain the withdrawal from locatable mineral entry.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

At La Sauses, Lobatos Bridge, and other sites in Colorado, information will emphasize riparian restoration, river-related resources, raptors, and historic sites. Implement interpretation of sites through Los Caminos Antiguos Historic and Scenic Byway partnerships.

RECREATION

Scattered parcels of public land along the river in Colorado between La Sauses Cemetery and County Bridge 142 will be managed for their recreation access potential, and developed as a part of the Special Recreation Management Area. At La Sauses Recreation Site and Lobatos Bridge, BLM will define parking areas to limit riparian habitat damage. BLM will continue efforts to acquire public access rights at Lobatos Bridge.

RIPARIAN AREAS

BLM will manage the 22 miles of the Rio Grande in Colorado for riparian protection. The agency's goal is to improve a total of 124.5 acres or 98% of the riparian habitat to properly functioning condition within 10 years. The BLM will implement the following actions to achieve this goal:

- Modify 4.25 miles of net wire fence in Colorado along the state line to facilitate big game migra-tion and movement.
- Designate as closed to vehicle use all routes within riparian areas between the La Sauses Cemetery and the Lobatos Bridge (on the west side). In addition,

the agency will treat about ½ acre of closed routes to enhance riparian vegetation.

- Plant 10 acres with willows and three acres with cottonwoods over the first five years following plan approval to restore native species. Additional plantings will be undertaken as additional funding and partnerships become available.

SCENIC QUALITY

Manage the foreground areas of the corridor as Visual Resource Management Class II (see Tables 3-6 and 3-7).

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Protect outstanding resource values by seeking an enduring form of legislative protection (e.g., Wild and Scenic River designation or National Conservation Area designation) for the entire 41-mile-long river corridor running through public lands in Colorado.

BLM has recommended a 22-mile segment of the Rio Grande from the La Sauses Cemetery to the New Mexico state line as suitable for designation, with 14 miles from the cemetery to the Lobatos Bridge as scenic, and eight miles from the bridge to the state line as wild. Until Congress designates these river stretches, the BLM is managing this segment under interim management restrictions to protect their wild and scenic values. The interim boundaries are 0.25 mile from the ordinary high-water mark on each side of the river.

RIO GRANDE AND RED WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS (NEW MEXICO)

The Rio Grande and Red River in New Mexico were among the original eight rivers to be designated by Congress in 1968 to initiate the National Wild and Scenic River System. From the Colorado state line to the Taos Junction Bridge, 50 miles of the Rio Grande are classified as wild, and 2.2 miles near the John Dunn and Taos Junction Bridges are classified as recreational. The lower 3.2 miles of the Red River also are classified as wild, and the .75 mile below the Red River Fish Hatchery is recreational.

In 1994, Congress amended the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to include as a scenic segment the 12-mile-long stretch of the Rio Grande from the Taos Junction Bridge to the west section line of Section 15, T 23 N, R 10 E, which is just past the County Line Recreation Site. This document constitutes the management plan and proposes boundaries for the 12-mile-long scenic segment and will be forwarded to Congress at the end of the planning process.

Congress also asked the BLM to study the eight-mile-long Bosque Segment (actual mileage is 7.6) from Rinconada to the Velarde Diversion Dam and report within three years on its suitability for Wild and Scenic River designation. A report on the Bosque Segment is included in this document and will be submitted to Congress (see Appendix 3).

Many of the BLM's actions being undertaken to manage these Wild and Scenic Rivers are described under the following Special Management Areas in this chapter: Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recrea-tion Areas, and the Lower Gorge ACEC. The actions below affect lands that fall outside these other designated areas.

ACCESS

Vehicle use is limited to the designated roads shown on Maps 6-b, c, and d (in back pocket) and described in Table 3-1. Hiking trails provide the majority of access opportunities along the segments classified as wild - see the Recreation section below.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

BLM will attempt to acquire all state lands through exchange, and will work with willing private land-owners to acquire properties with a priority on undeveloped lands and/or those with high-value resources (see Table 3-2).

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

No livestock grazing is permitted within the desi-nated river corridors.

MINERALS

The designated portions of the Rio Grande and Red River have been withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

John Dunn Bridge: Post directional signs. Continue weekend river ranger patrols to permit boating use, provide information, and direct traffic. Place sign-ing to support parking and use restrictions/ controls at the bridge and springs.

Manby Springs: Post interpretive signing to encour-age protection of cultural resources. Acquire public access to the trailhead at Manby Springs.

Rio Grande Gorge Bridge: Develop, in partnership with New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, interpretive signing on the bridge and parking areas which provide information about the bridge, how the Rio Grande Gorge has affected transportation in north-central New Mexico, the region's geology, watchable wildlife in the area, and a brief history of the Nation's Wild and Scenic River system.

Other public education actions will be implemented in the Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recreation Areas and the Lower Gorge ACEC.

RECREATION

Prohibit commercially guided fishing along the Rio Grande from Chiflo Trail to Big Arsenic Trail (year-round) to protect fisheries resources, and on the Ute Mountain Segment (from April 1 to May 31) to protect sensitive wildlife breeding areas.

The West Rim Trail will be extended north from the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge to Chiflo in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area. The segment between John Dunn Bridge and Cerro Chiflo will be closed from May 1 to July 31 to protect big game species.

Improve the Ute Mountain, East Rim, Lee, Chiflo, Sheeps Crossing, Miners, Red River, and Manby Springs Trails, the river trail between the John Dunn Bridge and Manby Springs, and the Powerline Trail.

Sign at trailheads only.

Coordinate with Taos Pueblo in locating an East Rim Trail between the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge and the Taos Junction Bridge.

No parking or overnight use (including camping) will be allowed within 300 feet of existing trailheads or trail descent points to protect wildlife migration corridors and access routes to water. The BLM will install appropriate signs to inform users of the restriction. Restrictions on overnight use will not apply to the Raven or Powerline trailheads or to the trailheads on the east rim of the gorge within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area.

Close the John Dunn Bridge Recreation Site to camping. Additional sites could be closed if monitoring indicates that resource damage is occurring that could not be mitigated in other ways.

BLM will coordinate with Taos County and the Hondo Mesa Neighborhood Association to determine a management strategy for the Manby Springs easement area.

RIPARIAN AREAS

BLM will manage the Wild and Scenic River cor-ridors to conserve or enhance riparian vegetation through controls on vehicle use, plantings, and removal of noxious weeds or invasive, non-native plants.

SCENIC QUALITY

The public lands adjoining the wild segments of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers will be managed following are classified as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I guidelines. The developed recreation sites, including the BLM

Visitor Centers, campgrounds, river access sites, and day use sites are VRM Class III. VRM Class II applies to the remaining portions of the Wild and Scenic River corridor (see Table 3-6 for definitions).

To preserve scenic quality, the BLM will acquire state and private land in the Corridor (both surface and subsurface) when owners are willing to sell (refer to Table 3-2 for a list of these parcels). BLM will maintain the right-of-way corridor near the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge and prohibit new right-of-way crossings elsewhere.

WATERSHED

Fire suppression will be limited to those methods least disturbing to soils and vegetation. Fuelwood and timber sales will not be allowed unless such action would enhance watershed resources. Recrea-tion sites will be designed or rebuilt to control erosion, particularly at sites used for river access.

WILDLIFE

Construct cable grates on the mine entry at Black Rock Springs and at the El Poso Cave entrance to protect bats from human contact. The agency will allow scientific studies only - the caves will be closed to the general public.

Protect southwestern willow flycatcher territories through implementation of the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher Management Plan, 1998.*

Introduce a reproducing population of river otter into the Upper Gorge in coordination with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and Colorado Department of Wildlife.

WILD RIVERS RECREATION AREA (NEW MEXICO)

The expanded Wild Rivers Recreation Area is the most intensively used area in the Upper Gorge. It includes portions of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers (3,209 acres), the original Wild Rivers Recreation Area (12,060), the former Guadalupe Mountain ACEC (1,363 acres) and adjacent public lands (2,034 acres). Private and state land adjacent to or enclosed by the new boundary also will be included if they are acquired (1,565 acres), bringing the area's total potential public land acreage to 20,231.

About 90% of the area is in a natural condition with the remaining 10% developed for intensive recrea-tion use. The Wild Rivers Recreation Area was first developed for visitor use in 1962, with the construction of roads, trails and facilities under the temporary management of the New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Commission. BLM reassumed management responsibility of the area in 1969. Recreational activities include hiking, fishing, camping, picnicking, biking, sightseeing, kayaking, float-boating, roller blading, wildlife viewing, and nature study.

A 13-mile-long paved road, nationally designated as the Wild Rivers Back Country Byway, provides the main access to the recreation area. Paved road access is also available through the Red River Fish Hatchery, and access to trails is available via Forest Road 9 on Cebolla Mesa and other primitive roads on the west side of the Rio Grande Gorge.

The Wild Rivers Visitor Center is staffed daily from May through September, and on weekends during the low-use season. Twenty-two developed campsites are located along the rim of the Rio Grande and Red River at four campgrounds and the La Junta Point Overlook. These sites provide sheltered picnic tables, cooking grills, water, pit toilets, and trail access to the river canyons. Five overlook sites have been developed, including La Junta Point; two of these also serve as overflow campgrounds. Nineteen primitive campsites are located within the river canyons and are accessible only by trail. Camping in the canyons is limited to these designated sites, which are equipped with sheltered picnic tables, cooking grills, and pit toilets.

Within the Recreation Area, 26.5 miles of main-tained trails are available, including six trails that provide access to the river canyons, two multi-use rim trails, and two interpretive rim trails. One trail climbs Guadalupe Mountain to an area designated for primitive camping. Fourteen miles of rim trail are open to mountain biking, five miles of canyon trail are open to equestrian use, and 11 miles of rim trail are open to cross-country skiing. Wheelchair access is available to the La Junta Point Overlook.

Two sections of land within the recreation area are owned by the State of New Mexico. One section contains BLM recreational facilities allowed by the State under a cooperative agreement. Both sections are leased for grazing and contain minimal grazing developments. One parcel of private land lies along the western boundary of the recreation area; it is used for grazing and occasional hunting.

ACCESS

Vehicle use is limited to roads and trails designated open in 1994, as shown on Map 6-c (back pocket) and listed in Table 3-1.

To provide and maintain a safe and efficient road network, the loop drive was upgraded for recrea-tional vehicle use. All paved roads will be resur-faced in 2001. Secondary roads providing access to campgrounds and trailheads will be graded to provide crowns, ditches, and gravel surfaces (on-going); parking areas will be defined to discourage random parking; and annual maintenance will be provided.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

Private and state lands within the Recreation Area will be acquired through easement, exchange or purchase if there are willing sellers (see Table 3-2). BLM will exclude new rights-of-way unless needed for administering recreation sites.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Manage livestock grazing on Allotments 603, 606, 608, 640 and 641 as described in the Allotment Management Plans in Table 3-4. Grazing will be eliminated in the Loop Road area of Allotment 606 once vegetative treatments (partially completed) have restored grasslands to the southwest of Guadalupe Mountain.

MINERALS

Maintain withdrawal from locatable mineral entry and mineral material disposal. Maintain the closure to oil and gas leasing on 5,000 acres (the developed rim areas); in the remainder of the Recreation Area, oil and gas leases would be issued with a No Surface Occupancy stipulation.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Protect and interpret select prehistoric and historic sites within the recreation area by conducting a 100% class III inventory, excavating/interpreting select sites for visitors, and taking active steps to protect sites. Appropriate sites will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Environmental education will be the primary method of developing user awareness and a sense of stewardship that will contribute to preserving the quali-ties of the recreation area.

Sufficient visitor information and regulatory signing will be provided to meet current and future needs while protecting scenic quality. Sign needs will be reviewed each year and new signing installed as required.

Displays at the Wild Rivers Visitor Center will be updated to describe geology, human settlement, wildlife and habitats, and resource management issues such as human manipulation of vegetation and use of fire as a management tool.

BLM will increase ranger patrols at La Junta Point to provide more contact with visitors, maintain self-guided nature trails, and install interpretive signing to orient the visitor and provide information on the rivers, watchable wildlife and habitats.

An entry sign will be installed at the main entrance to the Recreation Area to orient the visitor to the area's opportunities. As use increases, BLM will consider developing a small entry station to provide enhanced visitor services and collect fees.

An amphitheater was completed in 1988 near the visitor center to provide for an outdoor lecture area for quality programs for visitors and area residents.

RECREATION

Supervision, maintenance and visitor services necessary to operate an efficient, safe and enjoyable Recreation Area will be provided throughout the year. A variety of hosted workers such as volunteers will continue to be used to supplement the work of paid staff.

Boating Management: Outfitted and private boater use will be managed under guidelines described in Chapter 4.

Casual Uses: All but the Guadalupe Mountain area will remain closed to hunting, trapping, and the discharge of firearms, in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Fishing: Commercial fishing access will be closed in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area on the Rio Grande from Chiflo downstream to Big Arsenic Trail. Fishing access will be enhanced along the Red River by upgrading the trail from the Red River Fish Hatchery downstream to the confluence with the Rio Grande. It will only be maintained to primitive standards, with construction limited to the use of hand tools and the minimum work necessary to define the trail. The trail system along the rivers will be maintained to provide access to the river and to disperse use.

Camping/Picnicking: All camping will take place in developed or designated sites or areas. BLM will meet user demand with the minimum number of well-designed campgrounds and campsites needed to accommodate motorized and non-motorized access. All facilities on the rim will be fully accessible. Existing campgrounds will be redesigned and expanded, although priority will be on maintenance of existing facilities over new construction. When redesign is called for, sites which block public access to the rim area or to trails will be relocated. Large RVs will be accommodated at El Aguaje campground. An overflow camping area will be designated, and additional campsites added when the expanded campgrounds reach 80% of their capacity during the high-use months of July and August (this threshold was reached in 1994 and 1995). No more than 15 additional sites will be added on the rim. The group campsite at El Aguaje campground will be expanded to accommodate 50 people. Three restrooms will be developed with showers if water rights are obtained.

Conflicts between day and overnight users will be addressed by clearly marking areas for day or overnight use. La Junta, Chawalauna and the visitor center are the primary day use areas. As needed, parking areas will be designated or constructed to separate day uses such as hiking from the developed campsites. Each campground will be kept to three acres or less, with capacity limits established to preserve opportunities for privacy. Additional picnic tables will be provided at Sheeps Crossing and Chiflo when they reach capacity at least half the time during the high use period of July and August.

In the river canyons, adequate camping opportunities will be provided without compromising the area's solitude. Campsites in the canyon will not exceed two

per acre, no new shelters will be constructed, and shelters visible from rim viewpoints will be removed as they deteriorate, or repaired and relocated. A reservation system will be considered when use warrants.

Public water supplies, including springs, will be monitored in accordance with State water quality standards. Personnel will be certified to meet State water system operator requirements.

Trails: Hiking opportunities will be provided for those who do not wish to descend into the canyon, and maintain the loop trail connecting the visitor center and all campgrounds/day-use sites.

Pack stock will only be allowed on Little Arsenic Trail and short portions of the River Trail as needed to access the Rio Grande.

Mountain bike trails have and will be developed where not in conflict with other trail uses. Signing, fencing and barriers will be installed/maintained as needed to control vehicle use. In 1992 the Rinconada Trail was constructed with funds provided by the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department, and was widened in 1999 with additional funds from the same source.

BLM will construct the Pescado Trail from the Wild Rivers Visitor Center to the Red River Fish Hatchery, if trespass concerns of hatchery personnel can be mitigated.

The Ute Mountain, East Rim, Lee, Chiflo, Sheeps Crossing, Miners, Red River, and Manby Springs Trails, the river trail between the John Dunn Bridge and Manby Springs, and the Powerline Trail will be improved. Signs will be installed at all trailheads.

SCENIC QUALITY

The wild segments of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers will be managed under Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines. VRM Class III will apply to the developed recreation sites (21 acres), and VRM Class II will apply to the remaining public lands in the Recreation Area (see Table 3-6 for definitions).

To protect scenic quality, restrictions on use have been established, such as right-of-way exclusions and protective withdrawals (described above under Land Ownership). Scenic quality will be a primary consideration in facility design. There will be no new developments in the "loop area". Specifications for proposed structures will consider size, shape, materials, color and basic harmony with the existing landscape. Existing structures, such as the Federal Aviation Administration garage, will be repainted or relocated to meet visual requirements.

WATERSHED

Woodlands and shrub grasslands will be treated to promote forest and watershed health. Fire suppression and mechanical thinning will be limited to the methods least disturbing to soils and vegetation. Noxious weeds will be suppressed using methods deemed most effective for the particular species, but herbicides would be used only as a last resort.

WILDLIFE

Emphasize wildlife viewing as a principle use in the recreation area by promoting habitat improvement projects that will enhance the abundance and variety of wildlife in the area. Opportunities for the public to observe wildlife will be enhanced by controlling facility development, installing bird baths and nesting boxes in high use areas, and improving habitat for the reintroduction of selected species such as pronghorn and sage grouse. Such re-introductions will be in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. Fencing and creation of a wetland environment are the types of actions required to meet this objective.

Other wildlife-related actions to be taken include implementing the San Antonio-Pot Mountain habitat management plan; locating trails and other facilities to optimize wildlife viewing opportunities; avoiding development in sensitive wildlife habitats; expanding the no-hunting zone to include all but the west rim area; and limiting fuelwood and timber sales to those that will enhance wildlife habitat.

In the river canyons, BLM will manage the aquatic habitat to achieve the rivers' full potential for fisheries by conducting studies on minimal and optimum flows.

Parking or overnight use (including camping) will not be allowed within 300 feet of existing trailheads or trail descent points, as appropriate, to protect wildlife migration corridors and access routes to water. The BLM will install appropriate signs to inform users of the restriction. Restrictions on overnight use will not apply to the Raven or Powerline trailheads or to those on the east rim of the gorge within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area.

ORILLA VERDE RECREATION AREA (NEW MEXICO)

Orilla Verde Recreation Area provides access for a variety of activities including camping, fishing, swimming, boating, bird-watching, hiking, and general sightseeing along part of NM 570.

The east side of the river is privately owned for about the first two miles downstream of the confluence of the Rio Pueblo and Rio Grande. Camping is allowed within the recreation area only at designated sites. The west side of the river throughout the recreation area is undeveloped except for the campground at Taos Junction Bridge and two designated primitive camp sites. Four campgrounds are on the east side of the river at Petaca, Arroyo Hondo, Orilla Verde (which includes a visitor station and storage yard), and Pilar. Each site has picnic and overnight camping facilities, restrooms, and (except at Arroyo Hondo) drinking water. Public pay telephones are available at the Taos Junction and Orilla Verde campgrounds, as are group shelters that accommodate up to 50 people.

Boating access is provided at four locations--the Taos Junction, Orilla Verde, and Arroyo Hondo campgrounds, and at the Lone Juniper Recreation Site, which is designated for primitive camping.

ACCESS

Vehicle access is limited to designated routes of travel as shown on Map 6-d and listed in Table 3-1.

Shoreline access at will be restricted at selected locations in Orilla Verde Recreation Area to protect bird habitat. Restrictions will be passive (e.g., by closing off adjacent parking areas or obliterating signs of trails).

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

BLM will attempt to acquire the following lands if landowners consent:

- Private land adjacent to the Taos Junction Bridge (within T 24 N, R 11 E; portions of eight protracted sections totaling approximately 2,510 acres);
- Private land within T 24 N, R 11 E, Sections 22, 23, 29, 32 (approximately 260 acres); and
- State land within T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 2 (approximately 271 acres).

The Recreation Area is closed to new rights-of-way, except for underground utilities and New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department road-maintenance activities.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Grazing will be managed under guidelines shown in Table 3-4 for Allotments 517 and 626 (shown on Map 7 in the back pocket). No livestock use will be permitted within the Gorge.

MINERALS

Continue closure of the Recreation Area to locatable mineral entry. The No Surface Occupancy stipulation for oil and gas leasing and development would be applied to any leases issued covering this area.

Except for recreational gold panning and a building stone site at Arroyo Hondo (T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 24), the removal or collection of rocks or mineral material will not be allowed.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Complete an inventory of cultural resources and provide interpretation where feasible. The highest priority for inventory will be areas of intensive recreation use.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center and selected sites throughout the Recreation Area will be used to provide visitor information and environmental education on the Rio Grande Gorge, its history, resources and uses.

Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center: Provide displays, including interactive videos, about the Rio Grande Gorge's recreation opportunities, history and resources. Promote visitor etiquette toward resources and education about local custom and culture. The visitor center will serve as a hub for environmental education with local and visiting school groups, and formal presentations will be given on a variety of topics of interest to visitors and local residents.

Taos Junction Bridge: Acquire land or make a land use agreement and put interpretive signing in place to describe the site's history, river ethics, and leave no trace practices. Provide BLM ranger presence, including guided hikes.

La Vista Verde Trail: Install a sign at the trailhead about hiker safety, cultural resources protection and vegetation.

Orilla Verde Campground: Replace the current contact station with an unstaffed facility to provide

exhibits describing the area's recreation opportunities, sites of interest, riparian ecosystem, cultural resources, safety, wildlife, geology, and native plants. A nearby volunteer host site will allow for personal visitor contacts in summer.

RECREATION

Boating: Enforce the supplemental rule that pro-hibits motorized travel on the river by prohibiting hovercraft or motorized boat launching on public lands. Outfitted and private boaters will be managed under guidelines described in Chapter 4.

Casual Uses: Continue the closure to hunting, trapping, and the discharge of firearms within the recreation area, in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Fishing: Provide universal fishing access at one or two locations in the Recreation Area, and improve trails to the river from parking areas along NM 570 to provide safer access.

Camping and Picnicking: Camping in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area will be allowed only at developed campgrounds, and at designated primitive sites at Lone Juniper and selected sites on the west side of the river.

All campgrounds will be rebuilt to improve accessibility, provide additional sites where space allows, and provide additional services such as more group sites, RV hook-ups, dish washing stations, and restrooms with showers. Each campground will have a host/information facility with full hookups. Host facilities may be provided at major river access sites if use warrants.

A fully developed campground with 9 to 13 sites including at least one group site will be constructed near the historic stagecoach stop northeast of the bridge, if the private land adjacent to the Taos Junction Bridge is acquired.

Trails: BLM will design and construct La Cieneguilla Trail from Pilar campground to the Taos Junction Bridge Area, and continue to maintain La Vista Verde Trail. Short trails used to access the shoreline will be maintained to the minimum extent necessary to assure safety.

SCENIC QUALITY

The rim area bounded by New Mexico Highway 68 (NM 68), the north rim of Arroyo Hondo, and the rim of the Rio Grande Gorge (if acquired) will be managed under Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines; campgrounds and developed day-use areas along the river under Class III guidelines; and the remainder of the area under Class II guidelines.

WATERSHED

Fire suppression activities will be conducted in a manner least disturbing to soils and vegetation. A strategy will be developed to control tamarisk and noxious weeds and reestablish native vegetation to improve biodiversity within the Recreation Area.

Water rights for springs in Arroyo Hondo Canyon, east of NM 68 near the Horseshoe Curve, will be acquired if owners are willing to sell.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT

Restrict shoreline access in designated areas, and close selected side channels to boating use to protect bird habitat.

Human use on public land in the big-game migratory corridor within Arroyo Hondo Canyon (near Horseshoe Curve) will not be encouraged.

Protect southwestern willow flycatcher territories through implementation of the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher Management Plan, 1998.*

LOWER GORGE ACEC (NEW MEXICO)

This ACEC covers 16,351 acres of public land along a 14-mile-long stretch of the Rio Grande from the village of Pilar to the Velarde Diversion Dam, and includes important riparian habitat along both sides of the river. The designation recognizes the area's value for recreation, wildlife habitat, and riparian vegetation. The majority of the lands within the 12-mile-long segment of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River designated in 1994 are within the ACEC. This new ACEC will encompass the former Racecourse ACEC (1,355 acres) and 663 acres of the Black Mesa ACEC. Its boundary also encloses 5,127 acres of private and state lands which BLM will try to acquire. The boundary of the Black Mesa ACEC has been adjusted to exclude the portion transferred to the new ACEC.

ACCESS

Vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails which are shown on Map 6-c (back pocket). BLM will work with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department to identify safe pullouts for sightseeing and parking along NM 68 and 570. Road improvements will be recommended to increase safety, such as marked driveway entrances, turning lanes, or road work to increase line of sight distances at dangerous hills or turns.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

Acquire selected private lands within the ACEC boundaries, if landowners are willing to sell.

Allow disposal of about ½ acre in T 23 N, R 10 E, Section 19 to address community needs and approximately five acres in T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 33 in Pilar for community purposes and a trash transfer site. Otherwise, the remainder of the ACEC will be withdrawn from the public land laws.

New rights-of-way will be excluded unless needed to administer recreation sites or to provide access or utility service to private or state lands where it was otherwise not possible. Utilities will be underground only and will be co-located with roads.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Grazing will be managed under guidelines described in Table 3-4 for Allotments 503, 514, 516, 517 and 636 (see Map 7 in back pocket for locations). No grazing will be permitted within the ACEC's riparian and wetland areas.

MINERALS

Withdraw the ACEC from mineral entry and close it to mineral material disposal. The ACEC is closed to mineral leasing.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Pilar North Parking Area: Provide river ranger patrols and limited informational signing.

Quartzite Recreation Site: Develop interpretive signs describing key resources and river characteristics, and increase river ranger presence.

Racecourse Parking Sites: Provide interpretive signs at larger sites receiving the heaviest visitor use, and focus on Wild and Scenic River management, watchable wildlife, and natural and cultural features of interest.

County Line/Rinconada Overlook: Provide signing focusing on riparian area protection.

Lover's Lane: Increase patrol of the site.

Embudo Station: Provide some patrol and interpretive signing on river use, local history, and good neighbor guidelines in cooperation with landowners.

RECREATION

Boating: Outfitted and private boaters will be regulated by the guidelines described in Chapter 4.

Camping and Picnicking: Close the Quartzite Recreation Site to camping. No camping will be allowed within 100 feet of the river between the County Line Recreation Site and the Velarde Diver-sion Dam, including the County Line and Lover's Lane sites. Additional sites could be closed if monitoring indicates that resource damage is occur-ring that can not be mitigated in other ways.
Provide day-use facilities at the south end of the County Line Recreation Site to accommodate fishing and picnicking and, if use warrants, install a universally accessible restroom.

Fishing: Provide universal fishing access at the Quartzite and/or County Line Recreation Sites (away from the launch/takeout areas), and at Lover's Lane. Improve trails to the river from parking areas along NM 68 to provide safer access.

Trails: BLM will conduct a feasibility study in

cooperation with the New Mexico State Highway

and Transportation Department for a pedestrian underpass or overpass between the Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center and the Quartzite Recreation Site.

Continue to improve foot trails from the NM 68 parking areas to river sites. Where terrain allows, BLM will provide a trail between parking sites to facilitate access.

Develop or improve the Rinconada Hill Trail, following old roads from the County Line Recreation Site northeast to the Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center.

RIPARIAN RESOURCES

BLM's goal of improving riparian conditions will be achieved by closing several sites to vehicles, including the public lands at the confluence of the Rio Grande and Rio Embudo, an east shore vehicle pullout located ½ mile south of Embudo Station, and the pullout located just upstream from the Velarde Diversion Dam. The riparian area at Lovers' Lane will be closed to vehicles, and adjacent private lands, if acquired.

SCENIC QUALITY

Continue application of Visual Resource Manage-ment Class II guidelines on all public lands in the ACEC, except at recreation sites (four acres) which will be managed under VRM Class III guidelines.

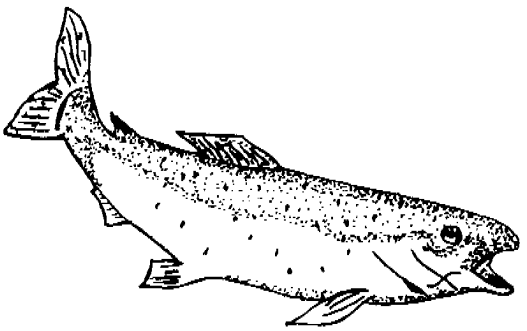
To protect the visual quality of the ACEC, rights-of-way in the ACEC will be strictly limited and the area withdrawn from public land and mining laws. BLM will redesign and landscape the Pilar North Parking Area and developed recreation sites, revegetate closed roads, and rehabilitate the old mining site near the Taos Junction Campground. BLM will develop partnerships with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and Public Service Company of New Mexico to improve the appearance of the NM 68 and 570 rights-of-way and the gas line parallel to NM 68.

WATERSHED

Shrub grasslands will be burned to improve watershed health. Noxious weeds will be suppressed with methods deemed most effective. Herbicides will be used only as a last resort. Any unplanned fires will be extinguished within the full-suppression zone. In the rest of the ACEC, fire prescriptions and burn plans will be developed to meet vegetation management objectives.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT

Protect southwestern willow flycatcher territories through implementation of the *Southwest Willow Flycatcher Management Plan, 1998.*



COPPER HILL ACEC (NEW MEXICO)

This area, covering 17,280 acres of public lands south and east of NM 68, is named after Copper Hill, one of the higher peaks in this area. Several streams that drain this portion of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains characterize the unit, the most significant being the Rio Embudo. Access in much of the unit is limited by the steep, densely wooded terrain, but NM 75 is the main route.

The ACEC includes the now-rescinded Warm Springs (12,567 acres) and Lower Embudo Special Management Areas (SMAs), and the Agua Caliente (664 acres) and Embudo Canyon (1,212 acres) ACECs. The new ACEC is divided into four zones:

1 The Agua Caliente Protection Zone, which includes the area from the south boundary of the Agua Caliente Wild and Scenic River Study Area north to the ACEC boundary. The Agua Caliente drainage supplies water to the village of Pilar that is used for irrigation. This watershed is covered by stands of piñon, juniper, ponderosa pine, aspen, and Douglas fir, and contains noteworthy riparian and fish habitat.

2 The Rio Embudo Protection Zone, which includes the area from the north boundary of the Rio Embudo Wild and Scenic River Study Area south to the ACEC boundary. The Embudo Canyon is a deep, five-mile-long box canyon with outstanding scenic, wildlife, and recreation values. Since designation of the SMA, inventory has shown that the area also contains critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl.

3 The Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone, which covers the same 498 acre area as the former Lower Embudo SMA. It encompasses portions of the river valley as well as flat terraces and rolling hills overlooking it. The area contains archaeological sites dating to the Coalition Period (A.D. 1200-1325); three of these are small pueblos with associated agricultural and special-use areas.

4 The Central Protection Zone, which covers the remainder of the ACEC (refer to Map 4 for the boundaries of the Wild and Scenic River Study Areas).

ACCESS

Vehicle use is restricted to designated roads and trails (see Map 6-c for designations, and Table 3-1). BLM will try to acquire administrative access to Agua Caliente for fisheries management.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

State and private lands within the ACEC will be acquired by purchase or exchange with willing owners.

New rights-of-way will only be allowed in the Central Protection Zone, and will be excluded in the remainder of the ACEC.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Livestock in Allotment 521 will be managed under guidelines shown in Table 3-4. When the current permittee chooses to stop grazing, the permit will be retired.

MINERALS

The ACEC will be withdrawn from the public land and mineral entry laws. Mineral leasing will only be allowed within the Central Protection Zone.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

A Class III (100%) cultural resources inventory will be completed, and all archaeological sites recorded. This inventory will be phased over time and tied to priority areas (based on protection needs).

Eligible archaeological sites will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Access to the pueblo ruins in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone will be limited to permitted users only.

Use limited techniques to suppress fires in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone. Suppression techniques causing earth disturbance (e.g., fire lines built by bulldozers or hand tools, off-road vehicles) will not be used within this zone.

RECREATION

Primitive camping will be allowed except within 100 feet of rivers or streams to protect riparian habitat. The area will remain open to casual recreation uses. Trails will be marked in the Rinconada Hill and Agua Caliente areas to limit surface disturbance.

SCENIC QUALITY

Visual Resource Management Class I guidelines will apply to 1,775 acres of the Rio Embudo and Agua Caliente Wild and Scenic River study segments. VRM Class II is assigned to the remainder of the Agua Caliente and Rio Embudo Protection Zones (4,789

acres). VRM Class III is assigned to the 10,716 acre Central Protection Zone.

BLM will protect the visual resources of the ACEC through land acquisitions, coordination with Rio Arriba and Taos Counties concerning zoning regulations, and other limitations on surface-disturbing activities.

WATERSHED

Manage all woodland and forestry resources to enhance wildlife habitat, ecosystem health, and scenic values.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

The BLM will recommend a five-mile segment of the Rio Embudo known as the Embudo Box for designation as a wild component of the Wild and Scenic River System. Proposed boundaries are shown on Map 4, and management prescriptions will be those discussed throughout this Final Plan.

The BLM will complete suitability studies with the Carson National Forest on their adjoining portions of the following 10.1 miles of streams and river segments (tentative classifications are shown in parentheses): Arroyo Hondo (scenic), Tierra Amarilla Canyon (scenic), Agua Caliente Canyon

(scenic/wild), Cañada de Ojo Sarco (scenic), and Rio de las Trampas (scenic). The BLM will manage these segments for protection of their wild and scenic values until the Congress determines their status. The interim boundaries will be 0.25 mile beyond the ordinary high water line.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT

Acquire administrative access to Agua Caliente for fisheries management.

Prohibit all surface-disturbing projects, vegetative removal, and mineral material sales to protect Mexican spotted owl critical habitat area NM-BLM-3 in the new Copper Hill ACEC. The habitat area has been withdrawn from public land and mining laws and closed to mineral leasing.

Continue the cooperative effort with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for the reintroduction of Rio Grande cutthroat trout to Agua Caliente Canyon after the existing population of rainbow trout is removed. In addition, the BLM will designate the Rio Grande cutthroat trout as a BLM sensitive species in New Mexico.

CHAPTER 3

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This chapter provides an overview of the key resources and uses occurring in the Rio Grande Corridor, and policies to be followed or actions to be implemented to improve management of the area. Many guidelines or decisions already in place have effectively met public needs and resolved issues. Because they have been proven effective, the BLM will continue to use these measures to manage the Rio Grande Corridor. Decisions from previous plans that will continue are referred to in the following resource/use summaries.

In August of 1996, BLM amended its grazing regulations to require each state to provide a set of standards and guidelines that address the health of public lands. At a minimum, the standards must meet the fundamentals of land health outlined in the regulations and must apply to all management and uses of the land. BLM in Colorado and New Mexico has standards in place that comply with the new regulations. It is anticipated that New Mexico may have additional standards in the near future. As BLM implements any management action on public lands, the standards must be addressed. Also, all management actions or tools, referred to as guidelines in the regulations, must be evaluated to ensure they move management toward a desired future condition or landscape that achieves the standards for land health.

Standards for public land health are meant to pro-vide measures by which the health of the land can be assessed for condition and trend. They are not intended to provide a process that categorizes the land by condition classes. Indicators associated with the standards provide guidance to assess resource condition for a given landscape, whether the boundaries are an allotment or a larger unit of land such as a watershed. Assessments of public lands are conducted in priority or focus areas and in areas where administrative requirements indicate the need, such as term permit renewals (grazing programs) or special recreation permits (recreation programs).

The following are standards by which land health will be assessed:

- Upland soils must exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, landform, and geologic processes. Adequate soil infiltration and permeability allow for the accumulation of soil moisture necessary for optimal plant growth and vigor and minimizes surface runoff.

- Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water function properly and have the ability to recover from major disturbance such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods. Riparian vegetation captures sediment and provides forage, habitat, and biodiversity. Water quality is improved or maintained. Stable soils store and release water slowly.

- Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential. Plants and animals at both the community and population level are productive, resilient, diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce and sustain natural fluctuations and the ecological process.

- Special status, threatened, and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by the BLM and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy, native plant and animal communities.

- Water quality standards are being met for all water bodies.

ACCESS

BLM policy is to provide reasonable access to meet the needs of all visitors and users, including those with disabilities, to public facilities and resources. At the same time, the agency attempts to minimize conflicts among users, promote visitor safety, and prevent damage to natural resources. The BLM may acquire legal access across nonfederal land through donation, land exchange, purchase, or easement from willing landowners.

Management guidance for motorized access to and across public land is contained in Executive Order 11644 (February 8, 1972); Executive Order 11989; BLM Manuals 8342, 8300, H-9114-1; and Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 8340 and 8364. Executive Order 11644 (as amended) establishes policies and procedures to ensure that the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) on public land is controlled and directed. All roads will be constructed and maintained in accordance with BLM guidelines, including those identified in Instruction Memorandum No. NM-95-031 (USDI, BLM 1995).

The San Luis and Taos RMPs established that motorized vehicle use in the planning area is limited to designated roads and trails. Route designation decisions contained in BLM New Mexico's *North Unit Transportation Plan* (USDI, BLM 1994) will continue. Route designation recommendations for the remainder of the planning area are included.

The BLM will continue to carry out decisions recorded in the San Luis and Taos RMPs that limited vehicle use in most of the planning area to designated roads. Vehicle use will be allowed on 127.1 miles of roads and trails to be designated as open in the planning area. To protect resources, the BLM will designate 76.3 miles of public land roads as closed to motorized vehicles (see Table 3-1 and Map 6).

Upper Gorge (Colorado)

Vehicle use will be limited to 57.2 miles of roads or trails designated as open. Closed routes will total 34.0 miles. The vehicle closure on 2,000 acres in the Flat Top portion of the San Luis Hills ACEC will remain in effect. All routes will be designated within riparian areas between the La Sauses Cemetery and the Lobatos Bridge (on the west side) as closed to vehicle use. In addition, BLM will rehabilitate closed routes to enhance riparian vegetation (on 0.5 acre).

Upper Gorge (New Mexico)

No change will be made in the designation of 31.6 miles of open routes.

Lower Gorge

Vehicle use will be limited to 23.5 miles of routes designated as open. A total of 10.1 miles of routes will be closed. Several sites adjacent to the Rio Grande will be closed to vehicles including the river access road at the Arroyo Hondo Campground, public lands at the confluence of the Rio Grande and Rio Embudo, a vehicle pullout located 0.5 mile south of Embudo Station on the east shore, and the pullout located just upstream from the Velarde Diversion Dam (also on the east shore). The public land at Lover's Lane will be closed to vehicles, as well as most of the adjacent private lands if they are ac-quired. (Parking will only be available on a 0.5-acre area between NM 68 and the cottonwoods). If the 2,510 acres of private land adjacent to the Taos Junction Bridge is acquired, the 1.5 miles of riparian habitat will be improved by closing selected areas (totaling 1.4 acres) to vehicle use. A 0.2-acre area east of the Taos Junction Bridge, if acquired, will remain open to vehicle access and a variety of shoreline uses.

Copper Hill

Vehicle use will be limited to 14.8 miles of inventoried routes designated as open; closed routes will total 32.2 miles. The closed routes are predominantly duplicate roads and those with no destination.

Table 3-1 Rio Grande Corridor Route Designations

Route #	Designation	Rationale
New Mexico Designations (shown on Maps 6-b through 6-e in back pocket)		
100	Open	Grazing permittee/recreational access to rim of Petaca, and access to state land.
100A	Closed	No destination.
100B	Open	Private land access.
100C	Open	Grazing permittee access.
101	Closed	Watershed/migratory big game protection.
102+A,B,C	Closed	Watershed/migratory big game protection. Designation effective only if lands acquired
103+A,B,C	Closed	Watershed/migratory big game protection. Designation effective only if lands acquired
104+A,B	Closed	Watershed/migratory big game protection. Designation effective only if lands acquired
105A	Open	Pipeline/private land access.
106	Open	Private land access. Closed beyond private land for watershed protection.
106A	Closed	Watershed/migratory big game protection.
107	Open	Gas line access.
107A	Closed	No destination.
107B	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
108A	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
109	Closed	Watershed protection, no legal public access.
110+A	Closed	Watershed protection.
111	Closed	Watershed protection.
112+A,B	Closed	Watershed protection, Mica Mine trail.
113	Open	Gravel pit access.
114	Open	Forest/private land access.
114A	Closed	No public access.
114B	Open	Private land access.
114C	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
114D	Open	This route will remain open to provide for access to private land and management of the natural gas pipeline.
115	Open	Forest/state land access.
115B	Open	Forest/state land/range improvement access.
115F	Open	Grazing permittee/range improvement access.
116A	Open	Private land access.
117	Open	Powerline access.

Table 3-1 Rio Grande Corridor Route Designations

Route #	Designation	Rationale
118	Open	Private land access.
119	Open	Private land access.
119B	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
119C	Open	Grazing permittee/private land access.
120	Open/Closed	Lover's Lane - private land access from highway. If access acquired, river access will be provided, w/no vehicles allowed in riparian zone.
121	Open	Private land access.
122	Open	Private land access.
123	Closed	Watershed protection (Rinconada Overlook area).
124	Open	County Line Recreation Site (access to recreation facilities).
125	Open	Mineral material site access.
125A	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
125B,C,D	Closed	Crucial winter range/watershed protection.
125E	Closed	Watershed/wildlife protection.
125F	Closed	Cultural, archaeological resources protection.
125G	Closed	Watershed protection.
125H	Closed	Cultural, archaeological resources protection.
125I	Closed	Pipeline route, watershed protection.
126	Open	Private land access.
126A	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
126B,C	Closed	Protection of crucial winter range.
126D,E	Closed	Watershed protection.
126F	Open	If the private property to the south is acquired, this route will remain open due to its scenic potential. A seasonal closure will also be implemented from December through April for winter range wildlife protection.
126G	Open	If lands are acquired this route will remain open for challenging 4-wheel drive (4WD) opportunities without impacting other resource values.
126H,I	Closed	If lands are acquired, these routes will be closed because they occur in an area of high soil erosion potential.
126J	Closed	Duplicate of 126.
126K	Closed	Prone to erosion.
126L	Closed	Wildlife Values. The portions of 126L on private land if acquired will also be closed.
126D,M,N	Closed	If lands are acquired these routes will be closed to protect crucial fawning and calving for big game species of wildlife.

Table 3-1 Rio Grande Corridor Route Designations

Route #	Designation	Rationale
126O	Open	To afford access to the historic Champion Mine.
126P,Q	Closed	Hazard of water erosion is high.
127	Open	Private land access.
127A,B,C	Closed	Watershed/crucial winter range protection. Highly erodible soils.
127D,E,F	Closed	Watershed protection.
128	Open	Access to private land.
128A	Closed	Watershed/crucial winter range protection.
128B	Closed	If lands are acquired this route will be closed because it duplicates the access provided by Route 126.
128C	Closed	If lands are acquired this route will be closed because it dead ends and does not provide for scenic views or 4WD opportunities.
128D	Open	If lands are acquired this route will remain open to provide access to historic mine workings for interpretive purposes.
129	Closed	Watershed/crucial winter range protection.
130	Open	Mineral material site access.
130A	Open	Mining claim access.
130B	Closed	This route will be closed north of the intersection with 130F; the primary entrance to this route is 130F.
130C,D,E	Closed	These routes consist of short spurs that do not provide access to specific locations or scenic vistas nor do they provide for any measurable 4WD opportunities.
130F	Open	This route will be open to provide access along 130B.
130G	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate routes.
130H	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
130I	Closed	Previously closed by New Mexico State Highway & Transportation Department for mineral material site security.Watershed protection, no destination.
132	Open	Mining claim access (primary access to Harding Mine).
132A,B,C,D, E,F	Open	Mining claim and recreational access.
132G	Closed	Watershed/riparian protection.
132H	Open	If Section 32 is acquired, this route will be open, subject to mitigation of erosion.
132I	Open	If Section 32 is acquired, this route will remain open to a scenic overlook.
132J	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
132K	Open	Mining claim and recreational access.
133	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
134	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.

Table 3-1 Rio Grande Corridor Route Designations

Route #	Designation	Rationale
135	Closed	Mining claim/recreation access. Closed from junction with 135C to the east.
135A	Open	This route will remain open to form a loop with 136.
135B,C	Closed	Watershed/crucial winter range protection.
136	Open	Closed at parking area near wild and scenic boundary for watershed/crucial winter range protection.
137	Open	Mining claim/recreation access.
137A,B,C	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate routes.
137D	Closed	Watershed protection.
138	Closed	4WD use is considered incompatible with on-site soil conditions and resource protection objectives for riparian habitats.
138A	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route, no destination.
139+A,B	Closed	Watershed/crucial winter range protection.
140+A,B,C	Closed	Watershed/crucial winter range protection.
141	Closed	Watershed protection.
142+A	Closed	Watershed protection.
143+A,B,C,D	Closed	Watershed protection.
144	Open	Recreation trail access.
145+A,B,C,D	Closed	Watershed protection.
146	Open	Recreational access to river, closed near state land boundary
147	Closed	Watershed protection.
148	Closed	Watershed protection.
149	Open	Private land access.
150	Open	Forest access (Carson National Forest).
FR606 (105)	Open	Forest access (Carson National Forest)
Colorado Designations (shown on Maps 6-a and 6-b in back pocket)		
4998	Closed	Watershed protection; grazing permittee access.
4999	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination; grazing permittee access.
5000+A	Open	Grazing permittee access.
5001	Closed	Private property access; provide closed to protect wetland and water bird populations.
5001A	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
5002	Open	Grazing permittee access.
5002A	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.

Table 3-1 Rio Grande Corridor Route Designations

Route #	Designation	Rationale
5003	Open	River access.
5003+A,B	Open	Private land access.
5003C	Closed	Watershed protection.
5003D	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5003E	Open	Canyon rim access.
5004	Open	River access.
5004A,B,C,D,E	Closed	Watershed protection.
5005	Open	Recreation/grazing permittee access.
5005A	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5005B,C	Closed	Wilderness Study Area.
5006	Open	Recreation access.
5006A	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5006B	Closed	Wilderness Study Area, watershed protection.
5007	Open	Recreation/grazing permittee access.
5007A	Closed	Watershed protection, Wilderness Study Area.
5009+A,B	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5009C	Closed	Private land access; grazing permittee access provided. Closed to maintain ACEC values.
5010	Open	River/grazing permittee access.
5010A	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5010B,C	Closed	Watershed protection, duplicate route.
5014A	Closed	Wilderness Study Area, watershed protection.
5014B	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5015	Open	Grazing permittee access.
5015A,B	Closed	Watershed protection, no destination.
5015C	Open	Water well access.
5016	Closed	Watershed protection, Wilderness Study Area.
5017A	Open	Grazing permittee access.
5020	Open	River access.
5020A,B	Closed	Watershed protection, wildlife habitat.
5021A	Closed	Watershed protection, wildlife habitat. Private land access provided.

AMERICAN INDIAN COORDINATION

The BLM's objective is to be responsive to American Indian uses within the planning area. It is BLM policy to accommodate access to and ceremonial use of sacred sites by American Indian religious practitioners and avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sites. The agency will coordinate and consult with local tribes about sacred uses within the planning area, while protecting the privacy required for these uses.

Although most interactions will be with the Taos and Picuris Pueblos, other tribal groups have expressed cultural affinities with the Rio Grande Corridor.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND REALTY ACTIONS

All public lands in the planning area are classified for retention, while most State and private lands are proposed for acquisition. The BLM will acquire lands within the planning area by purchase, exchange, easement, or donation if landowners are willing (See Table 3-2). In limited instances, such as under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, the agency may dispose of lands in the planning area if it is in the best interest of the public, but this will require an amendment to the RMP.

In the planning area there will be no disposal of public land except for color-of-title sales and disposal of the three parcels identified below:

- 200 acres in T 27 N, R 12 E, Section 20 for potential use as a landfill by Taos County;
- Allow disposal of approximately 0.5 acre in T 23 N, R 10 E, Section 19 to address community needs; and
- Approximately 5 acres in T 24 N, R 11 E, Section 33 in Pilar for community purposes and a trash transfer site.

BLM will continue to grant rights-of-way across public lands to provide access and utility services to private or State lands when no alternative is avail-able. These new rights-of-way will be considered on a case-by-case basis except in exclusion areas. To protect scenic quality and habitat for the Mexican spotted owl and fisheries, rights-of-way will be excluded from the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers, the expanded Wild Rivers Recreation Area, the entire Lower Gorge Unit (with exceptions as described below), and Copper Hill ACEC's Agua Caliente and Rio Embudo Protection Zones. (Note: Rights-of-way will be excluded from the Wild Rivers Recreation Area and the Lower Gorge Unit unless they are necessary to administer or improve access to recreation sites.)

Within the Lower Gorge ACEC, access or utility services to private or State land where such access is otherwise not possible will be considered. Rights-of-way to private or State land completely surrounded by public land may be authorized, with restrictions to protect the scenic quality of the area. Only one ac-cess point to such parcels will be authorized across public lands. An amendment to an existing right-of- way (e.g., a request for expansion, a different use, or to provide structures different in style) will only be approved if the change is consistent with the objectives of the Final Plan. New utility projects will be underground only and will be co-located with roads. The right-of-way window near the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge will continue in effect. Rights- of-way for acequias (irrigation ditches) are grandfathered through the legislation for Wild and Scenic Rivers, so they also will remain in effect. Construction and rehabilitation of acequias will have to be done using historical materials and methods to protect wild and scenic river values.

Table 3-2 State and Private Lands/Minerals Proposed for Acquisition

Area	Township	Range	Section	Subsection	Acres	Surface or Subsurface
State Lands in Colorado Proposed for Acquisition						
San Luis Hills ACEC	35N	10E	36	All	640	Both
	34N	10E	36	All	640	Both
	34N	11E	16	All	640	Both
Upper Gorge	33N	11E	16	All	640	Both
				Subtotal	**2,560**	
Private Lands in Colorado Proposed for Acquisition						
Upper Gorge	33N	11E	14	Lots, 3, 4	64	Both
	33N	11E	15	SE¼, E½SW¼	240	Both
	33N	11E	22	Lots 1, 2, 3, 4	345	Both
	33N	11E	27	Lots 1, 2, 3	59	Both
	33N	11E	28	Lots 1, 2	59	Both
	34N	10E	3	S½SE¼	80	Both
	34N	10E	11	SE¼SW¼	40	Both
	35N	10E	35	NE¼	160	Both
	35N	10E	24	S½SE¼	80	Both
	35N	10E	25	NE¼, NE¼SE¼	200	Both
	35N	11E	17	SW¼SW¼	40	Both
	35N	11E	18	S½SE¼	80	Both
	35N	11E	19	NE¼SW¼, S½SW¼	120	Both
	35N	11E	30	NW¼, N½SW¼	240	Both
				Subtotal	**1,807**	
Total State & Nonfederal Lands in Colorado Proposed for Acquisition					**4,367**	

Area	Township	Range	Section	Subsection	Acres	Surface or Subsurface
State Lands in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition					**Table 3-2 (continued)**	
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River	31N	11E	2	W½SE¼	80	Both
	30N	12E	7	E½SE¼	80	Both
	30N	12E	29	SW¼NW¼, W½W½SE¼	80	Both
	30N	12E	32	SW¼, S½NW¼, W½W½SE¼, W½W½NE¼	320	Both
Wild Rivers Recreation Area	29N	12E	16	All	560	Both
	29N	12E	10	NW¼SW¼, Lot 5	80	Both
	29N	12E	32	All	617	Both
Orilla Verde	24N	11E	2	NW¼, W½SW¼, NE¼SW¼	267	Both
	24N	11E	32	W½NW¼	80	Both
Lower Gorge ACEC	23N	10E	16	N½	320	Both
Copper Hill ACEC	23N	11E	32	All	640	Both
	23N	11E	2	N½	329	Both
	23N	11E	16	All	640	Both
	23N	10E	36	All state lands	300	Both
	24N	11E	36	All	469	Both
				Subtotal	**4,862**	
Private Lands in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition						
Upper Gorge	25N	11E	23	N½NE¼, NW¼SE¼, SW¼NE¼	160	Both
	25N	11E	26	SE¼	160	Both
Along Rio Hondo	27N	12E	30,31 protracted	Portion within Arroyo Hondo Grant from north rim to south rim & 100' setbacks	90	Both
Wild Rivers Recreation Area	28N	12E	7	W½	308	Surface
Orilla Verde Recreation Area	24N	11E	22, 23, 29	Portions of each section	253	Both
	24N	11E	1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13,14,15 protracted	Portions of each section	2,454	Both

Area	Township	Range	Section	Subsection	Acres	Surface (Subsurface)
Private Lands in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition (continued)						**Table 3-2 (continued)**
Lower Gorge ACEC	24N	11E	32	Various small holding claims as shown in RMP	65	Both
	23N	9E	23	Tract (Tr.) A, SE¼, NE¼SW¼	215	Both
	23N	9E	24	E½, SE¼NW¼, S½SW¼, Tr. A	443	Both
	23N	9E	34	SW¼SE¼, SE¼SW¼	80	Both
	23N	10E	1	Lots 5, 6, SW¼SE¼	77	Both
	23N	10E	11	Lots 1, 2, 10, S½NE¼	169	Both
	23N	10E	12	Lots 1, 2	75	Both
	23N	10E	15	Small Holding Claim (SHC) 4472 Tract 1; SHC 2143; SHC 1109; SHC 4098; SHC 489; SHC 488 Tract 1; SHC 488; SHC 2143	104	Both
	23N	10E	16	Lots 1, 2	67	Both
	23N	10E	19	Lots 3, 4, 13, 30, 31, 32, 34, 38; SHC 3266; SHC 388; SHC 969; SHC 561 Tr. 1, 2, 3; SHC 559 Tr.1, 3; SHC 556 Tr. 2; SHC 560 Tr. 1, 2, 3, 4; SHC 797 Tr. 2; SHC 792; SHC 966; SHC 380 Tr. 3; SHC 386; SHC 389; SHC 382 Tr. 1, 2, 3; SHC 383; SHC 494 Tr.1; SHC 968 Tr. 1	216	Both
	23N	10E	20	Lots 1, 3, 4, 6, 7; SHC 1111 Tr. 3; SHC 1120; SHC 4472; SHC 1536; SHC 801 Tr. 1, 2, 3; SHC 1000; SHC 798 Boltou Tr., Romero Tr.; SHC 1121 Borrego Tr., Archuleta Tr., Roybal Tr.; SHC 561 Tr. 4; SHC 560 Tr. 4; SHC 968 Tr. 2; SHC 556 Tr. 3; SHC 559 Tr. 2	269	Both
	23N	10E	21	SHC 1536; SHC 1111 Tr. 3, SHC 1120 (1128028); SHC 966 Tr. 1; SHC 349 (446); SHC 355 (457); SHC 402 (444); SHC 403 (443); SHC 488 (447); SHC 487 Tr. 1; SHC 4; SHC 690 Romero Tr. (776673), Romero Tr. (45); SHC 487 Romero Tr. (448), Ortega Tr.; SHC 966 Tr. 2; SHC 2143; Lot 1	170	Both
	23N	10E	22	SHC 4098 (489); Sanchez Tr., Romero Tr.; SHC 488 Tr. 2; SHC 488 (181954); SHC 2143	33	Both
	23N	11E	6	Tract 4	90	Both
	23N	11E	8	N½	320	Surface
	23N	11E	5	S½	320	Surface

Area	Township	Range	Section	Subsection	Acres	Surface or Subsurface
Nonfederal Lands in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition (continued)						**Table 3-2 (continued)**
Copper Hill ACEC	23N	11E	17	Part	588	Surface
	23N	11E	17, 18, 19, 20	Patent #33276	103	Both
	23N	11E	21	NW¼, SW¼, SE¼, N½NE¼	560	Surface
	23N	11E	29	Patent #s 1018121 & 30820005	51	Both
				Subtotal	**7,440**	
Total State and Private Lands in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition					**12,302**	
Nonfederal Minerals/BLM Surface in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition						
Wild Rivers Recreation Area	29N	12E	10	NE¼SW¼, NW¼SE¼	80	Subsurface
	29N	12E	20	E½E½, E½SW¼SE¼, E½NW¼NE¼	189	Subsurface
	29N	12E	21	N½	320	Subsurface
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River	26N	11E	12, 13	Grant Lands Case #27827	138	Subsurface
	26N	11E	1	SE¼, part	73	Subsurface
	25N	11E	11	SE¼	160	Subsurface
	25N	11E	23	NW¼	160	Subsurface
	25N	11E	26	W½	320	Subsurface
	25N	11E	27	SE¼	160	Subsurface
Orilla Verde Recreation Area	24N	11E	16	NW¼, N½SW¼, SW¼SW¼, N½NE¼, SW¼NE¼	400	Subsurface
Total Nonfederal Minerals in New Mexico Proposed for Acquisition					**2,000**	

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Of the planning area's 123,750 public land acres, 73,105 are in 25 allotments that will remain under permit for seasonal grazing by sheep and cattle. The BLM has standards in both states for rangeland health with grazing guidelines to help the agency and allottees meet those standards. These standards and guidelines direct livestock management on public lands (see page 3-1).

Allotment boundaries on two allotments will be changed; #636 in New Mexico, will be adjusted to exclude springs in the Cañada Comanche, and #4245 in Colorado will be split into two allotments. In New Mexico allotments #603 and #641 are only partially in the planning area. For this reason, information for these allotments was not included in the tables for the plan. However, the vegetative treatments proposed for these allotments were in-cluded and analyzed in the plan.

BLM monitors the range resource for condition, trend, utilization, actual use, climate and rangeland health (see Glossary for definitions). Table 3-3 describes the schedule for performing minimum levels of allotment monitoring within the corridor. In New Mexico, vegetative inventories and monitor-ing studies will be conducted in accordance with the *Taos Monitoring Plan* (USDI, BLM 1988) as required to establish the existing condition, estimate resource potential, evaluate changes in resource condition over time, and evaluate the effectiveness of management actions.

Table 3-3 Schedule for Allotment Monitoring

Element	Minimum Frequency
Condition	10 years
Trend	3 to 5 years
Utilization	1 to 2 years/as needed
Actual Use	annually
Climate	annually

Upper Gorge - Colorado

The 13 grazing allotments in Colorado provide 2,418 AUMs of forage for sheep and cattle under the Final Plan. The area allocated to livestock forage will not change. Grazing will continue in the riparian areas of the La Sauses (#4255), Piñon Hills (#4249), Mesa Common (#4251), Piñon (#4245A and B), and Flat Top (#4253) allotments at small water gaps (about 2.5 acres total). The remainder of the riparian area in these allotments will be rested until the standards for a properly functioning riparian area are met on 124.5 acres. Once the standards are met, grazing will be allowed as long as a 4-inch stubble height on herbaceous species is maintained through the May to June high-water season or no more than 20% of the annual growth of woody riparian species will be removed.

Changes have been made in grazing management practices, acreage of vegetative treatments, kinds and numbers of range improvements, and levels of inventory and monitoring. These changes are expected to result in increased forage production that will be assigned in part to wildlife and watershed protection and in part to livestock uses. These changes are as follows:

- Grazing Systems: Six allotments will have one year of rest every third year, two allotments will have one year of rest every fourth year, one will have rest every fifth year and four allotments will be managed under rest-rotation;
- Vegetation Treatments: A total of 1,124 acres will be seeded;
- Seasons of Use: Seven allotments will be grazed in the dormant season, and six will be grazed in the growing season after plants have adequate root reserves for regrowth; and
- Range Improvements: Six wells will be developed to water 11 allotments. Permanent water gaps will be constructed on five allotments.

New Mexico

The 12 allotments in New Mexico will initially provide 1,289 AUMs of forage for cattle grazing. One allotment will be retired leaving 11 allotments providing 1,255 AUMs of livestock forage. Livestock grazing will be excluded within the riparian and wetland areas of the Lower Gorge ACEC and below the rim in the upper gorge.

To protect riparian resources and minimize conflicts with wildlife and recreationists, all unallotted and unpermitted areas (32,327 acres) and 600 acres within the Pajarito Allotment (#636) will be exclud-ed from livestock grazing over the long term. In addition, 24,446 acres have already been excluded by the Taos RMP. To improve riparian condition over the long

term, grazing privileges on the Cuestecita Allotment (#521C 1,392 acres) will be retained only for the current permittee. Grazing will be excluded upon relinquishment of the permit and no permit transfer will be allowed. If grazing preference AUMs become available in the
Rio Grande Corridor, the grazing use of these AUMs will be at the discretion of the Authorized Officer and will be prescribed to meet vegetation manage-ment objectives. The type, class (i.e., cattle, sheep, goats, horses, or other livestock) of grazing, and season of use will be determined and then a grazing schedule applied to the area where the AUMs are permitted.

The following will apply for all units in New Mexico:

- Grazing Systems: Will be implemented on four allotments. No system will be in place for the remaining eight until monitoring demonstrates the need;
- Vegetation Treatments: The BLM will treat 3,066 acres of the shrub/grassland and woodland associations on seven allotments;
- Seasons of Use: Will range from 20 to 185 days. Grazing on four allotments will begin in mid-May, five will have fall/winter use seasons, and three will begin use in mid-June; and
- Range Improvements: Will be planned on three allotments. The improvements on two allotments will be designed to improve riparian conditions, and to improve livestock forage and reduce unauthorized use of non-federal land on the other.

Table 3-4 contains a description of the basic management guidelines for each allotment under the Final Plan.

The following terms are used to describe grazing management in Table 3-4: (1) deferment - involves delay of grazing in a pasture until the seed maturity (ripening) of the key forage species; (2) rest - is distinguished from deferment in that the range receives nonuse for a full year rather than just during the growth period; (3) rotation - involves the movement of livestock from one pasture to another on a scheduled basis. Systems with deferment and rest typically involve livestock rotations.

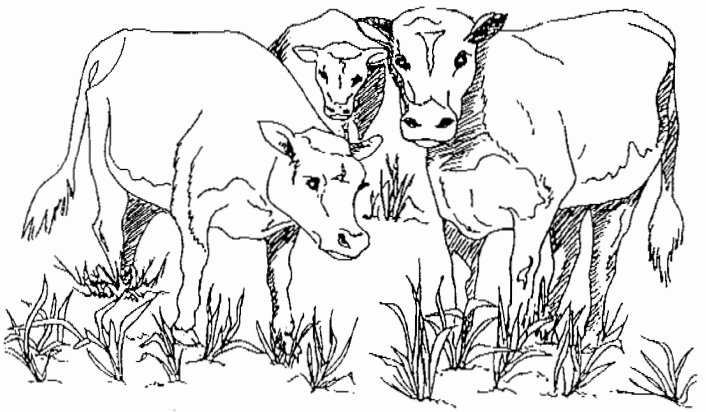


Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Upper Gorge - Colorado

4243 River Allotment

Grazing System:	One pasture with deferred rotation (deferred until after seed ripe).
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle; 200 allowable animal unit months (AUMs)
Season of Use:	October 1 to November 12
Each Year	Graze Oct 1 to Nov 12
Vegetation Treatment:	None planned.
Range Improvements:	None planned.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 627 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend every three years after growing season.

4244 South Valley Allotment

Grazing System:	One pasture with deferred rotation (deferred until after seed ripe) with rest every fourth year.
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 136 allowable AUMs
Season of Use:	December 1 to February 8
Year 1	Graze Dec 1 to Feb 8
Year 2	Graze Dec 1 to Feb 8
Year 3	Graze Dec 1 to Feb 8
Year 4	Rest
Vegetation Treatment:	None planned.
Range Improvements:	None planned; livestock water at river on narrow rocky natural water gap
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 738 acres (25% of the uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend every fourth year when allotment is rested.

4245A North Piñon Allotment

Grazing System:	Allotment will be split into two; one-pasture deferred rotation system will be developed on each with rest every third year.
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 168 AUMs
Seasons of Use:	May 20 to June 24 and November 6 to November 30
Year 1	Graze May 20 to Jun 24
Year 2	Graze Nov 6 to Nov 30
Year 3	Rest
	This grazing plan allows for complete rest every third year for both allotments in the spring and fall.
Vegetation Treatment:	Reseed 215 acres of sandy bench range site w/mix of native cool-season grasses and forbs. BLM will work with private landowner to improve riparian condition. Allocate expected forage increase of 4 AUMs to wildlife/watershed (3 AUMs) and livestock (1 AUM).
Range Improvements:	Develop well and 2 miles pipeline to water this, Piñon Hills and Kiowa Hill Allotments. Permittee will haul water to livestock w/change in location every 10 days.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 500 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend in Year 3 when rested and repeat every three years.

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Upper Gorge - Colorado (continued)

4245B South Piñon Allotment

Grazing System:	One pasture deferred rotation with rest every third year.
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 114 AUMs
Seasons of Use	May 20 to June 24 and November 6 to November 30
Year 1	Graze Nov 6 to Nov 30
Year 2	Graze May 20 to Jun 24
Year 3	Rest
	This grazing plan allows for complete rest every third year for both allotments in the spring and fall.
Vegetation Treatment:	None planned.
Range Improvements:	Haul water to livestock w/change in location every 10 days.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 500 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend in Year 3 when rested and repeat every three years.

4247 Braiden Allotment

Grazing System:	Develop grazing system with full year's rest (deferred until after seed rest) every fourth year.
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 40 allowable AUMs
Season of Use:	November 1 to November 20
Year 1	Graze Nov 1 to Nov 20
Year 2	Graze Nov 1 to Nov 20
Year 3	Graze Nov 1 to Nov 20
Year 4	Rest
Vegetation Treatment:	None planned.
Range Improvements:	None planned.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 960 acres (100% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend every fourth year when allotment is rested.

4248 Kiowa Hill Allotment

Grazing System:	Three pasture deferred rest rotation.
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 209 allowable AUMs
Seasons of Use:	May 16 to June 15 and October 10 to November 9

	West Pasture	*North Pasture*	*East Pasture*
Year 1	Graze May 16 to Jun 15	Graze Oct 10 to Nov 9	Rest
Year 2	Rest	Graze May 16 to Jun 15	Graze Oct 10 to Nov 9
Year 3	Graze Oct 10 to Nov 9	Rest	Graze May 15 to Jun 15

This plan allows for complete rest every one pasture every year. Deferring livestock grazing until after seed ripe occurs in one pasture every year.

Vegetation Treatment:	None planned.
Range Improvements:	Develop well and 2 miles pipeline to water this, Piñon Hills and North Piñon Allotments for improved livestock distribution.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 1,373 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend in year shown when pastures are rested and reread again as sequence repeats itself; trend is read every third year in a pasture.

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Upper Gorge - Colorado (continued)

4249 Piñon Hills Allotment

Grazing System:	One pasture with full year's rest every three years (deferred until after seed ripe in second year).
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle; 502 allowable AUMs
Seasons of Use:	May 16 to June 15 and Oct 11 to Dec 24
Year 1	Graze May 16 to Jun 15
Year 2	Graze Oct 11 to Dec 24
Year 3	Rest
Vegetation Treatment:	Reseed 359 acres sandy bench range site with cool-season native grasses and forbs. Improve riparian condition by developing additional water gaps along river. Allocate expected forage increase of six AUMs to wildlife/watershed (four AUMs) and livestock (two AUMs).
Range Improvements:	Develop new well to water Piñon Hills, Eight Mile, and Mesa Allotments, and pipe water 1 mile to Flat Top and San Luis Hills Allotments. Second well and 2 miles pipeline will water this, Kiowa Hills and North Piñon Allotments. Develop permanent water gaps on river to improve livestock distribution and riparian condition.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 1,723 acres (25% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend every three years when allotment is rested.

4250 Eight Mile Allotment

Grazing System:	Two pasture rest-rotation with rest every fifth year.	
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 213 allowable AUMs	
Seasons of Use:	May 15 to May 30 and November 24 to December 15	
	East Pasture	*West Pasture*
Year 1	Graze May 15 to May 30	Graze Nov 24 to Dec 15
Year 2	Graze Nov 24 to Dec 15	Graze May 15 to May 30
Year 3	Graze May 15 to May 30	Graze Nov 24 to Dec 15
Year 4	Graze Nov 24 to Dec 15	Graze May 15 to May 30
Year 5	Rest	Rest
	This grazing system allows complete rest every fifth year on the entire allotment.	
Vegetation Treatment:	Reseed 102 acres sandy bench range site with cool-season native grasses and forbs. Allocate expected increase of three AUMs to wildlife/watershed (two AUMs) and livestock (one AUM).	
Range Improvements:	Develop well to water Eight-Mile, Piñon Hills, and Mesa Allotments; pipe water 1 mile to Flat Top and San Luis Hills Allotments.	
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 1,322 acres (50% of the uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend every fifth year when rested.	

4251 Mesa Common Allotment

Grazing System:	Three pasture deferred rest-rotation.		
Animals and AUMs:	Sheep - 270 allowable AUMs		
Season of Use:	January 1 to January 23 and September 15 to October 6		
	East Pasture	*Middle Pasture*	*West Pasture*
Year 1	Graze Sep 15 to Oct 6	Graze Jan 1 to Jan 23	Rest
Year 2	Graze Jan 1 to Jan 23	Rest	Graze Sep 15 to Oct 6
Year 3	Rest	Graze Sep 15 to Oct 26	Graze Jan 1 to Jan 23
Vegetation Treatment:	None planned		
Range Improvements:	Develop well to water Mesa, Eight-Mile, and Piñon Hills Allotments; pipe water 1 mile to Flat Top and San Luis Hills Allotments. Develop permanent water gaps on river.		
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 1,043 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend in year shown when pastures are rested and reread again as sequence repeats itself.		

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

4255 La Sauses Allotment

Grazing System:	Three pasture rest-rotation.		
Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 138 allowable AUMs		
Seasons of Use:	May 15 to June 15 and October 30 to November 10		
	North Pasture	*East Pasture*	*West Pasture*
Year 1	Graze May 15 to Jun 15	Graze Oct 30 to Nov 10	Rest
Year 2	Rest	Graze May 15 to Jun 15	Graze Oct 30 to Nov 10
Year 3	Graze Oct 30 to Nov 10 Rest		Graze May 15 to Jun 15
	This grazing plan allows for complete year of rest in one pasture every year. Pastures are not grazed again in spring until the following third year of the cycle. Deferring grazing until after seed ripe occurs in one pasture every year. Year four repeats the cycle.		
Vegetation Treatment:	Reseed 180 acres sandy bench range site with cool-season native grasses and forbs. Allocate expected forage increase of three AUMs to wildlife/watershed (two AUMs) and livestock (one AUM).		
Range Improvements:	Equip existing well to water livestock, and develop new well to supply water to this and East Bend Allotment to improve livestock distribution. Install permanent water gaps along river to protect riparian zone.		
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 1,560 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend in year shown when pastures are rested and reread again as sequence repeats itself. Trend is read every third year in a pasture.		

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Upper Gorge - Colorado (continued)

4256 East Bend Allotment

Grazing System:	One pasture deferred grazing (deferred until after seed ripe) with rest every third year.
Animals and AUMs:	Sheep - 150 allowable AUMs
Seasons of Use:	March 1 to March 13 and November 7 to November 18
Year 1	Graze Mar 1 to Mar 13 and Nov 7 to Nov 18
Year 2	Graze Mar 1 to Mar 13 and Nov 7 to Nov 18
Year 3	Rest
	Deferred until after seed ripe.
Vegetation Treatment:	Reseed 125 acres sandy bench range site with cool-season native grasses and forbs. (Refer to recommended actions for Riparian Resources and Sparse Shrub/Grassland Association.) Allocate expected forage increase of 2 AUMs to wildlife (1 AUM) and livestock (1 AUM).
Range Improvements:	Develop new well to supply water to this and La Sauses Allotments to improve livestock distribution.
Monitoring:	Inventory and monitor range condition on 607 acres (50% of uninventoried area) over next 15 years. Monitor trend every third year during allotment rest.

Upper Gorge - New Mexico

606 Wild River Allotment

Grazing System: Four pasture deferred rotation system (includes Allotment #641); use excluded during most cool-season growth periods.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 404 AUMs (275 in planning area)

Season of Use: May 1 to November 1

	641 Pasture	*West Pasture*	*East Pasture*	*South Pasture* (Loop)
Year 1	Graze May 1 to Jun 29	Graze Jun 30 to Aug 15	Graze Aug 16 to Sep 30	Graze Oct 1 to Nov 1
Year 2	Graze Aug 2 to Sep 30	Graze May 1 to Jun 16	Graze Jun 17 to Aug 1	Graze Oct 1 to Nov 1
Year 3	Graze Jun 16 to Aug 14	Graze Aug 15 to Sep 30	Graze May 1 to Jun 15	Graze Oct 1 to Nov 1

Vegetation Treatment:	Mechanically thin or burn 295 acres woodland, and burn 163 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component. Allocate expected forage increase of eight AUMs to wildlife/watershed.
Range Improvements:	None planned.
Monitoring:	Monitor range condition at least once every three years.
Note:	Grazing in the South Pasture (loop) will be eliminated upon completion of vegetative projects proposed in a settlement agreement, dated 1991.

608 Guadalupe Allotment

Grazing System: No system in place; one pasture allotment with no fence, allowing cattle to graze 2,060 acres of unleased public and state land.

Animals and AUMs:	Cattle - 210 AUMs
Season of Use:	May 1 to July 30 (each year)
	Partial cool season rest prior to May 1. Partial warm season rest after July 30
Vegetation Treatment:	Mechanically thin or burn 458 acres woodland, and burn 61 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component. Allocate expected forage increase of six AUMs to wildlife/watershed.
Range Improvements:	None planned; permittee will haul water to various parts of allotment to improve livestock distribution.
Monitoring:	Monitor range condition at least once every five years.

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Upper Gorge - New Mexico (continued)

624 Carson Road Allotment

Grazing System: No system in place; one pasture allotment with no fence, allowing cattle to graze additional acreage of unleased public and private land. Grazing deferred until after cool season seed ripe.

Animals & AUMs: Cattle - 19 AUMs (approximate)

Season of Use: June 15 to October 10 (each year)

Vegetation Treatment: Burn 322 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every 10 years.

626 Carson Allotment

Grazing System: No system in place; one pasture allotment with no fence, allowing cattle to graze additional acreage of unleased public and private land.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 154 AUMs

Season of Use: May 1 to October 10

Each Year: Graze from May 1 to Oct 10 (each year partial cool season rest prior to May 1)

Vegetation Treatment: None planned.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every five years.

640 Guadalupe Mountain Allotment

Grazing System: Two pasture deferred rotation (one pasture in this allotment, other in #641).

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 145 AUMs

Seasons of Use: May 1 to June 20 and September 1 to October 20 (warm season rest and partial cool season rest prior to May 1)

	640 Pasture	*641 Pasture*
Year 1	Graze May 1 to Jun 20	Graze Sep 1 to Oct 20
Year 2	Graze Sep 1 to Oct 20	Graze May 1 to Jul 1

Vegetation Treatment: Mechanically thin or burn 410 acres woodland, and burn 107 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component. Allocate expected forage increase of eight AUMs to wildlife/watershed.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every three years.

Lower Gorge

503 Embudo Allotment

Grazing System: None proposed; one pasture system with approved non-use since 1993.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 17 AUMs

Season of Use: February 8 to February 28 (each year - dormant season grazing)

Vegetation Treatment: None planned.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every three years.

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Lower Gorge (continued)

514 Cerro Azul Allotment

Grazing System: None proposed; one pasture allotment.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 23 AUMs (approximate)

Season of Use: October 15 to October 31 (each year - dormant season grazing)

Vegetation Treatment: Burn 222 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component. No actions planned to treat allotment's woodland because of unstable soils and increased potential for erosion. Allocate expected forage increase of two AUMs to wildlife/watershed.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every five years.

515 Glen Woody Allotment

Grazing System: None proposed; one pasture allotment with voluntary non-use approved since 1992.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 25 AUMs (approximate)

Season of Use: December 1 to February 28 (each year - dormant season grazing)

Vegetation Treatment: None planned because of steep slopes and concern for increased erosion.

Range Improvements: Construct 2 miles boundary fence between public and private land, develop one permanent water source.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every five years.

516 Pilar Allotment

Grazing System: None proposed; one pasture allotment.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 8 AUMs

Season of Use: September 15 to November 19 (each year - dormant season grazing)

Vegetation Treatment: None planned.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every 10 years.

517 Hondo Allotment

Grazing System: Three pasture allotment (one private, two BLM) with deferred rotation.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 64 AUMs

Season of Use: June 15 to December 1

	North Pasture	*South Pasture*	*Private Pasture*
Year 1	Graze Jun 15 to Aug 22	Graze Aug 23 to Oct 24	Graze Oct 25 to Dec 1
Year 2	Graze Sep 24 to Dec 1	Graze Jun 15 to Aug 16	Graze Aug 17 to Sept 23
Year 3	Graze Jul 23 to Sep 29	Graze Sep 30 to Dec 1	Graze June 15 to July 2

Defer grazing until after cool season seed ripe. When crops are grown on the private pasture, the permit will be adjusted to reflect the reduced availability of forage.

Vegetation Treatment: Burn 546 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and amount of cool-season grasses. No actions planned to treat woodland because of unstable soils and increased potential for erosion. Allocate expected forage increase of five AUMs to wildlife/watershed.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every 10 years.

Table 3-4 Grazing Allotment Management Plans

Lower Gorge (continued)

636 Pajarito Allotment

Grazing System: Develop three pasture rest-rotation system to exclude livestock grazing from one BLM pasture each year.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 186 AUMs (approximate)

Season of Use: November 1 to February 28 (dormant season grazing)

	North Pasture	*West Pasture*	*East Pasture*
Year 1	Rest	Graze Nov 1 to Dec 30	Graze Dec 31 to Feb 28
Year 2	Graze Jan 23 to Feb 28	Rest	Graze Nov 1 to Jan 22
Year 3	Graze Nov 11 to Dec 7	Graze Dec 8 to Feb 28	Rest

Vegetation Treatment: Burn 539 acres shrub/grassland to increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component. No actions planned for woodland because of unstable soils and increased potential for erosion. Allocate expected forage increase of 13 AUMs to wildlife/watershed.

Range Improvements: Adjust allotment boundary to exclude Comanche Spring area, construct 4.5 miles allotment boundary fence. These actions will reduce authorized AUMs by 24 to 38. To improve livestock distribution, construct 1.8 miles pasture fence and provide two or three water sources. (These actions may increase AUMs for grazing, but reallocation will be made only when monitoring studies indicated that additional AUMs are available.)

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every two years.

Copper Hill

521 Cuestecita Allotment

Grazing System: None proposed; two pasture allotment.

Animals and AUMs: Cattle - 34 AUMs short term. Grazing privileges retained only for current permittee; grazing to be excluded upon relinquishment of permit, with no permit transfers allowed.

Season of Use: June 15 to September 30

	North Pasture	*Private Pasture*
Year 1	Graze Jun 15 to Aug 31	Graze Sep 1 to Sep 30
Year 2	Graze Jul 15 to Sep 30	Graze Jun 15 to Jul 14

Defer grazing until after cool season seed maturity. When crops are grown on the private pasture, the permit will be adjusted.

Vegetation Treatment: Burn 586 acres shrub/grassland to reduce soil erosion, increase species and structural diversity and cool-season grass component. Allocate expected forage increase of four AUMs to wildlife/watershed.

Range Improvements: None planned.

Monitoring: Monitor range condition at least once every five years.

MINERALS

Development of locatable mineral claims (for gold, silver and other hardrock minerals) will continue to require the filing of a Notice (for activity affecting less than five acres) and/or a Plan of Operation (for all operations in an ACEC or for those of five acres or more). A Notice gives the BLM an opportunity to review the activity and recommend to the operator measures to avoid degradation. A Plan of Operation allows for full review of the mining proposal, with opportunity for public comment and development of mitigating measures to ensure that no unnecessary or undue degradation occurs

As a general rule, all public lands not within Wilderness Study Areas and/or not closed to mineral leasing are available for oil, gas, geothermal and carbon dioxide exploration, leasing and development. Site-specific decisions on lease issuance and stipulations are described in the *San Luis RMP* (USDI, BLM 1991) and the *Taos RMP Amendment for Oil and Gas Leasing and Development* (USDI, BLM 1991).

The sale of mineral materials is a discretionary, not mandatory, action. Applications for the removal of common-variety mineral materials including sand, gravel, fill, volcanic cinders, and brick clay, and the casual collection of fossil wood will be based on restrictions contained in the RMPs, this CRMP, and applicable Supplemental Rules.

Locatable Mining

The BLM will allow locatable mineral entry on 49,931 acres, primarily in the Upper Gorge Unit under the Final Plan. A total of 73,820 acres will be under withdrawal to protect resources that could be affected by surface disturbance and/or facility development. The additional withdrawals listed below will apply to all public lands in the area described, along with any parcels acquired by the BLM at a later date. A total of 14,122 acres of private and State lands will be withdrawn if acquired by the BLM under the Final Plan.

All public lands within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area will be withdrawn in the Upper Gorge Unit. All public lands within the Lower Gorge and Copper Hill ACECs will be withdrawn.

Leasable Minerals

Existing mineral leasing closures or limits will continue in the Upper Gorge, with an additional 14,906 acres subject to the No Surface Occupancy stipulation for oil and gas development. An additional 90 acres will be closed to mineral leasing if acquired by the BLM. The entire Lower Gorge Unit will be closed to leasing activity. Mineral and geothermal leasing will not be allowed in the Agua Caliente and Rio Embudo Protection Zones (an additional 4,550 acres) to protect Mexican spotted owl habitat and scenic quality. Leasing in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone will be authorized with a No Surface Occupancy stipulation.

Mineral Materials

No sales will be approved in the Rio Grande Corridor ACEC, the Flat Top Mountain (2,000 acres) portion of the San Luis Hills ACEC, the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, and the Wild Rivers Recreation Area. No sales will be made from the Lower Gorge Unit, except at four sites that will remain open (the Rinconada, Dixon and La Mesita pits and Arroyo Hondo building block area near Pilar) until the materials are exhausted. The Copper Hill ACEC will be closed except for three sites (Piedra Lumbre, Hilltop and Canada del Oso). See Map 5 for mineral material site locations.

PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Guidance for management of prehistoric and historic resources on public lands is provided by various federal laws passed by Congress over the past century, particularly Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (as amended), Antiquities Act (1906), Executive Order 11593, American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978), Archeological Resources Protection Act (1979), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990). The BLM must take into account the effects of its actions or authorizations on cultural resources. Agency policy is to avoid disturbing cultural sites, so cultural inventories are required before surface disturbance. If sites cannot be avoided mitigation must be carried out, ranging from making detailed records to total salvage.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

Upper Gorge

The BLM will inventory 10% of this portion of the planning area in Colorado by 2002, in addition to conducting inventories when ground-disturbing activities are proposed. Any location with heavy visitation will be inventoried and the monitoring frequency increased from current levels. Sites that are eligible for the National Register and able to withstand visitation will be interpreted.

In New Mexico, the Wild Rivers Recreation Area will be expanded to include public lands in the Guadalupe Mountains that contain cultural resource sites. The BLM will complete a 100% inventory of Wild Rivers Recreation Area for cultural resources and nominate appropriate sites to the National Register of Historic Places. Cultural resources and selected sites will continue to be interpreted for the public. The Big Arsenic Springs petroglyph site will remain open to public use and monitored on a regular basis. Guided hikes for visitors will continue to provide some awareness and education to help visitors respect the values associated with the site. The BLM will interpret historic and prehistoric resources at the John Dunn Bridge and Manby Hot Springs for visitors.

Lower Gorge

The BLM will complete an inventory of cultural resources and provide interpretation where feasible in Orilla Verde Recreation Area. The highest priority for inventory will be areas of intensive recreation use.

Copper Hill

The Lower Embudo Special Management Area will become a part of the new Copper Hill ACEC, and will be managed under the prescriptions outlined under ANew Mexico RMP-Level Decisions@des-cribed as follows. A Class III (100%) cultural resources inventory of the Lower Embudo Cultural zone will be completed, and all archaeological sites will be recorded. This inventory will be phased over time and tied to priority areas (based on protection needs). Archaeological sites will be nominated, as appropriate, to the National Register of Historic Places. Access to the pueblo ruins in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone will be limited to permitted users only. Fire suppression techniques causing earth disturbance (e.g., fire lines built by bulldozers or hand tools, off-road vehicles) will not be used within this zone.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Under the Final Plan the BLM will complete an interpretive plan following the guidelines of the Rio Grande Gorge Interpretive Prospectus. BLM will establish guidelines for signs to provide a consistent appearance and message throughout the planning area, provide a better appreciation of the resources and local custom and culture, and to better identify opportunities and help minimize conflicts. Most interpretive signs and brochures will be available in both English and Spanish. Signs will be posted at river access points to provide information on the location of adjacent access points, the length of river segments, safety concerns and emergency services. BLM will also establish partnerships with a wider range of users (e.g., fishing, hiking, mountain biking) to help inform them of public land opportunities as well as responsibilities.

The BLM will not provide onsite interpretation at any areas in the Copper Hill Unit, but will provide specific information or interpretive services at the following sites:

Upper Gorge

- La Sauses, Lobatos Bridge, and other sites in Colorado: Place emphasis on riparian restoration, river-related resources, raptors, and historic sites and uses. Implement interpretation of sites through Los Caminos Antiguos Historic and Scenic Byway partnerships;
- Wild Rivers Visitor Center: Continue displays of resource management issues, human manipulation of vegetation, and fire as a management tool;
- La Junta Point: Increase ranger patrols and contact with visitors, self-guided nature trails, and plans for interpretive signing focusing on geology and Wild and Scenic Rivers;
- John Dunn Bridge: Post directional signs. Continue weekend river ranger patrols to permit boating use, provide information, and direct traffic. Place signing to support parking and use restrictions/controls at the bridge and springs;
- Manby Springs: Post interpretive signing to encourage protection of cultural resources;
- Rio Grande Gorge Bridge: Develop interpretive signing on bridge and parking areas focusing on the bridge; impact of the gorge on transportation, geology and watchable wildlife; and the Wild and Scenic River system in partnership with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department;
- Place directional signs at all trailheads;

Lower Gorge

- Taos Junction Bridge: Acquire land or develop a land use agreement and put interpretive signing in place to describe site's history, river ethics, and leave no trace practices;
- La Vista Verde Trail: Install a sign at the trail-head about hiker safety, cultural resources protection and vegetation. Provide BLM ranger presence, including guided hikes;
- Orilla Verde Campground: Replace the current contact station with an unstaffed facility to provide exhibits describing the area's recreation opportunities, sites of interest, riparian ecosys-tem, cultural resources, safety, wildlife, geology, and native plants. A nearby volunteer host site will allow for personal visitor contacts in summer;
- Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center: Provide displays and interactive videos, about the Rio Grande Gorge's recreation opportunities, history and resources. Promote visitor etiquette toward resources and education about local custom and culture. The visitor center will serve as a hub for environmental education with local and visiting school groups. Formal presentations will be given on a variety of topics of interest to visitors and local residents;
- Pilar North Parking Area: Provide river ranger patrols and limited informational signing;
- Quartzite Recreation Site: Develop interpretive signs describing key resources and river characteristics, and increase river ranger presence;
- Racecourse Parking Sites: Provide interpretive signs at larger sites receiving the heaviest visitor use, and focus on Wild and Scenic River management, watchable wildlife, and natural and cultural features of interest;
- County Line/Rinconada Overlook: Provide signing focusing on riparian area protection;
- Lover's Lane: Increase patrol of the site; and
- Embudo Station: Provide some patrols and interpretive signing on river use, local history and good neighbor guidelines in cooperation with landowners.

RIPARIAN RESOURCES

BLM riparian areas in New Mexico and Colorado are managed under general guidelines provided by the agency's *Riparian/Wetland Initiative for the 1990s* (USDI, BLM 1991). The BLM in New Mexico has developed more specific riparian policy and program guidelines that will provide management direction for this habitat in the planning area (*Riparian 2000*).

A total of 344 acres of public land with (or with potential for) riparian vegetation exist in the planning area, 127 acres in Colorado and 217 acres in New Mexico. The BLM will continue the withdrawal of these areas from mineral entry and will keep them closed to mineral and geothermal leasing. Under the Final Plan, grazing will be eliminated from all riparian areas with the exception of one allotment in New Mexico; where over the long term grazing will be excluded and in Colorado except at water gaps, until proper functioning condition is achieved. Vehicle access, where practical, will not be allowed within 25 feet of perennial streams, unless mitigating measures are applied. Vegetation removal, with the exception of exotic species, will continue to be prohibited. In New Mexico, riparian areas will be included in new or enlarged ACECs or recreation areas to provide for special management and protection of these resources.

Upper Gorge - Colorado

BLM will continue to work with local groups to eliminate unauthorized livestock grazing in riparian areas by cattle moving from private lands on the east side of the Rio Grande. Grazing will continue in the riparian areas of the La Sauses (#4255), Piñon Hills (#4249), Mesa Common (#4251), Piñon (#4245A and B), and Flat Top (#4253) allotments at small water gaps (about 2.5 acres total). The remainder of the riparian area in these allotments will be allowed to rest until the standards for a properly functioning riparian area are met on 124.5 acres. Once in proper functioning condition, grazing will be allowed as long as a four inch stubble height on herbaceous species is maintained through the May to June high-water season, no more than 20% of the annual growth of woody riparian species is used by livestock, and the area's ecological health is main-tained. All vehicle travel routes within riparian areas between the La Sauses Cemetery and the Lobatos Bridge (on the west side) will be closed to vehicle use. In addition, the agency will treat closed routes to enhance riparian vegetation (on 0.5 acre) and will plant on another ten acres with willows and three acres with cottonwoods over the first five years following plan approval to restore native species. Additional plantings will be undertaken as additional funding and partnerships become available.

Upper Gorge - New Mexico

BLM will manage 48 miles of the Rio Grande and four miles of the Red River to conserve the riparian vegetation that is considered to be in properly functioning condition. BLM will enhance a portion of the riparian area at the John Dunn Bridge (0.1 acre) by restricting turnaround and parking space to an area sufficient for five cars at the east-side beach. The launch site on the river's west side at the John Dunn Bridge will be slightly expanded. These ac-tions will provide a net gain of .05 acre of riparian vegetation.

Lower Gorge

Riparian habitat will be maintained or improved by improving roads and trails, by removing exotic plant species and by excluding grazing from all riparian areas. The BLM's goal of improving riparian condition on nine acres will be achieved by closing several sites to vehicles including the river access road at the Arroyo Hondo Campground, public lands at the confluence of the Rio Grande and Rio Embudo, a vehicle pullout located 0.5 mile south of Embudo Station on the east shore, and the pullout located just upstream from the Velarde Diversion Dam (also on the east shore). The public land at Lovers' Lane will be closed to vehicles, as well as most of the adjacent private lands if they are ac-quired (parking will only be available on a 0.5-acre area between NM 68 and the cottonwoods). Salt cedar removal will continue at the Orilla Verde Recreation Area on an additional two acres. Graz-ing will be excluded from all riparian areas in the Lower Gorge ACEC.

The agency will attempt to acquire 2,510 acres of private land adjacent to the Taos Junction Bridge and manage the 1.5 miles of shoreline for riparian habitat by closing selected areas (totaling 1.4 acres) to vehicle use (two acres east of the Taos Junction Bridge will remain open to shoreline uses).

Seven miles of riparian habitat located along five short stream segments within the Copper Hill Unit will be managed to improve their current riparian classification of functioning at risk. The BLM will closely monitor grazing within the Rio de las Trampas and Cañada de Ojo Sarco riparian areas (in the Cuestecita Allotment, #521) to ensure properly

functioning riparian condition. Only the current permittees would retain their grazing privileges (no permit transfers will be allowed) with grazing to be excluded upon relinquishment of the permit. All other areas within the unit will be excluded from grazing.

Monitoring activities in riparian areas usually varies in intensity and complexity, but is used as a means of guiding progress towards identified objectives. In most cases, a lower intensity of monitoring will occur on areas that are at their potential, are not deteriorated, or have little likelihood of producing resource benefits. Table 3-5 displays the minimum frequency of monitoring to measure the achievement of objectives in the Final Plan.

Table 3-5 Riparian Monitoring

Type	Frequency
Photo points at key areas	every year
Ecological site inventory (Colorado)	3 years
Aerial photography interpretation	every 5 years or as needed
Woody species density	every 5 years or as needed
Woody species form, vigor, and utilization class	every 5 years or as needed
Woody species age class	every 5 years or as needed
Stream channel cross sections	every 5 years or as needed

Note: In New Mexico, riparian areas will be included in new or enlarged ACECs or recreation areas to provide for special management and protection of these resources. Refer to Chapter 2 for a description of these special management areas.

SCENIC QUALITY AND VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (VRM)

The BLM uses its VRM system to assign appro-priate VRM classes to public land in the planning area (refer to Table 3-6 for a description of the BLM's VRM classes). To determine whether or not a project will meet VRM class guidelines, the agency uses the contrast rating system.

Table 3-6 Visual Resource Management Classes	
Class I	To preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
Class II	To retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class III	To partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class IV	To provide for management activities that require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance and repeating the basic landscape elements.

The VRM system, therefore, provides a means to identify visual (scenic) values, establish objectives through the Resource Management Planning process or on a case-by-case basis for managing these values, and provides timely input into proposed surface-disturbing projects to ensure the assigned objectives are met. See Table 3-7 for a summary of VRM class assignments.

All public lands have beenn assigned a VRM class to set guidelines for projects that could change the appearance of local landscape or structures. BLM will provide for reestablishment of vegetation through natural processes or by seeding to enhance scenic quality in existing disturbed areas or areas where roads have been closed.

Upper Gorge - Colorado

VRM Class II will continue to be assigned to 16,457 acres in the San Luis Hills WSA and the foreground of the Rio Grande Corridor ACEC (as seen from the river). VRM Class III guidelines will continue to apply to the remaining 31,323 acres in Colorado. Scenic and visual quality will be maintained through guidelines for existing special area designations.

Upper Gorge - New Mexico

VRM Class I will be assigned to the 12,413 acres adjoining the wild segments of the Rio Grande and Red Wild and Scenic Rivers. VRM Class III will apply to 21 acres in developed recreation sites within Wild Rivers Recreation Area, including the BLM Visitor Center, Sheeps Crossing, Chiflo, Bear Crossing, Chawalauna, Big Arsenic, Little Arsenic, Montoso, La Junta and El Aguaje. VRM Class II will be assigned to the remaining 24,143 acres in the New Mexico portion of this unit. To preserve scenic quality, the BLM will acquire state and private land in the unit (both surface and subsurface) on a willing seller basis (refer to Table 3-2 for a list of these parcels).

Lower Gorge

VRM Class I will be assigned to those lands in the Orilla Verde Recreation Area above the rim that are bounded by NM 68, the north rim of the Arroyo Hondo drainage, and the east rim of the Rio Grande Gorge (if the lands are acquired). VRM Class II will be assigned to 5,743 acres of the Orilla Verde Recreation Area and 16,347 acres in the remainder of the unit. VRM Class III will be assigned to 24 acres of the unit's developed recreation sites below the rim of the gorge.

BLM will designate the public land south of the Orilla Verde Recreation Area as the Lower Gorge ACEC to protect the visual quality of the Lower Gorge Unit. Rights-of-way in the ACEC will be strictly limited and the area withdrawn from public land and mining laws. The BLM will acquire State and private land (both surface and subsurface) on a

willing seller basis, with priority given to undeveloped land (refer to Table 3-2). To improve scenic quality, the BLM will redesign and landscape the Pilar North Parking Area and developed recreation sites, revegetate closed roads, and rehabilitate the old mining site near the Taos Junction Campground. The agency will also develop partnerships with the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and Public Service Company of New Mexico to improve the appearance of the NM 68 and 570 rights-of-way and the gas line parallel to NM 68.

Copper Hill

The BLM will protect the visual resources of the unit by designating all public lands as the Copper Hill ACEC. VRM Class I will be assigned to 1,775 acres of the Rio Embudo and Agua Caliente Wild and Scenic River study segments. VRM Class II will be assigned to 4,789 acres. VRM Class III will be assigned to 10,716 acres in the ACEC's Central Protection Zone. State and private lands in the ACEC will be acquired on a willing seller basis. The ACEC will be managed to limit surface-disturbing activities.

Table 3-7
Visual Resource Management Classes Assigned to the Planning Area

Plan Area	VRM Class	Acreage
Upper Gorge - Colorado	I	C
	II	16,457
	III	31,323
	IV (no assignment)	C
Upper Gorge - New Mexico	I	12,413
	II	24,143
	III	21
	IV (no assignment)	C
Lower Gorge	I	C
	II	22,090
	III	24
	IV (no assignment)	C
Copper Hill	I	1,775
	II	4,789
	III	10,716
	IV (no assignment)	C
Planning Area Totals (rounded)	I	14,190
	II	67,480
	III	42,080
	IV (no assignment)	C
Total		**123,750**

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT (SOIL, VEGETATION AND WATER RESOURCES)

National guidance for management of vegetation resources is provided in documents such as the *Public Domain Woodlands Management Policy Statement* (1982) and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (1978). The San Luis and Taos RMPs also direct management of vegetation resources as part of the livestock grazing, forestry, wildlife, fire suppression and vegetation programs. The BLM is mandated to improve and protect soil and water quality, prevent deterioration where technically and economically feasible, and rehabilitate watersheds in unacceptable condition. The agency must also prevent or minimize threats to public health and safety, damage to natural site characteristics, and economic losses that are the result of floods, sedimentation, decreased water and soil quality, accelerated runoff, and erosion on public land. The BLM will continue to implement the following actions and guidelines:

- Study the interaction between streamflow and riparian habitat. The Taos and La Jara Field Offices will continue to work with BLM's National Applied Resource Science Center to study stream channel morphology and flows in order to assess the habitat's ability to provide for fisheries resources, consistent with goals of state wildlife agencies, and determine where in the planning area these goals can be reasonably achieved;
- Take the lead to initiate a water resources management group which will meet annually to explore water quantity and quality issues in the planning corridor. BLM will request participation by the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, Colorado Division of Water Resources (Division 3), Colorado Division of Wildlife, San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council, Rio Grande Corridor Advisory Committee, Rio Grande Restoration, New Mexico Environment Department, Colorado State Health Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U. S. Geological Survey;
- Use Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as those outlined in the *Soil and Water Conservation Practices Handbook* (USDA, Forest Service) to reduce nonpoint source pollution and conduct monitoring designed to measure the effectiveness of implemented practices;
- Comply with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (1972), as amended, Clean Water Act (1977), and Safe Drinking Water Act (1974). Drinking water provided by the BLM is regularly tested and the results submitted to the State. The BLM will retain certified water system operators for all of its public water supply sources;
- Follow water quality standards for all water bodies set by the New Mexico and Colorado Water Quality Control Commissions. The BLM has a Memorandum of Understanding with New Mexico and Colorado to reduce nonpoint source pollution from activities on public lands. One key tool in reducing nonpoint source pollution is to identify and apply BMPs for every activity with the potential to impact water quality. BMPs are to be identified in every environmental assessment (EA), and must be effective and efficient at accomplishing the project's intended purpose;
- Indirectly monitor water quality by conducting periodic surveys for parasites and other components that may adversely affect human health, and by monitoring vegetation loss from surface-disturbing activities. Vegetation is a major factor controlling the amount and timing of erosion from a site. By rehabilitating or manipulating the volume, form and density of vegetation, the BLM can most directly influence water quality. Water quality also will be directly monitored through occasional sampling of chemical content and temperature;
- Follow the objectives of the BLM water rights program, which are to (1) cooperate with state governments under state law to protect all water used for public land management, (2) conform to applicable state water rights laws and procedures, and (3) protect existing water rights;
- Develop projects as needed to control exotic and noxious weeds. In the New Mexico portion of the planning area, actions will be directed by the *Weed Prevention Plan* (USDI, BLM 1996). Actions will include stipulating the use of weed-free seed mixes and feed or straw bedding, reseeding of all areas disturbed by planned actions, and providing extra care to keep human activities in weed-infested areas from spreading the infestation. Complete a plan to determine the best strategy for controlling tamarisk and noxious weeds and reestablishing native vegetation to improve biodiversity within Orilla Verde Recreation Area;
- Contain all fires on public land, including those threatening private lands during the first burning period (refer to the Glossary), except in areas where an approved fire management plan is in effect. For the areas outside of the BLM's full suppression zones, the BLM will prepare fire management plans to meet "let burn" or "partial burn" objectives. The

agency may conduct prescribed burns to support resource management objectives; burn plans must be completed before such fires can occur. If burning is unsuccessful in meeting vegetation objectives, sites will be treated with herbicides. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines require that no herbicides be applied within 0.5 mile of a residence, developed recreation site, or perennial stream;

- Limit fire suppression within Wild Rivers Recreation Area to the methods least disturbing to soils and vegetation and limit fuelwood and timber sales to those that will enhance wildlife habitat;
- Conduct fire suppression activities within Orilla Verde Recreation Area in a manner least disturbing to soils and vegetation;
- Fully suppress any unplanned fires within the full-suppression zone in the Lower Gorge ACEC. In the remainder of the ACEC, fire prescriptions and burn plans will be developed to meet vegetation management objectives;
- Manage all woodland and forestry resources within the Copper Hill ACEC to enhance wildlife habitat, ecosystem health, and scenic values. Use limited techniques to suppress fires in the Lower Embudo Cultural Protection Zone. Suppression techniques causing earth disturbance (e.g., fire lines built by bulldozers or hand tools and off-road vehicles) will not be used within this zone; and
- Improve watershed and wildlife habitat conditions, close 76.3 miles of roads to motorized vehicles.

Colorado

Sparse Shrub/Grassland: BLM will develop three test plots in the sandy bench range type. On one plot native cool-season seed (such as Western wheatgrass or Indian ricegrass) will be broadcast. Another plot will be reseeded with the same species, but by dril-ling instead of by broadcast. The third plot will be a control plot where no treatment will be applied. If these tests are successful, up to 4% of the range sites (1,124 acres) will be reseeded by the best method over the life of the plan, as funding became available. Treated areas will be rested from livestock grazing for two years to ensure greater success.

If the tests are unsuccessful, BLM will develop partnerships with universities or colleges for graduate studies to determine other methods for successfully reestablishing desirable species on these sites. The best available methods will be used until desired species are reestablished on 4% of the range sites. In the Flat Top Mountain WSA, only native species will be reestablished using broadcast seeding by hand.

Savanna Woodland: Allow no fuelwood gathering within the planning area in Colorado. Any wood-lands within this part of the planning area that are considered operable are inaccessible because roads are lacking. No roads will be constructed for fuelwood gathering.

New Mexico

Oakbrush Woodland: The BLM will burn 184 acres in New Mexico to create a diverse growth structure and restore habitat through planned and natural ignition. Burns will only take place on lands with less than a 20% slope.

Savanna Woodland: BLM will treat 4,236 acres in areas where stand expansion has occurred using mechanical thinning methods or planned/natural burning. Burns will only take place on lands with no more than 33% slopes. The public will be allowed to harvest a minimum of 75% of the wood treated.

Piñon-Juniper Woodland: BLM will mechanically thin or burn (by planned or natural ignition) 2,994 acres of piñon-juniper woodland. Areas selected for treatment will have slopes of less than 20% and will not be on ridges or north slopes. To create a mosaic pattern only 20% of a particular area will be treated, and treated sites will not be replanted. Prescribed burns will be scheduled three to five years after mechanical thinning to remove seedlings. Each area treated will have one or two snags left per acre for wildlife. The public will be allowed to harvest a minimum of 75% of the wood treated.

Mixed Conifer Woodland: Approximately 9,744 acres in the New Mexico portion of the planning area are covered by mixed conifer woodland. About 20% of this area (1,642 acres) will be mechanically thinned to improve the competitive advantage for ponderosa pine, reduce the potential for catastrophic fire, and allow the natural fire process to be reestablished. The total square footage of remaining trunks (of all species) will average 40 to 80 square feet per acre treated. The areas to be treated will be selected where slopes were less than 20% avoiding ridges and north slopes and to maintain these treated stands, the BLM will carry out burns (planned or natural) at three to five-year intervals to keep seedlings under control. A minimum of five snags per acre will be left as wildlife habitat. The public will be allowed to harvest a minimum of 75% of the wood treated under the Final Plan.

Shrub/Grassland: BLM will burn 3,523 acres to improve ecological condition and species composition

through planned or natural ignition. Areas will be rested from livestock grazing for a year if needed to ensure enough fuel for a proper controlled burn. Burn plans will be tailored to ensure that 50 to 75% of the shrubs are killed to create a mosaic pattern. BLM will limit treatment to sites with slopes less than 20%. No more than 33% of any site with this type of vegetation will be treated. Burned areas will be reseeded with native species where the potential exists for invasion by noxious weeds, cheatgrass or other undesirable species. The agency will rest treated areas from livestock grazing for at least two years to allow reestablishment of grasses.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

In Colorado, 41 miles of the Rio Grande (including 22 miles in the planning area) will remain under interim protection. The Wild and Scenic River (W&SR) designations on 64 miles of the Rio Grande and four miles of the Red River will not change. BLM will recommend an additional 12.6 miles of river for designation by Congress, as described below.

The BLM has considered all rivers and streams in the planning area to determine what additional evaluations are needed. Table 3-8 identifies the river or stream segments and briefly describes the BLM's findings. Five streams have been determined to be eligible for consideration as Wild and Scenic Rivers (the eligibility studies and tentative classifications are included in Appendix 3). Because most of these streams extend onto Carson National Forest lands, the BLM will complete suitability analyses in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) within the next several years.

Within the planning area, 108.7 miles of rivers or streams will be protected for these values, either as designated W&SRs or under interim protection (refer to Table 3-7).

The BLM will work with Taos and Rio Arriba counties to develop local land use plans to meet the objectives of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. BLM will continue to take the following actions to manage wild and scenic rivers:

- Manage designated W&SRs following guidelines established by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968;
- Provide protection for all areas found eligible for designation as W&SRs until Congress makes its decision. [Refer to the San Luis RMP for the study of the 41-mile-long segment of the Rio Grande in Colorado (USDI, BLM 1991); and
- Allow uses of the public (or adjacent private) land in the wild and scenic corridors that were being practiced or were approved before the rivers were designated to continue to the same degree, if compatible with management objectives.

Upper Gorge - Colorado

In the Colorado portion of this unit, the BLM has recommended a 22-mile segment of the Rio Grande from the La Sauses Cemetery to the New Mexico state line as suitable for designation, with 14 miles from the cemetery to the Lobatos Bridge as scenic, and eight miles from the bridge to the State line as wild. The BLM is managing this segment under interim management restrictions to protect their wild and scenic values beyond the turn of the century until Congress designates these river stretches. (The interim boundaries are 0.25 mile from the ordinary high-water mark on each side of the river.)

Upper Gorge - New Mexico

In New Mexico, the Rio Grande between the State line and the Taos Junction Bridge (48 miles) and four miles of the Red River were among the first rivers designated in 1968. These segments will continue to be managed for their wild and scenic values. The BLM will continue to jointly manage the Carson National Forest portion of the W&SR.

Lower Gorge

BLM will manage the 12-mile segment of the Rio Grande designated as scenic in 1994 to maintain its recognized values. A permanent boundary will be recommended to Congress as shown on Map 4. The W&SR boundary between T 23 N, R 10 E, Section 15 SW1/4, NE1/4, and the west boundary of Section 20, will be moved to the north side of the highway right-of-way, accommodating future highway expansion without compromising W&SR values. The 7.6-mile-long study segment identified in the 1994 legislation will be recommended to Congress for designation with a recreational classification and recommended boundaries as shown on Map 4.

Copper Hill

BLM will recommend a five-mile segment of the Rio Embudo for designation as a wild component of the W&SR System. Proposed boundaries are shown on Map 4, and management prescriptions will be those discussed throughout the description of this Final Plan.

BLM will complete joint suitability studies with the Carson National Forest on adjoining portions of the following 10.1 miles of streams and river segments (tentative classifications are shown in parentheses): Arroyo Hondo (scenic), Tierra Amarilla Canyon (scenic), Agua Caliente Canyon (scenic/wild), Cañada de Ojo Sarco (scenic), and Rio de las Trampas (scenic). The BLM will manage these segments for protection of wild and scenic values until the Congress determines their status. The interim boundaries will be 0.25 mile beyond the ordinary high water line. (Refer to Map 4 for segment

locations and the portions of each that will be afforded this status, and to Appendix 3 for more information on the suitability studies.)

Table 3-8 River Segments Managed For Wild And Scenic Values (designated and eligible segments)

River Segment	River Miles, Acreage	Classification	Suitability Recommendation
Upper Gorge Rio Grande - Colorado	22 miles 1,280 acres public 3,200 acres private	Wild (8 miles, tentative) Scenic (14 miles, tentative)	Suitable, as previously determined in the San Luis RMP.
Rio Grande/ Red River (1968)	56 miles 13,516 acres public 1,306 acres USFS 340 acres state 128 acres private	Wild (53 miles) Recreational (3 miles)	N/A
Lower Gorge Rio Grande - Extension (1994)	12 miles 3,990 acres public 590 acres private	Scenic	N/A
Rio Grande - Bosque	7.6 miles 1,100 acres public 1,087 acres private	Recreational (tentative)	Suitable - Recreational
Arroyo Hondo	1.2 miles 380 acres public	Scenic (tentative)	Suitability analysis deferred
Copper Hill Rio Embudo Box	5 miles 990 acres public 550 acres state	Wild (tentative)	Suitable - Wild
Tierra Amarilla Canyon	2.3 miles 390 acres public 210 acres state	Scenic (tentative)	Suitability analysis deferred
Agua Caliente Canyon	2.9 miles 790 acres public 40 acres private 40 acres state	Wild (1.9 miles, tentative) Scenic (1.0 miles, tentative)	Suitability analysis deferred
Cañada de Ojo Sarco	2.4 miles 450 acres public 40 acres state 90 acres private	Scenic (tentative)	Suitability analysis deferred
Rio de las Trampas	1.3 miles 210 acres public	Scenic (tentative)	Suitability analysis deferred

Designated: 64 miles; 13,516 acres public (BLM), 1,306 U.S. Forest Service; 340 State; 128 private
Recommended suitable in Colorado: 22 miles; 1,280 acres public (BLM), 3,200 acres private
Recommended suitable in New Mexico: 12.6 miles; 2,086 acres public; 550 state; 1,087 private, Total 3,723
Eligible in New Mexico, with deferred suitability recommendation: 10.1 miles; 2,220 acres public; 290 state; 130 private)

WILDERNESS

The San Luis Hills Wilderness Study Area (WSA), located within the larger San Luis Hills ACEC, is the only parcel within the planning area under consideration for wilderness designation. The BLM will manage the San Luis Hills WSA portion of the San Luis Hills ACEC following guidance in the *Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review* (USDI, BLM 1995). No actions will be approved, or new uses allowed, that will damage the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness. (Note: Valid existing activities are allowed to occur in a WSA as long as no unnecessary and undue degradation of wilderness characteristics occurs.)

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES HABITAT MANAGEMENT

The BLM manages habitat on public lands including soils, watershed, and vegetation to benefit wildlife and domestic livestock. The New Mexico and Colorado state wildlife agencies manage the wildlife on public lands, including regulating hunting and relocation or reintroduction of wildlife populations. Nothing in this plan alters these responsibilities.

The BLM's objective is to protect sensitive species and provide a habitat for healthy wildlife populations and vegetative communities. The agency will continue to consult with other federal and State agencies to meet this objective. Before authorizing surface-disturbing work, BLM staff will conduct an inventory to locate any species, plant or animal, that is listed or proposed for listing. For actions that may affect such species, the BLM must engage in formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Current lists of species within the planning area which are listed or proposed for listing are available from the La Jara Field Office and Taos Field Office of the BLM.

Animal damage control within the corridor has been managed under the emergency procedures outlined in BLM Manual 6830. As of March 21, 1995, the federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service was given full authority to manage animal damage control efforts on public lands under an annual operations plan. A Memorandum of Understanding implemented on the same date allows BLM input into the plan but does not give the agency the ability to authorize any particular action. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service completed an environmental analysis for planned actions in 1997.

The BLM will implement the following actions and guidelines throughout the Rio Grande Corridor:

- Do not endanger the continued existence of any sensitive species or the habitat on which it relies;
- Monitor special-status species and maintain updated lists;
- Manage southwestern willow flycatcher habitat in conformance with the *Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Management Plan for Taos Resource Area* (March 11, 1998). In addition, BLM will manage activities under its control in a manner consistent with recovery plans for the southwestern willow flycatcher;
- Close duplicate and dead-end roads on fragile soils and within crucial wildlife habitats and maintain road densities (miles of road per square mile) as shown in Table 3-8;

Table 3-9 Road Densities

Planning Area	Existing Routes	Miles Open/ Density
Upper Gorge - Colorado	91.2 miles	57.2/0.8
Upper Gorge - New Mexico [a]	31.6 miles	31.6/0.7
Lower Gorge	33.6 miles	23.5/0.7
Copper Hill	45.4 miles	14.8/0.5
Total/Average	201.8 miles	0.7 [b]

Notes: [a]Designations for this unit were completed in 1994.
[b]This is a weighted average road density.

- Prohibit actions (i.e., access, activity) during critical periods, such as breeding or wintering, to eliminate potential adverse affects to wildlife;
- Consider requests from the public for removal of native vegetation on a case-by-case basis, except in designated recreation areas/sites and all riparian areas. These areas will be closed to such use to protect the nesting sites of the southwestern willow flycatcher and roosting sites for the bald eagle;
- Allow pack stock, such as llamas or horses, in the planning area except at developed campsites and on trails closed to such use (in the Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recreation Areas);
- Construct cable grates on the mine entry at Black Rock Springs and at the El Poso Cave entrance to protect bats from human contact. The agency will close the caves to the general public and will only allow scientific studies;
- Treat approximately 13,703 acres to improve biological diversity (refer to the "Vegetation, Soils and Water Quality" section above);

Upper Gorge

- Modify 4.25 miles of net wire fence in Colorado along the state line to facilitate big game migration and movement;
- Do not allow parking or overnight use (including camping) within 300 feet of existing trailheads or

trail descent points, as appropriate, to protect wildlife migration corridors and access routes to water. Install appropriate signs to inform users of the restriction. Restrictions on overnight use will not apply to the Manby, Raven, or Powerline trailheads or to the trailheads on the east rim of the gorge within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area;

- Introduce a reproducing population of river otter into the Upper Gorge Unit in coordination with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and Colorado Department of Wildlife;
- Limit fuelwood and timber sales within Wild Rivers Recreation Area to those that will enhance wildlife habitat;
- Prohibit commercially guided fishing along the Rio Grande from Chiflo Trail to Big Arsenic Trail (year-round) and on the Ute Mountain segment (from April 1 to May 31);
- Close the West Rim Trail from the John Dunn Bridge to Chiflo from May 1 to July 31 for big game fawning and calving;

Lower Gorge

- Restrict shoreline access in designated areas, and close selected side channels to boating use to protect bird habitat;
- Acquire from willing sellers the water rights for springs in Arroyo Hondo Canyon, east of NM 68 near Horseshoe Curve;
- Discourage human use on public land in the big game migratory corridor within Arroyo Hondo Canyon (near Horseshoe Curve);

Copper Hill

- Prohibit all surface-disturbing projects, vegetative removal, and mineral material sales to protect Mexican spotted owl critical habitat area NM-BLM-3 in the Copper Hill ACEC. The habitat area will be withdrawn from public land and mining laws and closed to mineral leasing;
- Continue the cooperative effort with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for the reintroduction of Rio Grande cutthroat trout to Agua Caliente Canyon after the existing population of rainbow trout is removed. Designate the Rio Grande cutthroat trout as a BLM sensitive species in New Mexico;
- Exclude livestock grazing including the Cuestecita Allotment (#521) over the long term;
- Withdraw the ACEC from the public land laws and mineral entry;
- Allow new rights-of-way and mineral leasing only within the Central Protection Zone; the remainder of the ACEC will be closed;
- Manage all woodland and forestry resources to enhance wildlife habitat and ecosystem health;
- Acquire state and private lands within the ACEC by purchase or exchange with willing owners; and
- Acquire administrative access to Agua Caliente for fisheries management.

In managing wildlife and their habitat, BLM is faced with identifying whether progress has been made in meeting desired objectives. As a means of tracking success or failure, and to provide a backdrop for evaluation, the BLM will implement the following monitoring methods:

Table 3-10 Wildlife Monitoring

Type	Survey Method
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	C FWS Protocol
Cowbirds	C Level of parasitism C Identify foraging distribution C Relative abundance
Neotropical Migratory Birds	C Breeding bird surveys
Raptors	C Active nest counts C Fledgling counts
Big Game	C Population counts C Sex and age ratios

CHAPTER 4

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

The objective of BLM's recreation program is to ensure the continued availability of quality outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences that are not readily available from other sources. Specific program goals are the protection of visitor health and safety; protection of the natural, cultural, and other resources which provide the setting for a quality experience; enhancement of the public's enjoyment of these lands through education and interpretation; maintenance of high quality, univers-ally accessible facilities; and resolution of user conflicts.

The Final Plan is designed to provide a balance between recreation use, protection of resources, visitor safety and needs of local residents. BLM will implement the following actions and guidelines:

- Continue to follow the Supplementary Rules for managing visitor use on public land in the Taos Field Office *(Federal Register*; May 10, 1996). These rules are generally revised every five years, with an opportunity for public input. The next revision is scheduled for 2000.

- Continue to collect user fees to comply with national policy and establish new fees consistent with policy and other local agency practices.

- Controls will be established for boating on most segments of the Rio Grande with an opportunity for a small increase in private or commercial use in the Upper Gorge Unit and some growth in the Lower Gorge Unit.

- Any new facilities or services would be located in areas already in use or would be provided when older facilities were scheduled for major repair or replacement.

Monitoring

The primary purpose of a monitoring program will be to track recreation use on the Rio Grande. This tracking will yield numbers of recreation users, as

well as the social conditions that result from user interactions, and will help determine the effective-ness of the Rio Grande Corridor Plan. This data will help with compliance of Special Recreation Permit stipulations. In addition, monitoring will document conditions of the riparian zone including river access sites, campsites, springs and vegetation health.

Monitoring will take place during the high use season from May through September using a team of BLM rangers and volunteers. Although all seg-ments of the Rio Grande in the planning area will be monitored, special emphasis will be placed on high use zones in the Lower Gorge where user interac-tions are most numerous. In addition to river user numbers, the count crew team will monitor quiet zones, outfitter launch windows, parking, and visitor satisfaction in order to determine if the Corridor Plan management actions are effective. Information compiled by this team will be presented annually so that an accurate picture of current conditions can be assessed.

In the more remote sections of the corridor the number of group encounters a user experiences is an indicator of the type of experience a visitor has. The count crew will conduct studies to determine the number of groups encountered on average in differ-ent river segments to determine if the remote nature of the canyon experience is being compromised.

Campsite and river access sites will be measured and photographed on a regular basis to determine the extent of human impacts. Representative undisturbed sites will be chosen in the riparian zone and monitored periodically by photo points and site characterization descriptions. Wildlife surveys will be conducted periodically by BLM wildlife bio-logists to indicate the overall health of the area. The discharge of springs occurring on BLM lands will be measured periodically in order to determine long-term trends.

SPECIAL RECREATION USE PERMITS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Criteria used by BLM to evaluate applications for commercial recreation on public lands in the Rio Grande Corridor are as follows:

- BLM's ability to effectively administer the permit within the capability of the resource. The BLM will allow only the minimum number of outfitters needed to provide recreational services, while ensuring fair competition and an adequate level of service;
- Consistency with management objectives for the area (such as suitability for a proposed use, or mitigation of traffic, congestion, conflicts with other uses, and timing); and
- Whether the proposed service is readily or potentially available from vendors on private lands.

Outfitted Boating

The BLM will issue no new permits for use on the Rio Grande between the Lobatos Bridge and the Velarde Diversion Dam, outside of the approved and authorized transfer process; nor for use in the new Copper Hill ACEC. Existing Rio Grande boating permits may be transferred in their entirety to any qualified individual or company, but transfer of part of a permit (e.g., for use on one particular segment) will be allowed only to parties who already posess a Rio Grande permit. If the number of permits for segments south of John Dunn Bridge is reduced to less than 10 (e.g., through attrition, cancellation), new permit(s) may be issued to maintain this num-ber. Segments above John Dunn Bridge will be maintained at five permits. (Additional restrictions on the use of permits are described in the following Boating section).

Allocations for commercial boating activities on the Rio Grande will be based on use figures collected for the 5 seasons prior to the year when allocations will go into effect. The figures for the two busiest years for each outfitter will be averaged and used to determine that outfitter's allowable use, launch size, and total number of launches. Commercial opera-tors who fail to operate at least one commercial trip in one of the two preceding seasons on any one segment will lose permit privileges for that segment. Allocations will be adjusted every five years or as conditions warrant.

Outfitted Fishing Guide Services

Permits for the use of streams in New Mexico will be considered after case-by-case review. Permittees will be limited to one trip per day in the planning area with up to four people per trip (including guides). To address wildlife concerns, commercial-ly guided trips are prohibited along the Rio Grande between the Chiflo Trail downstream to the Big Arsenic Trail all year and in the Ute Mountain segment from April 1 to May 31.

Rock Climbing

Commercial permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Individuals would be required to have a permit only if they intended to permanently install hardware.

Other Commercial Uses and Special Events

The BLM will permit these on a case-by-case basis. The traditional Mother's Day event began in 1959, and will be allowed to continue, with daily boating use restrictions waived for use of the Lower Gorge segments. Other requested uses would have to comply with restrictions in place for the area in which the use is proposed.

BOATING

Boating will be regulated according to guidelines listed below for the different segments of the Rio Grande and Rio Embudo. These guidelines, including limits on group size, restrictions on boating during certain times of the day or seasons, or closures at specific river flows, vary by segment, depending on the opportunities available, or the type of conflict between users or resources.

BLM will monitor this use throughout the season and work with outfitters, private boaters, residents and other recreation users on a recurring basis to determine whether adjustments can/should be made to resolve new concerns or better meet the guidelines established for each segment. An annual meeting will be held with residents, private and commercial boaters, and other recreation users to assess the past season and recommend changes which could be made to resolve recurring conflicts, reduce congestion, assure equitable access, improve the quality of the environment, or address emerging issues.

RIO GRANDE - ALL SEGMENTS

All Boaters
- Emergency takeout will be allowed on public lands at all times. No landing is allowed on private lands, without landowner permission, except in an emergency.
- No motorized watercraft will be allowed to use the Rio Grande from La Sauses Cemetery south to the Velarde Diversion Dam.
- Each outfitted or private group must register each trip at the launch site.
- All overnight parties, including solo kayakers, must use a firepan for all open fires, and a human waste carry-out system, preferably a portable system compatible with RV dump stations.
- A toll-free number will be available for advance telephone reservations or to provide information on current boating conditions. The reservation system for segments requiring them will provide equitable access to launches for private and outfitted boaters. Commercial outfitters may be asked to verify a booking when making a reservation for a launch.

Outfitted Boaters
- See Table 4-1, *Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Upper Gorge.*

RIO GRANDE - UPPER GORGE

La Sauses Segment (La Sauses Cemetery to Lobatos Bridge)

All Boaters
- No restrictions will be placed on private or outfitted boaters.

Facilities
- At La Sauses Recreation Site BLM will define parking areas to control damage to riparian habitat. Currently, BLM has an informal agreement with the landowner at Lobatos Bridge which allows for public use at the site and will continue efforts to acquire public access rights at Lobatos Bridge.

Ute Mountain Segment (Lobatos Bridge to Lee Trail)

All Boaters
- Launch/takeout access will be provided at Lobatos Bridge (as stated above), and from the Sunshine Valley and Lee trails.
- The segment is closed to all boating from April 1 through May 31.
- Two launches are allowed per day, whether private or outfitted, but only one can be overnight. All launches must be reserved in advance on a first-come basis.
- A total of 16 people (passengers+guides, commercial or private) will be allowed each day.

Facilities
- Improvements at Lobatos Bridge, if access rights are acquired, will include a defined parking

area, and if use warrants, seasonal or permanent toilet facilities.

Razorblades Segment (Lee Trail to Chiflo Trail)

All Boaters
- Launch/takeout access will be provided at Lee, Sheep Crossing and Chiflo trails.
- To maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available, one launch for an overnight trip will be allowed per day, whether private or outfitted, on a first-come first-serve basis. Overnight launches must be reserved in advance.
- Group size is limited to 16 people (passengers+guides).
- No additional restrictions will be placed on private/outfitted boating until monitoring shows that daily use is exceeding 32 people per day. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary.

Facilities
- No improvements are planned to facilities.

Upper Box Segment (Chiflo Trail to Little Arsenic Trail)

All Boaters
- Launch/takeout access will be provided at Chiflo, Big Arsenic and Little Arsenic trails.
- To maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available, one launch for an overnight trip will be allowed per day, whether private or outfitted, on a first-come first-serve basis. Overnight launches must be reserved in advance.
- Group size is limited to 16 people (passengers/guides).
- No additional restrictions will be placed on private/outfitted boating until monitoring shows that daily use is exceeding 32 people per day. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary.

Facilities
- No facility changes are planned; restrooms and picnic tables will be maintained.

La Junta Segment (Little Arsenic Trail to John Dunn Bridge)

All Boaters
- Access will continue to be provided by several BLM/Forest Service trails (Little Arsenic, La Junta, Cebolla Mesa, Miners Trail). The takeout is located at John Dunn Bridge.

Private Boaters
- To maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available, one launch for an overnight trip (maximum group size of 16) will be allowed per day, and must be reserved in advance. No additional restrictions will be placed on private boaters until monitoring shows that daily use exceeds 32 people per day. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary.

Outfitted Boaters
- Two launches will be allowed per day, but only one can be overnight, with no more than 16 people (passengers + guides) to maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available. Overnight launches will be available on a first-come first-serve basis.
- Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holiday launches will be assigned based on historic use records. The assignments will be assessed every 5 years, or as needed, and adjusted if necessary. Weekday launches will be available on a first-come first-serve basis.
- Outfitted groups are limited to 16 people (passengers + guides). Outfitters can occasionally exceed the group size for day trips through use of a pool - up to a maximum of 21 people per group, for a total of 10 times per season on a first-come basis.
- Outfitted launches will not be able to pass or takeout at John Dunn Bridge before noon on weekends and holidays to help relieve congestion at the bridge. Trips wishing to continue below John Dunn Bridge will not be required to obtain a separate Taos Box launch unless monitoring determines a need.

Facilities
- Primitive campsites and vault toilets are provided at the base of trails in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area. Primitive campsites and vault toilets are maintained by the Carson National Forest on Cebolla Mesa. Refer to the Taos Box segment for facilities at the John Dunn Bridge takeout.

Taos Box Segment (John Dunn Bridge to Taos Junction Bridge)

All Boaters

- Launch access is provided at John Dunn Bridge, along the west shoreline north of the bridge. The east shoreline north of the bridge will be used for overflow on the busiest weekends. South of the bridge, both shorelines are closed to boaters. Taos Junction Bridge is the main takeout (see the Orilla Verde/Pilar section for access information). Parking is available along the access road from Arroyo Hondo and may be expanded if BLM acquires additional lands in the Arroyo Hondo Grant.
- Due to the limited number of campsites available, one trip per day of 16 people (guides + passengers) will be allowed to camp on this segment, whether private or outfitted, on a first-come first-serve basis.

Private Boaters

- Up to 200 boaters will be allowed per day on weekends and holidays, and 150 will be allowed per day on weekdays. No additional restrictions will be placed on private boaters until monitoring shows that daily use exceeds these limits. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary.
- Private boaters will be encouraged to launch before 1:00 p.m. to ensure completion of the run before twilight and minimize displacement of other users at John Dunn Bridge.

Outfitted Boaters

- See Table 4-1, *Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Upper Gorge.*

Facilities

- John Dunn Bridge: year-round restrooms will be installed and the northwest shoreline area expanded slightly. See the Orilla Verde/Pilar segment for facility development proposals in the Taos Junction Bridge area.

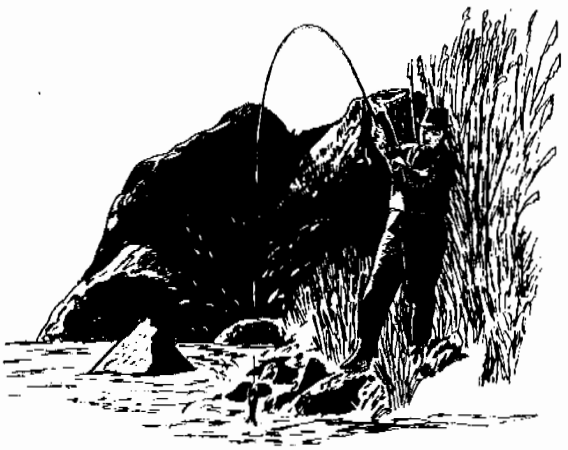


Table 4-1 Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Upper Gorge

Segment	Outfitted Boater Guidelines
All Segments	Permits issued to outfitters specify the river segment in which they are allowed to conduct business. Four river segments will be allocated (La Junta, Taos Box, Orilla Verde (through Pilar only) and Racecourse). Commercial use on other segments will be on a first-come first-serve basis. For trips that originate in one segment and continue into another segment, launch requirements for both segments must be adhered to (for example, a Taos Box trip continuing through Pilar must use one of their allocated launches to continue down river). The only exception is for authorized La Junta segment outfitters that continue into the Taos Box segment after 12:00 pm. Use continuing through the Taos Box in this situation will not count toward historical use in the Taos Box, since this use generally would fall outside the allocated time period.
La Sauses	No restrictions will be placed on outfitted boaters.
Ute Mountain	The segment is closed to all boating from April 1 through May 31. Two launches are allowed per day, whether private or outfitted, but only one can be overnight. All launches must be reserved in advance on a first-come basis. A total of 16 people (passengers+guides, commercial or private) will be allowed each day.
Razorblades	To maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available, one launch for an overnight trip will be allowed per day, whether private or outfitted, on a first-come basis. Overnight launches must be reserved in advance. Group size is limited to 16 people (passengers+guides). No additional restrictions will be placed on private/outfitted boating until monitoring shows that daily use is exceeding 32 people per day. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary.
Upper Box	To maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available, one launch for an overnight trip will be allowed per day, whether private or outfitted, on a first-come basis. Overnight launches must be reserved in advance. Group size is limited to 16 people (passengers+guides). No additional restrictions will be placed on private/outfitted boating until monitoring shows that daily use is exceeding 32 people per day. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary.
La Junta	Two launches will be allowed per day, but only one can be overnight, with no more than 16 people (passengers+guides) to maintain primitive opportunities and due to the limited campsites available. Overnight launches will be available on a first-come basis. Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holiday launches will be assigned based on historic use records. The assignments will be assessed every 5 years, or as needed, and adjusted if necessary. Weekday launches will be available on a first-come basis. Outfitted groups are limited to 16 people (passengers+guides). Outfitters can occasionally exceed the group size for day trips through use of a pool - up to a maximum of 21 people per group, for a total of 10 times per season on a first-come basis. Due to the limited number of campsites available, one trip per day of 16 people (passengers+guides) will be allowed to camp on this segment, whether private or outfitted, on a first-come basis. Outfitted launches will not be able to pass or takeout at John Dunn Bridge before noon on weekends and holidays to help relieve congestion at the bridge. Trips wishing to continue below John Dunn Bridge will not be required to obtain a separate Taos Box launch unless monitoring determines a need.

Taos Box	All commercial launches will take place between 8:30 am and 12:30 pm. Weekends and holidays: up to 8 launches will be allowed per day and size will be limited to 21 passengers per launch. Weekdays: up to 8 launches will be allowed per day and size will be limited to 32 passengers per launch. Although no trading of passenger slots will be allowed between outfitters, they can occasionally exceed the day-use group size limits above through use of a pool, up to a maximum group size of 40 passengers and only on weekdays. Outfitters will request slots from the pool on a first-come basis. Initially the daily pool will have 15 passenger slots available. Over-limit fees: to allow an outfitter to fill trips, BLM will allow up to 4 extra passengers to be booked, but an extra fee will be imposed to remove any profit incentive for doing so. These extra passengers will not be counted towards an outfitter's historic use for allocation purposes. This option is not available for launches that have been augmented from the pool. The over-limit policy may be discontinued if monitoring indicates a need.

Table 4-2 Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Lower Gorge

Segment	Winter Oct 15 - Feb 28/29	Spring Mar 1 - May 14	Summer May 15 - Aug 14 & Labor Day Weekend	Fall Aug 15 - Oct 14
All Segments	Over-limit fees: to allow an outfitter to fill trips, BLM will allow up to four extra passengers to be booked on Lower Gorge trips, but an extra fee will be imposed to remove any profit incentive for doing so. These extra passengers will not be counted towards an outfitter's historic use for allocation purposes. The overlimit may be discontinued if monitoring indicates a need. Initially, no specific use allocation will be made for individual outfitters. All outfitted use will be regulated by guidelines described below. Use will be allocated to specific outfitters when thresholds are exceeded on any given day. Once exceeded, that day will be rationed for the following five seasons. Each outfitter will be given a specific number of passengers as their allocation based on their percent of Lower Gorge use for that season and the previous four seasons.			
Orilla Verde/ Pilar	For trips that take place solely within Orilla Verde Recreation Area, maximum group size is 40 passengers, but there is no limit at this time on the number of launches.			
	50 passengers per **week** through Pilar, reserved on a first-come first-serve basis, maximum group size of 32.	All flows - 120 passengers per **day**, first-come first-serve basis, maximum group size of 32.	**ALL FLOWS:** No passage allowed past Orilla Verde Campground before 9am or after 3pm. Trips originating above Taos Junction will have to use (or join) an Orilla Verde/Pilar launch to continue downstream, provided group size requirements are met.. **BELOW 2000 CFS:** 32 passengers per outfitter per day, one or two launches. **BETWEEN 2000-4000 CFS:** Each outfitter can take a total of 32 passengers in one or two groups through Pilar as part of their Orilla Verde allocation. In addition, one Racecourse trip per outfitter can launch above Pilar; limit is 40 passengers. **ABOVE 4000 CFS:** No boating unless private owners grant portage rights around the Pilar Bridge, or the bridge is reconstructed. **POOL:** The Racecourse and Orilla Verde/Pilar segments will have a combined pool of 50 per weekend and 100 per weekday which may be used to increase group size up to 90 on weekdays and 50 on weekends,on a first-come first-serve basis. Where augmented launches exceed 40 passengers, launches must split and be staggered in 10 minute intervals to minimize the impacts of large groups **ALLOCATIONS:** Specific days will be allocated when passengers exceed 300 (when flows are below 2000 cfs), or 450 (when flows are above 2000 cfs). These allocations will apply to all trips taken between Taos Junction Bridge and County Line.	All flows - 120 passengers per **day**, first-come first-serve, maximum groups size of 32.
Racecourse	Quartzite launch windows will be assigned each outfitter from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Limits are 40 passengers per launch, two launches per day per outfitter. On weekdays, outfitters will be able to combine these two launches into one by providing advance notice to BLM. Most trips will take out at County Line. Although no trades will be allowed between outfitters, BLM will maintain a Lower Gorge pool that all outfitters can draw from. Racecourse and Orilla Verde/Pilar will have a combined pool of 50 per day on weekends, and 100 on weekdays. The pool can be used to increase a launch to 50 passengers on weekends, and 90 passengers on weekdays. These augmented launches, as well any combined launches, will be encouraged to be rescheduled during the noon period. When passenger numbers on any given day exceed 600 in the Racecourse, the size of the pool may be reduced, and/or that day will be allocated for the following five years for this and the Orilla Verde/Pilar segment combined, based on historic use during the season when the threshold was exceeded and the previous 4 seasons.			
Bosque	All trips for outfitters authorized to use this segment (except for high water trips originating above County Line and ending at Lovers' Lane) will count toward the daily limit of 50 passengers. Outfitters without a Bosque permit will not be allowed to float past Lovers' Lane.			
	50 passengers per **week**, first-come first-serce basis.	50 passengers per **day**, first-come first- serve basis.	50 passengers per day, first-come first-serve basis. **ABOVE 2000 CFS:** One Racecourse trip per outfitter per day can take out at Lovers' Lane. **ABOVE 4000 CFS:** All Racecourse trips can take out at County Line or Lovers' Lane, choice up to the outfitter.	50 passengers per **day**, first- come first-serve basis.

RIO GRANDE - LOWER GORGE

Orilla Verde/Pilar Segment (Taos Junction Bridge to Quartzite Recreation Site)

All Boaters

- Launch and takeout will be allowed at Taos Junction Bridge, the Cable Site (north of gauging station - kayak/canoe only), and Lone Juniper. Takeout will be allowed only at Orilla Verde Campground. Access at Karmic Wave will be allowed only for boaters in kayaks or canoes. Other sites may be accessed from the river to use shoreline facilities - boats can be moored or partially dragged on shore. Shoreline access will be restricted in designated areas and selected side channels closed to boating to protect wildlife habitat.
- Until portage rights are granted at the Pilar Bridge, or the bridge is altered to allow safe passage at higher flows, all boaters will take out at Lone Juniper or Orilla Verde Campground when flows are 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) or higher. No public access is available in the village of Pilar except with landowner permission, or for an emergency.
- A no stopping and quiet zone will be enforced from Pilar Campground downstream to the beginning of Karmic Wave. Sounds must be kept at conversational levels, except in emergencies.

Private Boaters

- No restrictions will be applied initially to private boaters until monitoring indicates that 100 or more private boaters per day are passing through the village of Pilar. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary. Measures may include providing information at upstream launch sites to encourage private boaters to take out at Orilla Verde Campground; prohibiting boating past Orilla Verde Campground takeout after a specified time; or others which may be suggested at that time.

Outfitted Boaters

- See Table 4-2, *Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Lower Gorge.*

Facilities

- Taos Junction: BLM will work with private partners to provide management of the private lands on the east side of the river between Taos Junction Bridge and the gauging station. If acquired, permanent facilities will be constructed at the Taos Junction boater takeout. If the private lands are not acquired, BLM will provide for boater access on the west side of the river.
- Cable Site: the parking area at the Orilla gauging station will be relocated to the cable site. The vault toilet currently located across from the gauging station will be relocated to the new parking site.
- Lone Juniper: the site will be redesigned to improve access.
- Orilla Verde Campground: access will be improved; boater parking and launch/takeout will be separated from other uses.
- See Camping section for additional information.

Racecourse Segment (Quartzite Recreation Site to County Line Recreation Site)

All Boaters

- Quartzite, Souse Hole, and County Line are the main river access sites.
- Locational boating will be available where desired, but vehicles must be parked in areas which have been approved by the Highway Department. Outfitted boater parking will be identified through BLM permit stipulations.
- At Quartzite during congested periods, the beach may be divided into two zones - one for rafts that are inflated and rigged or canoes/kayaks (express lane) and one for rafts that are not inflated and rigged.

Private Boaters

- No restrictions will be placed on this group until monitoring indicates that 300 or more private boaters per day are launching from Quartzite. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary. Additional actions may include assigning launch times, encouraging use at less congested times, or other actions which might be suggested by interested parties.

Outfitted Boaters
- See Table 4-2, *Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Lower Gorge.*

Facilities
- Quartzite: the level of the beach will be raised to allow use at higher flows, and improve traffic flow with signs and barriers. The BLM also will install a pay/emergency telephone.
- Pilar North Parking Area/Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center Parking: a committee of stakeholders will make recommendations to provide for additional short- and long-term parking and improved restroom facilities for outfitted and private boaters and other users of this area.
- Souse Hole: build a permanent rest room and provide more space for parking.
- County Line Area: build permanent rest rooms, improve access and parking, install a pay/emergency phone, use signs and barriers for vehicle controls, and landscape.
- Other Sites: provide portable or permanent vault toilets at additional sites if use, resource degradation or public safety warrants. The BLM will work with the Highway Department to provide safe access points for sightseeing and parking, and improve trail access to the river to control erosion and provide for user safety.

Bosque Segment (County Line Recreation Site to Velarde Diversion Dam)

All Boaters
- County Line, Lovers' Lane, Embudo Station (if owner allows) and Embudo South are the main river access sites. There will be no landing on private lands except in emergencies or with landowner permission.
- A quiet zone will be enforced from County Line downstream to Embudo Station. Sounds will be kept at conversational levels except in emergency situations.

Private Boaters
- No additional restrictions will be placed until a threshold of 50 or more private boaters per day launching or floating past County Line is reached. Once this threshold is exceeded, additional controls may be implemented if determined to be necessary. Additional actions may include reducing group size, requiring call-in reservations, or other measures which may be proposed by residents, boaters or BLM.

Outfitted Boaters
- See Table 4-2, *Outfitted Boater Guidelines for the Lower Gorge.*

Facilities
- County Line: See the Racecourse section for a description.
- Lovers' Lane: if public access is acquired, a permanent rest room will be built and a parking area established above the riparian area. If access to this parcel is not acquired, then BLM will work with stakeholders to determine alternative strategies.
- Embudo Station: private facilities may be available if boaters make arrangements with the owner. If the Embudo South site is developed, BLM will limit development to what is needed to provide for resource protection or public safety, such as a vault toilet or trash receptacle, a small parking area, and a trail to the river.

RIO EMBUDO

Rio Embudo Box (west boundary of Picuris Pueblo to BLM road 146 access point)

Private Boaters	• Boaters will be required to register at river put-ins. BLM will monitor activity and may propose actions if more than 200 boaters per year are making use of this segment.
Outfitted Boaters	• No commercial use permits will be issued for boating on the Rio Embudo.
Facilities	• Low-key signing will be used to identify access points and mark public land boundaries. Parking areas will be defined with landscape barriers.

Other Segments

All Boaters	• BLM will cooperate with Picuris Pueblo in providing information to the public about their use restrictions. Downstream of Dixon, BLM will monitor use and propose actions to resolve any concerns related to boater use, such as unsafe parking, trespass, noise, or other issues.
Facilities	• No facilities are planned.

CASUAL USES

The public lands are used for a large variety of recreational pursuits that require little in the way of facilities or developments and for the most part, currently do not require intensive management. Wildlife and bird watching, recreational rock collecting, rock climbing, and camping away from developed sites are a few of these pursuits.

Casual recreation use was considered during development of proposals for vehicle use (refer to Access), since access is an important element in many of these activities. Non-motorized trails are also an important element in access and are describ-ed below under "Trails• (page 4-11). When parking or camping within developed recreation areas or sites, visitors will have to keep vehicles within 25 feet of any designated route of travel. In the re-mainder of the planning area, vehicles will have to remain within 300 feet of designated routes; this restriction may be re-visited by the Taos Field Office during future transportation planning in adjacent planning areas.

An environmental assessment is being prepared to consider commercial hot air balloon activities near the Manby Springs area. A decision on this issue will be provided following additional public input and analysis.

FISHING

BLM will take steps to improve access to favored fishing sites, including steps to provide for improved access, or barrier-free fishing platforms where terrain allows. Information will be provided at entry or key use sites to minimize conflicts with other users.

CAMPING/PICNICKING

Steps will be taken to provide developed sites for both day and overnight use at several locations throughout the Rio Grande Corridor, with an emphasis at Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Rec-reation Areas. Key river access sites, such as John Dunn Bridge, Taos Junction Bridge (the east shore), Quartzite and County Line will remain closed to camping but be developed for a variety of day-use activities.

Camping will be allowed throughout the corridor, with these guidelines:

- Camping in Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recreation Areas is allowed only at developed or designated sites. Undeveloped campsites outside the two recreation areas will remain so, unless monitoring indicates a need for facilities (such as restrooms, trash containers, site designation, hardening) to mitigate resource damage.
- Within Wild Rivers Recreation Area, no additional sites within the gorge will be designated for camping. Shelters visible from rim viewpoints will be removed as the shelters deteriorate.
- Within Orilla Verde Recreation Area, camping will be allowed at designated primitive sites (Lone Juniper and two sites on the west side of the river).
- Areas opened/closed to camping will be clearly signed or marked.
- Overnight use will not be allowed within 300 yards of existing trailheads or trail descent points. An exception will be made for developed sites within the Wild Rivers Recreation Area and at the Raven and Powerline trailheads.
- Human waste must be carried out by all overnight boating groups not staying in developed campgrounds.
- Campfires in Wild Rivers and Orilla Verde Recreation Areas and at all developed sites will be allowed only in grills or facilities provided. In undeveloped areas, campfires will be allowed, but the use of camp stoves will be encouraged instead. Dead and down wood can be collected for campfires. Boaters will have to use firepans for any campfires along the river and may only use driftwood.
- Facilities that are not universally accessible will be replaced or redesigned after considering physical and economic feasibility.
- In the Copper Hill ACEC, primitive camping will be allowed except within 100 feet of rivers or streams to protect riparian habitat.

TRAILS

Trails have been used throughout the Rio Grande/Rio Embudo corridor to access favorite sites for fishing, boating, or other pursuits, or for the enjoyment of walking, biking or horseback riding. Table 4-3 lists the trails which will be maintained and/or built to continue providing for these opportunities. The following guidelines will be followed by BLM in implementing this plan, or by the trails' users:

- When proposed trails cross state or private property, an access easement will be acquired before public use is encouraged. If an easement cannot be obtained, the trails will be rerouted to avoid the parcels.
- Place directional signs at all trailheads and trail junctions.

Table 4-3 Existing/Planned Trails in the Rio Grande Corridor

Rio Grande Corridor ACEC (Colorado)
State Line Gauging Station
Emery Orr

Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River (New Mexico)
East Rim - Sheeps Crossing to Sangre de Cristo Grant (P)
Ute Mountain
Cisneros, East and West
Sunshine Valley
Lee
Razorblades
Miner's
Black Rock Spring
John Dunn
Manby Spring
Raven, East & West
West Rim - SR 567 north to Chiflo; closed north of John Dunn Bridge May 1-July 31 for wildlife (P)
Yellowbank
Powerline

Wild Rivers Recreation Area
Sheeps Crossing (NRT)
Chiflo, East and West (NRT)
Bear Crossing
Big Arsenic Springs
Little Arsenic Springs (NRT)
La Junta (NRT)
La Junta Nature Trail

Wild Rivers Recreation Area (continued)
El Aguaje (NRT)
Confluence
Guadalupe Mountain
Pescado Trail - linking Wild Rivers Recreation Area and the Red River Fish Hatchery (P)
Red River Fault Loop
Rinconda Loop
Red River

Orilla Verde Recreation Area
La Vista Verde
West Rim - Petaca to SR567
Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center Nature Trail
La Cieneguilla Trail - Pilar Campground to Taos Junction Bridge (P)

Lower Gorge ACEC
Improve foot trails from parking areas along NM68 to river sites. Where terrain allows, BLM will construct a trail which parallels NM68 to connect these parking areas for foot or bicycle travellers.
Rinconada Hill - County Line Recreation Site to Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center (P)

Copper Hill ACEC
Agua Caliente
Rinconada Hill (P)

Notes: NRT = National Recreation Trail P = new trail or planned extension of existing trail

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADC	Animal Damage Control (federal agency)
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AGL	above ground level
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
AMP	Allotment Management Plan
APHIS	Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
ARPA	Archeological Resources Protection Act
AUM	animal unit month (grazing)
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practice
CDOW	Colorado Division of Wildlife
CEC	Colorado Environmental Coalition
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Colorado
CR	County Road
CRMP	Coordinated Resource Management Plan
CWQCC	Colorado Water Quality Control Commission
DOD	Department of Defense
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy & Management Act (1976)
ft^3/s	cubic feet per second (waterflow)
HMP	Habitat Management Plan
I	"Improve" category for grazing allotments
LAC	Limits of Acceptable Change (monitoring system)
M	"Maintain" category for grazing allotments
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCA	National Conservation Area
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act (1969)
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NM	New Mexico, New Mexico State Highway
NMDG&F	New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
NMED	New Mexico Environment Department
NMSH&TD	New Mexico State Highway & Transportation Department
NMSO	New Mexico State Office (BLM)
NMWQCC	New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOL	not open to leasing (for oil & gas)
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly SCS)
NSO	no surface occupancy (oil & gas leasing stipulation)
OHV	off-highway vehicle
ORV	off-road vehicle
OVRA	Orilla Verde Recreation Area
P.L.	Public Law
P.L. 90-452	Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (1968)
P.L. 103-242	Amendment to the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (1994)
PRIA	Public Rangelands Improvement Act
R.	Range
RGCRMP	Rio Grande Coordinated Resource Management Plan
RGORP	Rio Grande Occupancy Resolution Program
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
ROW	right of way
R&PP	Recreation & Public Purposes (Act)
RV	recreational vehicle
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (New Mexico)
SCS	Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS)
Sec.	Section
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SMA	Special Management Area
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
T.	Township
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

APPENDIX 1
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

USDI	U.S. Department of the Interior
USFWS/FWS	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VRM	visual resources management (BLM program)
WRRA	Wild Rivers Recreation Area
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic River

APPENDIX 2
LIST OF PREPARERS

Name	Assignment	Education	Related Experience
Core Team Terry Humphrey	Team Leader (NM)	BS - Recreation Management, Forestry	BLM/NPS/USFS - 20 years
Bill Dailey	Team Leader (CO) Recreation/Transportation	MPA - Public Admin BS - Agriculture	BLM/COE/City of Colorado Springs - 6 years
John Bailey	Recreation (NM)	BA - Anthropology	BLM/NPS - 23 years
John Bristol	Recreation/Access/Visual Res. (NM)	BS - Landscape/Architecture	BLM/USFS - 26 years
Mike Cassell	Vegetation (CO)	BS - Agriculture	BLM/USFS - 7 years
Sam DesGeorges	Wildlife/Vegetation/Transp./Fire (NM)	BS - Wildlife Biology	BLM - 18 years
Kent Hamilton	Project Advisor (NM)	BS - Agricultural Economics	BLM/BIA - 34 years
Patty McLean	Project Advisor (NM)	BA - English	BLM/NPS/DOI - 29 years
Yasmeen Najmi	Asst. Team Leader/Recreation (NM)	BA - Political Science	BLM/USFS - 2 years
Mark Sundin	River Management (NM)	BS - Int'l & Env. Studies	BLM - 12 years
Interdisciplinary Team Anne Apodaca	Recreation/Environmental Educ. (NM)	BS - Wildlife Management, Biology	BLM/USFS - 14 years
John Carochi	Resource Advisor (CO)	BS - Range Management, Forestry	BLM - 22 years
Larry Duran	Wildlife (CO)	BS - Wildlife Biology	USFS/BLM - 7 years
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries (CO)	BS - Fishery Biology MS - Wildlife Biology	CDOW/FWS/BLM - 16 years
Melissa Johnston	Vegetation/Range Management (CO)	BS - Range Management	BLM/USFS - 6 years
Fred Martinez	Minerals (CO)	BS - Geology, Env. Science	BLM/USFS - 19 years
Bill Miller	Lands/Realty (CO)	BS - Forestry	BLM - 21 years
Bill Overbaugh	Wild & Scenic River Studies (NM)	MA - Outdoor Recreation BS - Natural Resources	BLM - 15 years
Jeanette Pranzo	Socioeconomics (CO)	MA - Economics	BLM - 20 years
Karla Rogers	Socioeconomics (CO)	BA - Economics	BLM/Other Economics Training
Jim Silva	Fire (NM)	BS - Biology	BLM - 25 years
Steve Storo	Minerals (NM)	BS - Geology MS - Hazardous Waste Mgt.	BLM - 11 years
Jerry Wall	Soils/Air/Water (NM)	MS - Forest Soils	BLM/USFS - 29 years

Name	Assignment	Education	Related Experience [a]
Dave Wallace	Vegetation/Fire/Forestry (NM)	BS - Wildlife Biology, Range Mgmt.	BLM/Wyoming Game & Fish - 5 years
Monica Weimer	Cultural Resources (CO)	MA & BA - Anthropology	BLM/Contract Work - 11 years
Royce Wheeler	Vegetation/Range Management (CO)	BS - Range Management	BLM - 27 years
Paul Williams	Cultural & Historical Resources (NM)	MS - Anthropology BA - Psychology	BLM - 17 years
Lora Yonemoto	Lands/Realty (NM)	BLM Lands School	BLM - 13 years
Wayne Yonemoto	Vegetation/Range Management (NM)	BS - Range Management	BLM - 17 years
M'Lee Beazley	Desktop Publishing/Graphics/ Printing Specialist (NM)	Graphic Design (degree in progress)	BLM - 15 years
Bob Bewley	GIS Mapping (NM)	MS & BS - Geography	BLM/Other - 16 years
Donn Bode	GIS Mapping (CO)		BLM/USFS - 5 years GIS 13 years cartography
Greg Homan	Cartographer (NM)	BS - Geography	BLM/Other - 11 years
Charna Lefton	Public Affairs (NM)	Graduate work - Public Relations BA - Psychology	BLM/U.S. Peace Corps/Red Cross - 16 years
Mark Lovato	Cartographic Technician (NM)		BLM - 16 years
Francina Martinez	Lands/Realty/Process Records (NM)	BLM Lands School	BLM - 7 years
Elizabeth Peck	GIS Mapping (NM)	BS - Geography	BLM - 10 years
Sarah W. Spurrier	Writer/Editor (NM)	MBA, BA - Psychology	BLM/Other - 17 years
J. W. Whitney	Planning Process (NM)	BS - Botany	BLM - 30 years

Note: [a] Acronyms are as follows: BIA - Bureau of Indian Affairs|BLM - Bureau of Land Management| CDOW - Colorado Division of Wildlife|CO - Colorado|COE - Corps of Engineers|DOI - Department of the Interior|FWS - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service|NM - New Mexico|NPS - National Park Service|USFS - U.S. Forest Service.

APPENDIX 3
RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS STUDY

SUMMARY

The three phases of a Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Study are eligibility determination, classification analysis, and suitability assessment. In this report the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) evaluates the eligibility of 14 waterways within the New Mexico portion of the Rio Grande Corridor Planning Area for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs). Seven waterways have been determined to be ineligible and are dropped from further study. Seven waterways have met the criteria for eligibility, and tentative classifications of wild, scenic, or recreational have been assigned.

The BLM manages only small portions of the larger watersheds for five of the seven eligible and tentatively classified waterways. The agency must now coordinate with other landowners upstream to complete WSR studies. Two of the seven eligible and tentatively classified riversC Rio Embudo and Bosque segment of the Rio GrandeC are considered manageable waterways in and of themselves and are analyzed for suitability for inclusion in the National WSR System.

The purpose of the suitability study is to develop recommendations for the Rio Grande Corridor Coordinated Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CRMP/EIS) and to provide a basis for Congress to determine whether the two river segments should be added to the National WSRs system.

INTRODUCTION

BLM planning guidance suggests that WSR studies be completed for all waterways within the scope of a planning area. This study considers the following 14 waterways for inclusion in the WSRs systemC Arroyo Hondo, Rito Cieneguilla, Piedra Lumbre Canyon, Tierra Amarilla Canyon, Agua Caliente Canyon, Cañada de Ojo Sarco, Rio de las Trampas, Cañada de Piedra Lumbre, Arroyo del Plomo, Cañada Comanche, Cañada del Agua, Cañada de las Marias, Rio Grande Bosque segment, and Rio Embudo Box.

The October 1988 Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP) requires that a 5-mile-long section of the Rio Embudo east of Dixon, New Mexico (from the Picuris Reservation to the mid-section line of Section 36, T. 23 N., R. 10 E.), generally referred to as the Rio Embudo Box, be evaluated for WSR designation. Public Law 103-242 (May 4, 1994) requires the BLM to study an 8-mile-long section of the Rio Grande north of Velarde, New Mexico (generally referred to as the "Rio Grande Bosque" segment, which is actually 7.6 miles long), from the west section line of Section 15, T. 23 N., R. 10 E. to the south line of the northwest quarter of Section 34, T. 23 N., R. 9 E., and to submit a report to the Congress within 3 years.

This report is a record of the WSR study process associated with the Rio Grande Corridor CRMP/EIS. It is not meant to be an environmental impact analysis but an examination of the river segments in relationship to the WSR eligibility/classification/ suitability criteria. The environmental analysis is discussed in Chapter 4 of the Draft CRMP/EIS.

Land use controls on private land are a matter of state and local zoning. Although the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 includes provisions encouraging protection of river values through state and federal land use planning, these provisions are not binding on local governments.

The federal government is responsible for ensuring that management of designated rivers meets the intent of the act. In the absence of local or state river protection provisions, the federal government could ensure compliance through acquisition of private lands or interest in lands. The present surface land ownership in the Planning Area is approximately 50 percent public and 50 percent private.

The basic objective of WSR designation is to maintain the existing condition of a river. If a land use or development clearly threatens the outstandingly remarkable value(s) that resulted in designation of the river, efforts would be made to remove the threat through such actions as local zoning, land exchanges, or purchases from willing sellers. Agricultural and livestock grazing activities occurring at the time of designation would generally not be affected.

OVERVIEW OF THE THREE PHASES OF THE WSR STUDY PROCESS

The first phase of a WSR study is the eligibility determination, an analysis to see whether the river is eligible to be tentatively considered for WSR designation. To be eligible, the river must meet the criteria of being free-flowing and possessing one or more outstandingly remarkable values.

The second phase of the study is the classification analysis, which determines whether the river should be tentatively classified as a recreational, scenic, or wild river if it were designated by Congress. This tentative BLM classification is based on the level of development present in the river corridor.

The third phase of the study, the suitability assessment, consists of comparing alternative ways of managing the river. The suitability of a river for designation depends on the managing agency's ability to resolve key issues such as public access, long-term protection of resources and traditional resource uses.

PHASE ONE: THE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

The purpose of an eligibility study is to determine whether a river meets the minimum requirements for addition to the national system. According to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, eligible river segments must be free flowing and, with their immediate environment, possess one or more outstandingly remarkable values, such as scenic, recreational, geologic, fish habitat, wildlife, historic, ecological or cultural resource values. "Free flowing" is defined as "existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping or other modification of the waterway that would encourage future construction of such structures." (Free flowing should not be confused with naturally flowing, a state in which a river flows without any upstream manipulation except by nature.) "Outstandingly remarkable values" are defined as natural and cultural resources that are either unique at a regional level or exemplary at the national level.

A determination that a river is eligible for designation does not lead immediately to a recommendation that it should be added to the system. The eligibility study simply determines whether the river should be carried into the classification and suitability phases of the study.

Table B-1 summarizes the comparative analysis of the scenic, geologic, recreational, fish habitat, wildlife, cultural, water quality and riparian resources for the rivers within the Planning Area (refer to Map 4). In the analysis, the BLM compared resource values of the rivers under study to similar features on other rivers in the region and identified values that are unique or exemplary. To be "unique," a resource or combination of resources must be one of a kind within a region. To be "exemplary," a resource must be one of the better examples of that type of resource at a national level.

Eligibility Evaluations of the Fourteen Waterways

Table B-2 summarizes the eligibility determinations of the fourteen waterways that were screened during the eligibility study. Seven waterways were found ineligible and dropped from further study. Seven waterways were found eligible and were assigned a tentative classification of wild, scenic, or recreational. The table is followed by narrative descriptions providing detailed explanations of the eligibility determinations. The tentative classifications are described in the next section.

Rio Grande Bosque

The Rio Grande Bosque segment is free flowing with no existing dams or other structures to modify the river

channel. Evidence exists of past water diversion into ditches, but no recent activity. Water is actively being diverted from the river in 12 places for use in orchards and other farming activities by motorized equipment and siphon hoses.

The Taos Resource Management Plan (RMP 1988) designated this stretch of river as a portion of the Racecourse Area of Critical Environmental Concern (CEC). The Bosque segment provides unusual fishing opportunity and outstanding scenic values. Fishing use is year round. Game fish include rainbow trout, brown trout, northern pike, catfish and small-mouth bass.

TABLE B-1
COMPARISON OF RELATIVE RESOURCE VALUES OF RIVER SEGMENTS WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA

River Segment	Scenic	Geo-logic	Recre-ational	Fish Habitat	Wild-life	Cul-tural	Water Quality	Riparian
Rio Grande Upper Box (1968 designation)	1	1	2	1	3	2	3	4
Rio Grande Taos Box (1968 designation)	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	4
Rio Grande 12-mile Segment (1994 designation)	2	2	1	1	2	1	3	1
Rio Grande Bosque	2	4	3	1	3	2	3	2
Rio Embudo Box	1	2	1	2	1	3	3	3
Arroyo Hondo	1	2	2	4	2	4	2	2
Rito Cieneguilla	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Piedra Lumbre Canyon	2	2	3	4	3	2	4	3
Tierra Amarilla Canyon	2	2	2	4	3	2	2	1
Agua Caliente Canyon	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Cañada de Ojo Sarco	3	2	3	4	3	3	4	3
Rio de las Trampas	1	2	4	4	1	3	4	4

Notes: No outstandingly remarkable values were found for Rito Cieneguilla, Piedra Lumbre Canyon, Cañada de Piedra Lumbre, Arroyo del Plomo, Cañada Comanche, Cañada del Agua, or Cañada de las Marias.

Key to Ratings: 1 - Exemplary, one of the better examples of that type of resource at a national level.
2 - Unique, a resource or combination of resources that is one of a kind at a regional level.
3 - High quality at a regional and/or local level.
4 - A common resource at the regional and/or local level.

RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS STUDY

TABLE B-2
SUMMARY OF RIVER SEGMENT ELIGIBILITY AND TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATIONS

River Segment	BLM Miles	Comments
Rio Grande Bosque	7.6	Found eligible for cultural, fish habitat, riparian and scenic values; tentative classification of Recreational.
Rio Embudo Box	5	Found eligible for geologic, recreational, fish habitat, wildlife and scenic values; tentative classification of Wild.
Arroyo Hondo	3	Found 1.2 miles free flowing and eligible for unique geologic value; tentative classification of Scenic.
Rito Cieneguilla	4.2	Not eligible no outstandingly remarkable values found.
Piedra Lumbre Canyon	3.5	Not eligible no outstandingly remarkable values found.
Tierra Amarilla Canyon	2.3	Found eligible for geologic, recreational, cultural, water quality, riparian and scenic values; tentative classification of Scenic.
Agua Caliente Canyon	2.9	Found eligible for geologic value; tentative classifications of Scenic (1 mile) and Wild (1.9 miles).
Cañada de Ojo Sarco	2.4	Found eligible for unique geologic values; tentative classification of Scenic.
Rio de las Trampas	1.3	Found eligible for geologic, wildlife and scenic values; tentative classification of Scenic.
Cañada de Piedra Lumbre	5.5	Not eligible—no outstandingly remarkable values found; dry wash.
Arroyo del Plomo	3.1	Not eligible—no outstandingly remarkable values found; dry wash.
Cañada Comanche	5.2	Not eligible—no outstandingly remarkable values found; dry wash.
Cañada del Agua	1.4	Not eligible—no outstandingly remarkable values found; dry wash.
Cañada de las Marias	0.7	Not eligible—no outstandingly remarkable values found; dry wash.

In considering the uniqueness of the Bosque segment, one might envision the transition from the designated wild section of the Rio Grande that runs from the Colorado border south through the Rio Grande Gorge. This segment, which ends at Taos Junction Bridge at the north end of the BLM's Orilla Verde Recreation Area, is pristine, rugged, rocky, narrow and steep. South to Pilar, a mostly residential community, the gorge then opens up to high rocky hills with a green belt of riparian vegetation on both sides of the river. From Pilar, the river canyon takes on a rocky character and continues south to the Rio Arriba-Taos County Line where the riparian vegetation zone is limited. The section of the river from the north end of the Orilla Verde Recreation Area to a mile below the County Line Recreation Site has been designated as scenic. Recreation facilities are interspersed along the two paved state highways that run the length of this river section.

South of the County Line Recreation Site, large cottonwoods and wide stretches of riparian cover begin to appear in what is known as the "Bosque" section. The floodplain broadens to support orchard and farming activities associated with small rural communities. Human modification to the environment is noticeable from the river. The scenic resources of the Bosque section are contrastingly different from other sections of river in the region because of the pastoral setting.

The scenic and cultural values of the Rio Grande Bosque segment are considered unique in the region, with no other river segment containing the free-flowing character in a pastoral setting. The opportunities for game fishing also set the Bosque segment apart from other river sections in the region (refer to Table B-1).

It is determined that the Rio Grande Bosque segment meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing outstandingly remarkable cultural, fish habitat, riparian and scenic values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Rio Embudo Box

The Rio Embudo Box is free flowing; no structures, diversions, or other developments were found to exist. This section of river also possesses a number of characteristics that are unique and exemplary in the region. The Taos RMP describes the Embudo Canyon ACEC as "an area where scenic values are exceptional . . . offers outstanding scenic and recreational opportunities . . . is important to wildlife . . . contains riparian habitat and a perennial stream . . . [an] ecosystem of high value due to its vegetative variety and year-round flowing water."

The Rio Embudo Box is a deep and narrow, incised canyon with rugged walls of sandstone, basalt, and granite that have been sculpted and shaped by natural forces to form an array of colors and form. The aquatic habitat contains brown and rainbow trout and Rio Grande sucker. Big-game species found on the rim and in the canyon include elk, deer, mountain lion, bear, and wild turkey. The vegetation represented is a complex type, lying between the Great Basin shrublands and the Great Basin shortgrass region. This segment is considered unique in the region because of its pristine variety of geologic and vegetative features, and associated scenic values (refer to Table B-1).

It is determined that the Rio Embudo Box meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing out- standingly remarkable geologic, recreational, fish habitat, wildlife and scenic values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Arroyo Hondo

The Arroyo Hondo is a free-flowing stream for about 1.2 miles above a diversion, a 10-inch steel pipe located approximately 3 miles upstream from the Arroyo Hondo's confluence with the Rio Grande. This diversion effectively dewaters the final 3 miles of this small stream during the summer months.

The Arroyo Hondo is a steep-walled canyon with a primitive road paralleling the stream for most of its length. The v-shaped canyon is cut first into basalt, then metamorphic rock as it ascends to the east. The aquatic habitat is limited because the stream is diverted in summer months, and is degraded by erosion from the road nearby. Riparian vegetation is limited but healthy. Vegetation in general is healthy and varies from piñon-juniper-oak to pine-spruce-fir-aspen. Big game species found in the area include elk, deer, mountain lion and wild turkey. This area is also a migratory corridor for elk and mule deer. The area is internationally known for the occurrence of the mineral staurolite as cruciform twinned crystals, or "fairy crosses."

It is determined that the Arroyo Hondo above the diversion meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing outstandingly remarkable geologic, scenic, recreational, wildlife, water quality and riparian values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Rito Cieneguilla

The Rito Cieneguilla consists of two segments. The segment on BLM land in Sections 25 and 26 (T. 24 N., R. 11 E.) consists of an intermittent, dry streambed with no impoundments. During periods of high precipitation, the river serves as a channel for runoff, as evidenced by the wide river bed and large granite river boulders and stones.

Historic photos indicate that the canyon was incised or cut because of a change in the vegetation at the head of the canyon and the historic road that runs near the river. This road served as the historic road to Taos before New Mexico Highway 68 (NM 68) was constructed.

The vegetation consists of piñon and juniper woodlands and the terrain is gentle rolling hills with scattered granite outcrops. Evidence of elk and mule deer exists.

The second segment parallels NM 68 in Sections 27 and 33 (T. 24 N., R. 11 E.). This segment contains human-made structures, including two bridges and three roads that cross the river. These access routes lead to residences on the eastern side of the river channel. A small power line that crosses the river provides electricity to two homes, and pipeline following the channel empties into a pond constructed next to the riverbed. NM 68 contains a large pullout with a solid waste transfer station and restrooms.

The portion of the river that enters private land in Section 27 contains several springs. The springs and channels are lined with watercress, cottonwoods and willow trees. The area with springs historically was called ACieneguilla@or marsh. Apache Indians built wattle-and-daub (stick and mud) encampments in the area.

Continuing southwest along the highway, the river water continues to be supplied from numerous springs. It appears that a portion of the spring water is diverted at a constructed pond with an irrigation gate.

It is determined that the Rito Cieneguilla does not meet the criteria of being free flowing and possessing one or more outstandingly remarkable values. It thus does not meet the minimum requirements to be considered eligible for consideration as a Wild and Scenic River.

Piedra Lumbre Canyon

Piedra Lumbre Canyon contains an arroyo that has evidence of intermittent water flows. No structures, diversions or other developments exist. This arroyo does not have characteristics that are unique or exemplary.

Piedra Lumbre Canyon is a deep and narrow box canyon with steep walls of exposed bedrock. No aquatic species are evident in the dry arroyo. Big game species in the canyon include deer and elk. Vegetation in the area is common to this part of New MexicoC piñon-juniper stands interspersed with sagebrush and grasses.

It is determined that Piedra Lumbre Canyon does not meet the criterion of possessing one or more outstandingly remarkable values. It thus does not meet the minimum requirements to be considered eligible for consideration as a Wild and Scenic River.

Tierra Amarilla Canyon

Tierra Amarilla Canyon is free flowing with no structures, diversions or other developments existing along the drainage. At the time of the field inspection water was flowing in the drainage. The stream originates on U.S. Forest Service lands approximately 2 miles above the BLM boundary.

This is a deep and narrow box canyon with steep walls of exposed bedrock. Aquatic species are not evident even though water exists in the drainage. Big game species in the canyon include deer and elk. Vegetation ranges from piñon-juniper woodlands to ponderosa pine and aspen forests as elevation is gained. Willows and thick vegetation are abundant along the river banks.

Tierra Amarilla Canyon is considered to be a unique river segment containing a pristine variety of box canyon geologic and riparian vegetative features associated with scenic values (refer to Table B-1).

It is determined that Tierra Amarilla Canyon meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing outstandingly remarkable geologic, recreational, cultural, water quality, riparian and scenic values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Agua Caliente Canyon

Agua Caliente Canyon is free flowing as no structures, diversions or other developments exist. The stream begins on U.S. Forest Service lands approximately .2 miles above the BLM boundary. The 2.5 miles of stream located on BLM and state lands possess a number of characteristics that are unique to the region. The stream is situated off NM 68 about a half mile northeast of the Village of Pilar. The river flows northwest and enters private land approximately .2 miles southeast of NM 68. The stream flows into the dry Rito Cieneguilla just before the river travels under the highway. The Rito Cieneguilla then crosses about a half mile of private land before it enters the Rio Grande.

The lower portion of Agua Caliente Canyon has been used for irrigation since the eighteenth century. The majority of this stream segment lies within the Agua Caliente ACEC, which was established because of the stream's potential for cutthroat trout reintroduction.

Agua Caliente Canyon is a perennial stream containing waterfalls and pools. A jeep trail begins on the private land off NM 68 and parallels the stream for a mile, where it terminates at an open meadow. No indication of livestock grazing is evident.

The stream traverses cottonwoods and piñon-juniper woodlands, and as the elevation increases from 6,200 feet to 6,600 feet, the river enters ponderosa pine and aspen forests. Willows and thick vegetation are abundant along the streambed. Evidence exists of a small fire that scorched and destroyed several ponderosa pines, along with axe cutting of a small aspen stand.

Elk and deer are found in the canyon. Historically, beavers thrived and built lodges that trapped sediment; however, the beaver population has disappeared. Currently, the sediment is being deposited into an irrigation reservoir located on private land near the confluence of the Rito Cieneguilla and the Rio Grande.

Historically the stream contained Rio Grande cutthroat trout, but some time after 1958 these fish disappeared. Rainbow trout are currently found in Agua Caliente Canyon, and it is still potential habitat for the native cutthroat

trout. Along the entire stream is riparian habitat that consists of cottonwoods and willows.

As noted above for the Rito Cieneguilla, the area around Pilar was historically called ACieneguilla@or marsh. Apache Indians built wattle-and-daub (stick and mud) encampments here.

Agua Caliente Canyon is considered an excellent example of a stream segment containing several waterfalls and pools. The streambed cuts through a deep granite canyon and winds to the south before flowing northwest to the Rito Cieneguilla, which flows into the Rio Grande. The broken undulating outcrops in Section 3 (T. 23 N., R. 11 E.) rise to about 400 feet in elevation with outstanding geologic resources (refer to Table B-1).

It is determined that Agua Caliente Canyon meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing a variety of outstandingly remarkable values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Cañada de Ojo Sarco

Cañada de Ojo Sarco is free flowing; no structures, diversions, or other developments exist within the study segment. This 2-mile-long stream section (Section 6, T. 22 N., R. 11 E.; Section 1, T. 22 N., R. 10 E; Section 36, T. 23 N., R. 10 E.) is located just south of the Warm Springs Special Management Area and the Embudo Canyon ACEC, north of County Road (CR) 75. The confluence of the Ojo Sarco and the Rio Embudo is on private land in Section 36 (T. 23 N., R. 10 E.), about a quarter mile north of the BLM boundary.

The Ojo Sarco is a perennial stream that contains a waterfall flanked with granite walls. The vegetation represented is a complex type, lying between the Great Basin shrublands and Great Basin shortgrass region. Cottonwoods line portions of the streambed. Many small mammals and species of birds are associated with the riparian zone. Big game species found on the rim along the stream include elk, deer, and wild turkey.

The Cañada de Ojo Sarco originates on U.S. Forest Service lands approximately 13 miles above the BLM boundary. Small communities upstream from the study area use the water for irrigation, during which the stream can be entirely diverted before it reaches the Rio Embudo. The Picuris Pueblo Indians were probably early visitors to this area.

The 2-mile-long segment of Cañada de Ojo Sarco possesses a number of characteristics unique to the region (refer to Table B-1). It is considered the best example of a stream segment containing a 50-foot-long waterfall flowing over granite blocks, a north-facing granite cliff, a small granite canyon near the confluence with Embudo Creek and arroyo-style bank cutting.

It is determined that the Cañada de Ojo Sarco meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing outstandingly remarkable geologic values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Rio de las Trampas

The Rio de las Trampas is a stream that passes through three small communities where water is removed for irrigation. In dry years the stream may be completely diverted for this purpose.

The Trampas has its source in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains on U.S. Forest Service lands, flows through several parcels of private land, then onto BLM lands where it enters a granite canyon in the final mile above its confluence with the Rio Embudo (the ALower Trampas@). The aquatic habitat is at risk because the entire streamflow could be diverted for irrigation.

The Rio de las Trampas flows in a steep-walled granite canyon. A primitive road is nearby in one location. Big game species found in the area include elk, deer, mountain lion, and wild turkey. Vegetation is healthy and is of the piñon-juniper-ponderosa pine type. The final mile of the Rio de las Trampas is a good example of an upland stream containing outstanding geologic features and associated scenic values (refer to Table B-1).

It is determined that the Rio de las Trampas meets the criteria of being free flowing and possessing outstandingly remarkable geologic, wildlife and scenic values. It thus meets the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

Cañada de Piedra Lumbre, Arroyo del Plomo, Cañada Comanche, Cañada del Agua and Cañada de las Marias

These waterways are dry washes that contain water only during wet weather, including floods. They contain no resource values that are unique in the region. It is determined that these waterways do not meet the criteria of being free flowing and possessing one or more outstandingly remarkable values. Thus, they do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements to be considered for addition to the national system.

PHASE TWO: THE CLASSIFICATION ANALYSIS

The classification analysis determines whether a river should be tentatively classified as recreational, scenic, or wild. This determination is based on the level of development present in the river corridor as it exists at the time of the study. The determining factors include waterway development, shoreline modification and vehicular access.

The three classification categories for eligible rivers are defined as follows.

Wild River Areas

Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

Scenic River Areas

Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational River Areas

Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

A wild river would be an undeveloped river with very limited access. A scenic classification would be applied to a river or river segment that is more developed than a wild river and less developed than a recreational river. A recreational classification would be appropriate in developed areas, such as a river running parallel to roads or railroads with adjacent lands that have agricultural, forestry, commercial or other developments, provided that the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance. Attributes of each category are listed in Table B-3.

It is a common misunderstanding that rivers designated as scenic are managed primarily for scenery, and that recreational rivers are managed to promote recreation use. These labels can be misleadingC regardless of the classification, management is designed to maintain or enhance the river-related values and character of the river.

RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS STUDY

Rio Grande Bosque

The Rio Grande Bosque segment best matches the classification category of recreational, compared to the classification of other designated wild and scenic river segments in the region. The river corridor contains an adjacent highway, highway turnoffs, residential housing, bridges across the river, and pipelines, similar to the scenic section of the Lower Gorge immediately to the north. However, the character of the developments differs in the Bosque because shoreline modification is intensified and more visible from the river and the highway, waterway development includes diversions but not modifications to natural water flow, increased levels of vehicular access exist, and commercial businesses occur in the river corridor. In addition, numerous utility lines cross the river, household and commercial trash is present, mechanized noise levels are somewhat increased, and human-made structures and modifications to the natural environment are more visible. The BLM recommends a tentative classification of recreational for the Rio Grande Bosque.

Rio Embudo Box

The Rio Embudo Box best matches the classification category of wild, compared to the classifications of other designated wild and scenic rivers in the region. The river is free of impoundments and is currently inaccessible by vehicle. The few vehicular trails that do appear on the rim within a quarter mile of the river become single-track hiking trails that allow access into the box canyon and the river. No other human developments exist within a quarter mile of the river. The BLM recommends a tentative classification of wild for the Rio Embudo Box.

Arroyo Hondo

The Arroyo Hondo best matches the classification category of scenic, compared to the classifications of other designated wild and scenic rivers in the region. The river is predominantly free of diversions and accessible by vehicle. No other human developments exist within a quarter mile of the river. The BLM recommends a tentative classification of scenic for the Arroyo Hondo.

Tierra Amarilla Canyon

Tierra Amarilla Canyon best matches the classification category of scenic, compared to the classifications of other designated wild and scenic rivers in the region. The river is free of impoundments and contains an existing trail network that has not been used for a number of years. No human development occurs along the drainage other than an unauthorized cabin that is uninhabitable. The BLM tentatively recommends a classification of scenic for Tierra Amarilla Canyon.

Agua Caliente Canyon

Agua Caliente Canyon best matches the classification categories of scenic and wild, compared to the classifications of other designated wild and scenic rivers in the region. The stream is free of impoundments. From U.S. Highway 68, the two-track road parallels the stream enters private land and continues onto BLM land for approximately a mile southeast, ending at a riverside trailhead in an open meadow. This segment of the river contains arroyo-type banks and two small wooden logs serving as foot bridges across the river. The BLM tentatively recommends a classification of scenic for this portion of the Agua Caliente Canyon.

Beyond the meadow, a small game/foot trail continues up the stream but disappears as the canyon narrows. This portion is considered wild. The setting is ponderosa pine and aspen forests. Small dry tributaries enter north and south of the stream. The stream ravine takes on a rocky character and contains a green belt of riparian vegetation. Numerous small pools and ripples provide a desirable habitat for fish. The BLM recommends a tentative classification of wild for the portion of Agua Caliente Canyon that flows through Sections 2 (state) and 3 (BLM; T. 23 N., R. 11 E.) to the riverside trailhead in Section 3.

RIO GRANDE CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS STUDY

Cañada de Ojo Sarco

Cañada de Ojo Sarco best matches the classification category of scenic, compared to the designations of other designated wild and scenic rivers in the region. CR 75 parallels the Ojo Sarco on the south, although it crosses the river in two places. A few vehicular trails/roads leave CR 75 within a quarter mile of the river. These trails/roads allow access to the river.

The Ojo Sarco flows into Embudo Creek near the Village of Cañoncito. The 2-mile-long study segment of the stream crosses two sections of BLM land, one section of state land, and near the confluence with Embudo Creek enters private land. No other developments exist within a quarter mile of the stream. Household and commercial trash is present along the bank and in the streambed, and noise levels are somewhat increased due to the proximity of CR 75. The BLM recommends a tentative classification of scenic for the 2-mile-long segment above the confluence with Embudo Creek.

TABLE B-3
ATTRIBUTES OF THE THREE RIVER CLASSIFICATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

Wild	Scenic	Recreational
Free flowing. Low dams, diversion works, or other minor structures that do not cause flooding of the natural riverbank may not bar consideration. Future construction is restricted.	Free flowing. Low dams, diversion works, or other minor structures that do not cause flooding of the natural riverbank may not bar consideration. Future construction is restricted.	May have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Water should not have characteristics of an impoundment for any significant distance. Future construction is restricted.
Generally inaccessible by road. One or two inconspicuous roads to the area may be permissible.	Accessible by roads that may occasionally bridge the river area. Short stretches of inconspicuous and well-screened roads or railroads paralleling the river area may be permitted.	Readily accessible with likelihood of paralleling roads or railroads along riverbanks and bridge crossings.
Shoreline is essentially primitive. One or two inconspicuous dwellings and land devoted to production of hay may be permitted. Watershed is natural in appearance.	Shoreline is largely primitive. Small communities are limited to short reaches of the total area. Agricultural practices that do not adversely affect the river area may be permitted.	Shoreline may be extensively developed.
Water quality meets minimum criteria for primary contact recreation, except where such criteria would be exceeded by natural background conditions and esthetics. Capable of supporting propagation of aquatic life normally adapted to the habitat of the stream.	Water quality should meet minimum criteria for desired types of recreation, except where such criteria would be exceeded by natural background conditions and esthetics. Capable of supporting propagation of aquatic life normally adapted to the habitat of the stream, or capable and being restored to that quality.	Water quality should meet minimum criteria for desired types of recreation, except where such criteria would be exceeded by natural background conditions and esthetics. Capable of supporting propagation of aquatic life normally adapted to the habitat of the stream, or capable and being restored to that quality.

Rio de las Trampas

The final mile of the Rio de las Trampas best matches the classification category of scenic, compared to other designated wild and scenic rivers in the region. The river is free of diversions in this section and accessible by vehicle in one area. An old, shallow (10-foot-deep) mine shaft lies within a quarter mile of the river. The BLM recommends a tentative classification of scenic for the Rio de las Trampas.

PHASE THREE: THE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

The third component of a WSR study is the suitability assessment. It is designed to identify the impacts of designation and manageability of eligible rivers. The portion of the suitability assessment contained in this report identifies issues to be considered in the environmental consequences section (Chapter 4). In addition, the willingness of county, state and local landowners to participate in river corridor management is considered. These aspects of the suitability assessment are also considered in Chapter 4.

Criteria for Determining Suitability

In considering suitability, the criteria specified in Section 4a of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (listed below) provide a basis for assessment.

- $ Characteristics that do or do not make the river corridor a worthy addition to the WSR system
- $ Current status of land ownership and uses in the area
- $ Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed or curtailed if the river were designated
- $ Public, state, local or other interests in designation or nondesignation of the river
- $ Estimated costs of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands, and of administering the river if designated
- $ Ability of the agency to manage the river and protect identified values
- $ Historical or existing rights that would be adversely affected by designation
- $ Other issues and concerns identified in the land-use planning process

Rio Grande Bosque

River Values/Characteristics

The Rio Grande Bosque segment provides an unusual fishing opportunity and outstanding scenic values. Fishing use is year-round; game fish include rainbow trout, brown trout, northern pike, catfish, and small-mouth bass. The scenic and cultural values of the Rio Grande Bosque are considered unique in the region, with no other river segment containing its free-flowing character in a pastoral setting. The opportunities for game fishing also set the Bosque apart from other river sections in the region.

Land Ownership and Uses

Land ownership is approximately 50 percent private and 50 percent BLM (public). Private land is associated with the communities of Rinconada, La Bolsa, La Junta, La Cienega, and Embudo.

The predominant use of private land within the river corridor is residential and agricultural, including orchards. Major uses of the public lands within the corridor are river access, fishing, river boating, sightseeing and general dispersed recreation activities.

Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources
Hydroelectric power facilities would not be allowed and designation could preclude new diversions or structures. Other potential surface-disturbing uses of the public land and water resources in the river corridor would be constrained by designation to protect scenic quality. Designation could impact private development indirectly by influencing local planning and zoning.

Interest in Designation
During public scoping, the local communities and river conservation organizations expressed positive interest in designating the Bosque segment as an addition to the Rio Grande WSR.

Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration
The initial cost associated with designation would be limited to mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process. Future costs would depend on the level of threats to river-related values and are foreseen to result from the need for regulatory and educational signing, improved access, road closures/barriers, patrol and enforcement, biological and social inventories, and use permitting systems. In addition, approximately 1,165 acres of private land could be acquired if the owners were willing to sell.

Ability to Manage/Protect River Values
Recognition as a wild and scenic river would aid the BLM in managing and protecting the river-related values should development or other threats to the recognized values be proposed in the future.

Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights
No adverse effects on historical and valid existing rights are expected as the result of designation of the Rio Grande Bosque as wild and scenic.

Other Issues and Concerns
The intent of designation would be to preserve the existing river-related values. This would benefit traditional uses of the Rio Grande Bosque such as fishing and boating in a pastoral setting.

Rio Embudo Box

River Values/Characteristics
The scenic values in the area of the Rio Embudo Box are exceptional. The area offers outstanding scenic and recreational opportunities. It is important to wildlife, contains riparian habitat and a perennial stream, and the ecosystem is of high value because of its vegetative variety and year-round flowing water. The stream lies in a deep and narrow box canyon with rugged walls of sandstone, basalt, and granite that were sculpted and shaped by natural forces to form an array of colors and forms. The aquatic habitat contains brown and rainbow trout and Rio Grande sucker. Big game species found on the rim and in the canyon include elk, deer, mountain lion, bear, and wild turkey. The vegetation represented is complex, lying between the Great Basin shrublands and Great Basin shortgrass types.

Land Ownership and Uses
Land ownership is estimated to be 64 percent BLM and 36 percent state. No developments exist within the river corridor, and land use is considered to be in a primitive natural state. Hiking and fishing are the known predominant uses.

Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources
Designation would preclude hydroelectric power facilities, new diversions or structures, mining, and mineral leasing. Other potential surface-disturbing uses of the river corridor's land and water resources would be precluded by designation, where needed to protect scenic quality.

Interest in Designation
During scoping, local communities showed a positive interest in designating the Rio Embudo Box as a WSR.

Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration
Initial costs associated with designation would be limited to mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process. Future costs may result from regulatory and educational signing as well as the acquisition of about 550 acres of state land.

Ability to Manage/Protect the River Values
Recognition of the Rio Embudo Box as a WSR would aid the BLM in managing and protecting the river-related values should development or other threats be proposed in the future.

Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights
No known or foreseen adverse effects on historical and valid existing rights would occur as the result of designation.

Other Issues and Concerns
The intent of designation would be to preserve the existing river-related values. This would benefit traditional uses of the Rio Embudo Box such as fishing, backcountry uses that rely on a natural setting, and the local cultural activities that depend on them.

SUITABILITY SUMMARY

Arroyo Hondo, Tierra Amarilla Canyon, Agua Caliente Canyon, Cañada de Ojo Sarco, and the Rio de las Trampas

These five streams originate on U.S. Forest Service lands. The BLM will complete suitability assessments for these stream segments within the next few years in coordination with the Carson National Forest.

Rio Grande Bosque

The foreseen impacts of designating this segment as a WSR depend on one's point of view. Preserving the existing and sensitive natural and cultural values would require a cautious approach to any proposed development or use that would negatively affect the fabric of the adjacent community and/or ecosystem. On the other hand, limiting high-impact uses and developments would negatively impact users who seek developments and uses that are not compatible with preserving existing values. For those uses that are compatible with preserving existing values, the designation would be beneficial.

An increase in river-related uses such as boating and fishing could be expected, as trends show overall river use has been and will continue to increase, both regionally and nationally.

Designation in and of itself is not to cause a significant increase in river use, because better known, accessible opportunities also exist upstream. The degree of protection provided for under the leg- isolation would call

greater attention to management of the river, as the result of the Bosque segment being acknowledged as nationally significant.

Overall, designation is well suited to the existing river-related uses and cultural values of the local communities. These communities are definitely interested in participating in river corridor management.

Rio Embudo Box

The foreseen impact of designating this segment as a WSR is minimal. The ruggedness of this landscape would naturally dissuade most people from considering any developments not compatible with the wild nature of the environment, because such ventures would be costly.

Designation is not expected to cause an increase in river-related visitor use. The rugged countryside and character of waterflow in this segment of the river channel are natural deterrents to most existing uses.

The degree of protection provided for under the legislation would enhance preservation of the existing resource values and compatible uses.

Overall, the designation is well suited to the existing natural and cultural environment, and complimentary to public comments received over the last few years.

Suitability Findings

The above analyses of river suitability criteria are based on current knowledge of resource issues and public involvement. Chapter 2 of the Proposed Plan provides suitability recommendations. Comments on the Draft Plan were considered in arriving at a recommendation on whether these river segments are suitable for inclusion in the National WSR System. No opposition to recommending the Rio Embudo Box as wild was expressed through either written or oral comment during the public comment period on the preliminary recommendations. The primary topics of concern raised during the comment period on the preliminary recommendation for the Rio Grande Bosque segment were its tentative classification as recreational and condemnation of private lands within the boundary of t his river area. Classification categories for various river segments were completed as per direction of the BLM Manual 8351. The Bosque segment was classified based on the type and degree of human developments associated with the river and adjacent lands that existed at the time the evaluation was performed. In response to the other concern about condemnation of private land, as outline in the Proposed Plan, BLM would seek to acquire selected lands by purchase, easement, or donation if the landowners were willing. In addition, if 50 percent or more of the entire acreage is owned in fee title by the United States, BLM would not be authorized to acquire fee title to any lands by condemnation under the authority of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Currently 50 percent (1,100 acres of the total 2,187 acres) of the acreage in the Bosque segment is owned in fee title by the United States.

This report finds the Rio Grande Bosque and the Rio Embudo Box suitable to be considered for inclusion in the National WSR System. The Rio Grande Bosque is tentatively classified as recreational and the Rio Embudo Box as wild. Until Congress decides whether to add these river sections to the system, the BLM will manage them to preserve the river-related values identified in this report.

MANAGEMENT OF SUITABLE RIVER SEGMENTS

The following is a general summary of BLM's management direction to be taken for the Rio Grande Bosque and the Rio Embudo Box. Refer to Chapters 2, 3 and 4 for specific actions proposed. The BLM would work with Taos and Rio Arriba counties to develop local land use plans to meet the objectives of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Rio Grande Bosque

Under Final Plan guidelines, this segment is recommended as a WSR with a recreational classification and will be managed according to the following prescriptions:

- $ the segment will be withdrawn from the public land laws and mineral entry, and closed to mineral material disposal and to mineral leasing
- $ any unplanned fires will be fully suppressed
- $ VRM Class II designation will be applied
- $ selected private lands will be acquired if landowners are willing to sell
- $ grazing will be excluded from the riparian and wetland areas
- $ new rights-of-way will be excluded unless necessary for administration of recreation sites to improve access to these sites, or to provide access/utility service to private or state lands where such access was otherwise not possible; utilities will be underground only, and will be co-located with roads
- $ vehicles will be limited to designated roads and trails (see Map 6 and Table 3-1)
- $ BLM will work with Taos and Rio Arriba counties to develop local land use plans to meet the objectives of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Rio Embudo Box

Under Final Plan guidelines, this segment is recommended as a WSR with a wild classification and will be managed according to the following Copper Hill ACEC prescriptions:

- $ woodland and forestry resources will be managed to enhance wildlife habitat, ecosystem health, and scenic values
- $ vehicles will be limited to designated roads and trails (see Map 6 and Table 3-1)
- $ state and private lands within the area will be acquired by purchase or exchange with willing owners
- $ VRM Class I designation will apply
- $ grazing will be excluded
- $ the area will remain withdrawn from public land laws and mineral entry, and closed to mineral leasing and mineral material disposal
- $ new rights-of-way will be excluded

GOODANS

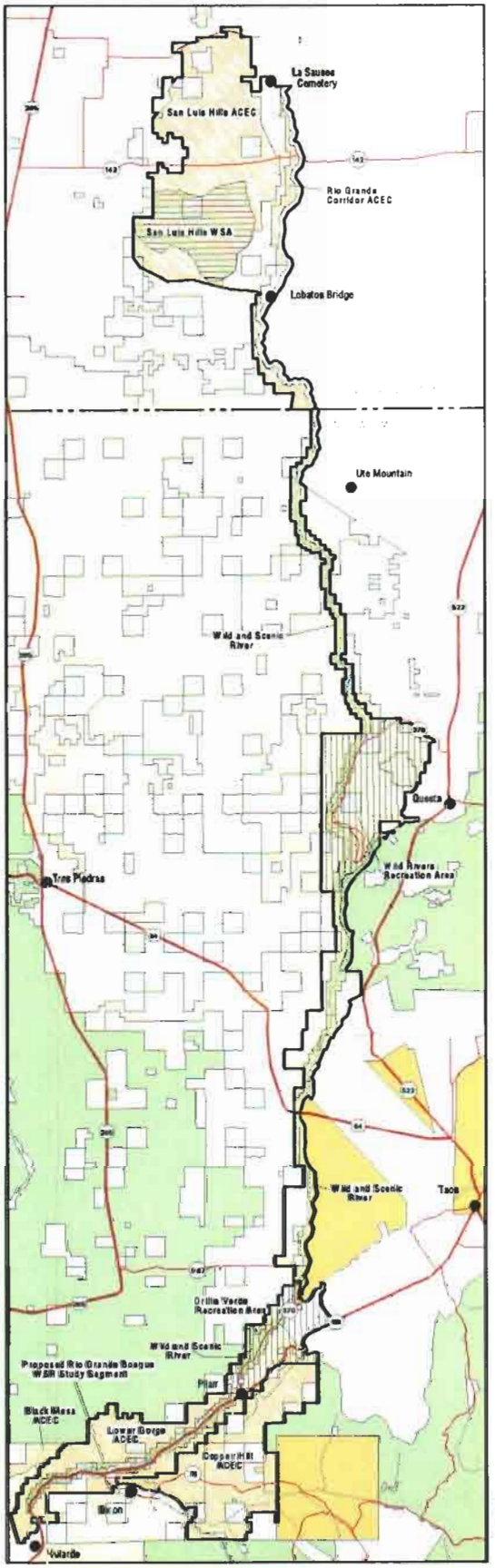
\\ABQPENTIUM1\HPIV$NT1

PSCRIPT Page Separator

Map 3

Planning Area

Rio Grande Corridor Coordinated Resource Management Plan



Surface Ownership

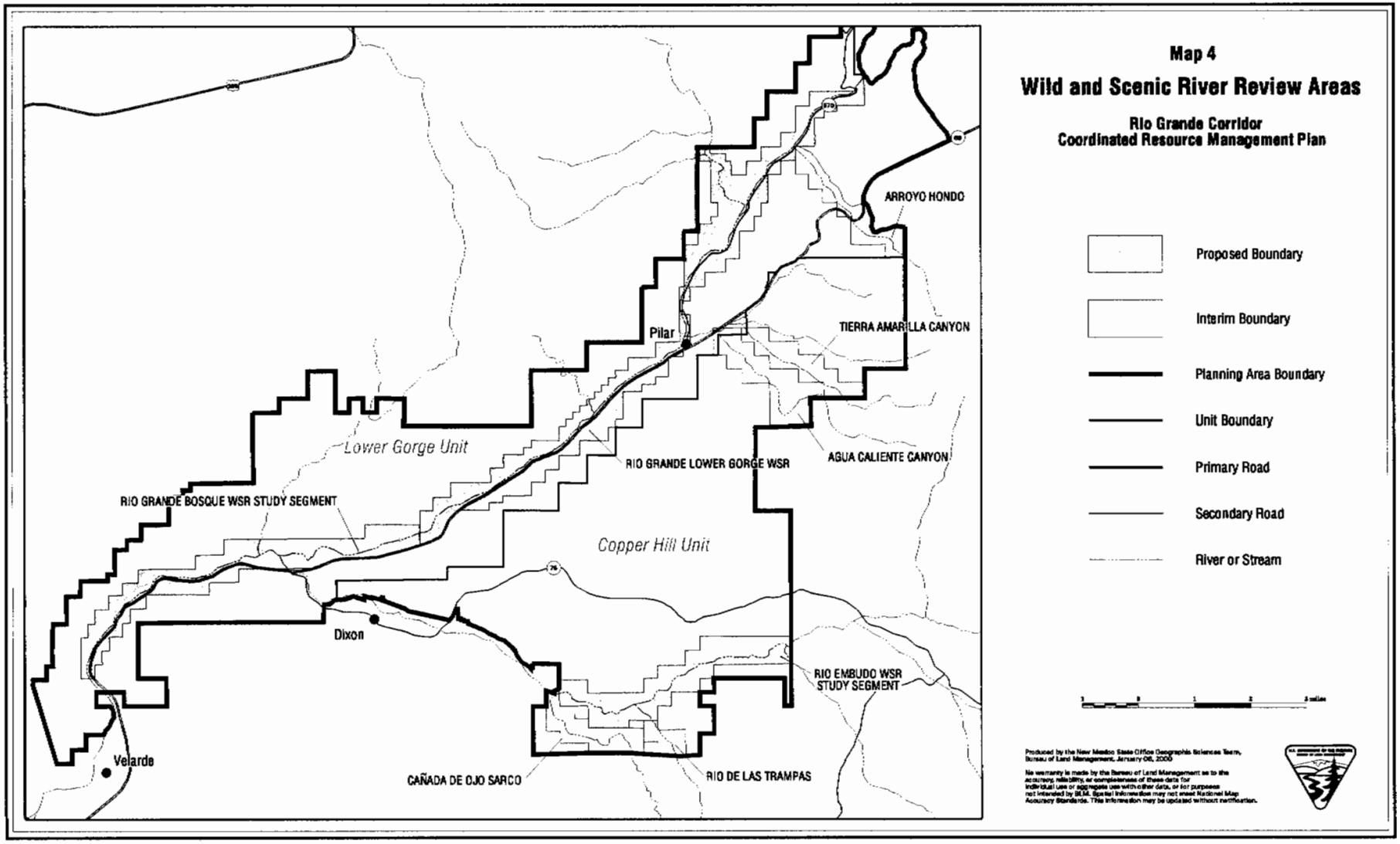
- BLM
- Carson National Forest
- State
- Tribal
- Private

Special Management Areas

- Wild and Scenic River (1968 Designation)
- Wild and Scenic River (1994 Designation)
- Proposed Rio Grande Bosque (WSR Study Segment)
- Special Management Area (SMA)
- Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
- Wilderness Study Area (WSA)
- BLM Recreation Area
- Planning Area Boundary
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- River or Stream

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 13, 1999

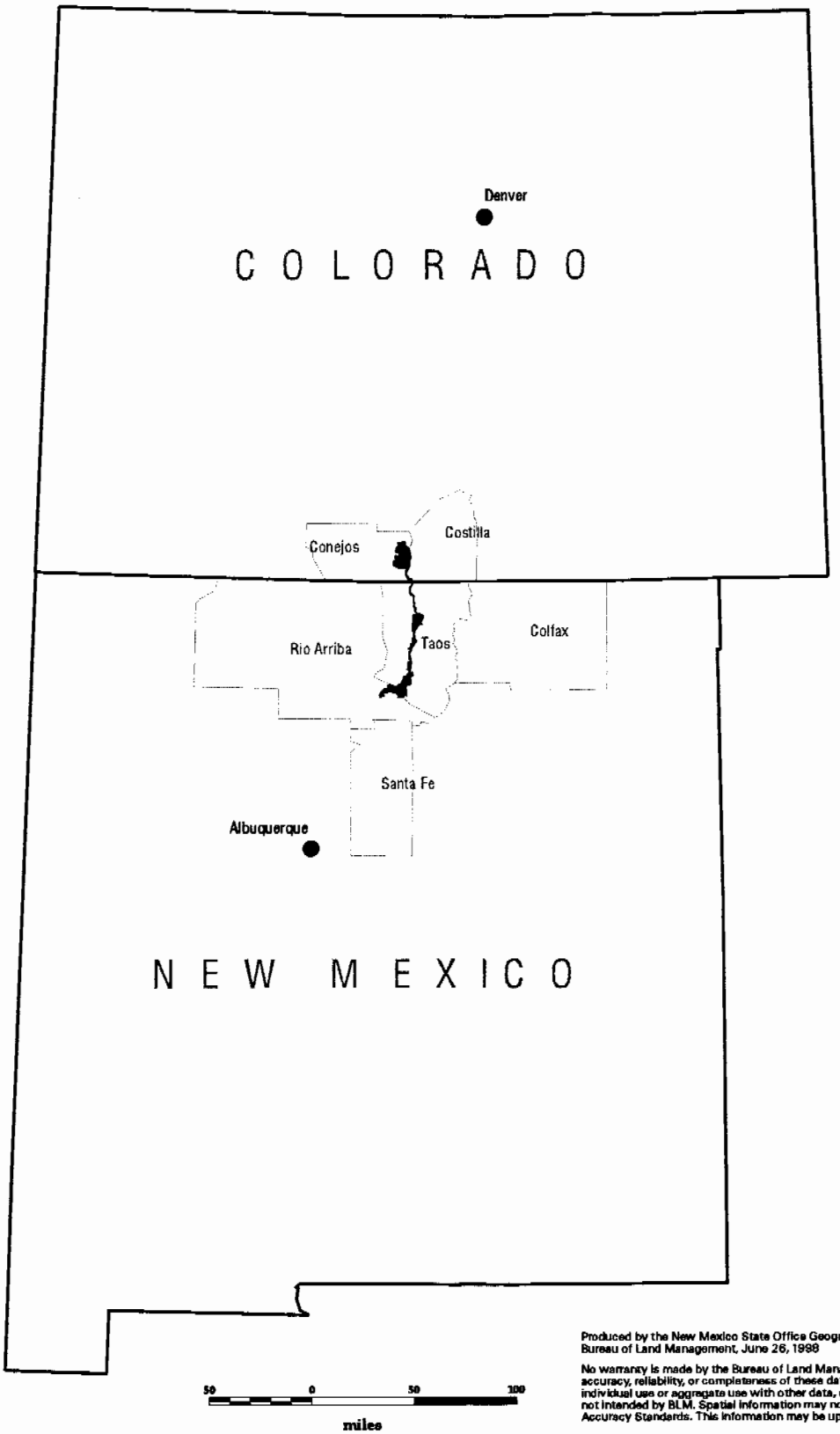
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.


Map 4
Wild and Scenic River Review Areas
Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan
Proposed Boundary
Interim Boundary
Planning Area Boundary
Unit Boundary
Primary Road
Secondary Road
River or Stream
ARROYO HONDO
TIERRA AMARILLA CANYON
Pilar
Lower Gorge Unit
RIO GRANDE LOWER GORGE WSR
AGUA CALIENTE CANYON
RIO GRANDE BOSQUE WSR STUDY SEGMENT
Copper Hill Unit
Dixon
RIO EMBUDO WSR
STUDY SEGMENT
Velarde
CAÑADA DE OJO SARCO
RIO DE LAS TRAMPAS

Map 1

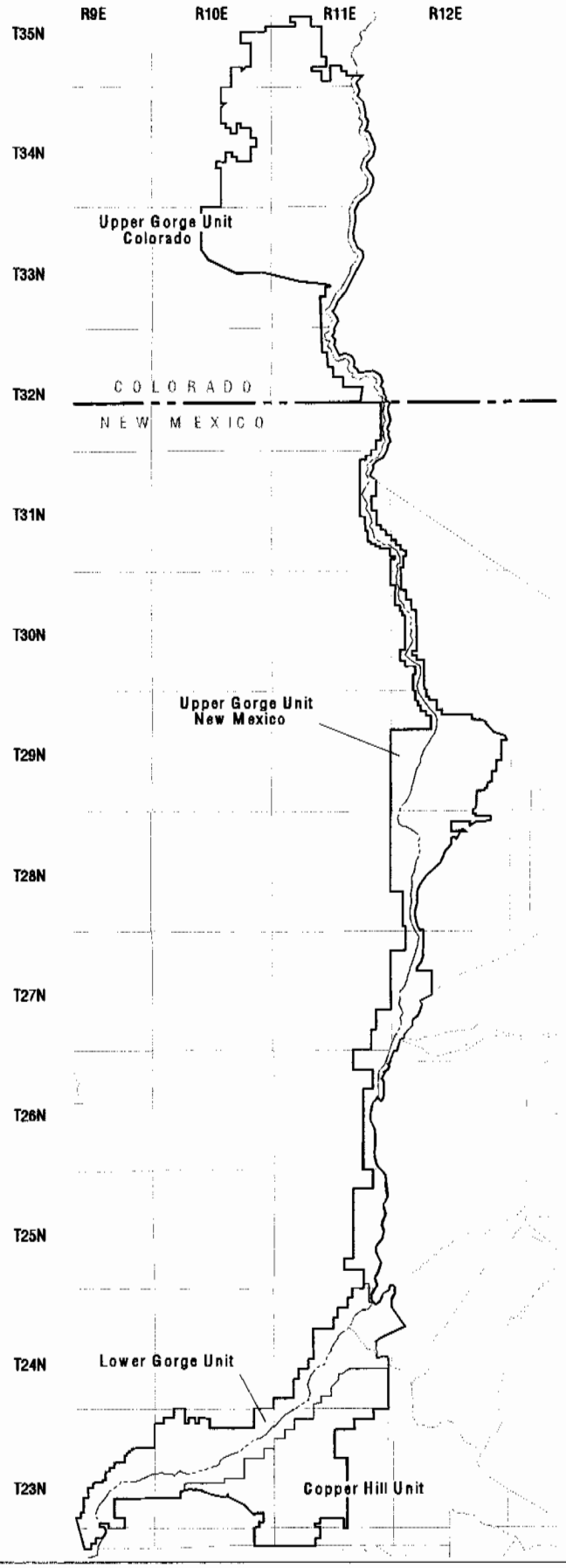
Planning Area Location

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan



Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, June 26, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 2

Planning Units

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

Planning Area Boundary

Unit Boundary

State Boundary

Rio Grande

Township and Range or Grant Line

5 0 5 10 15

miles

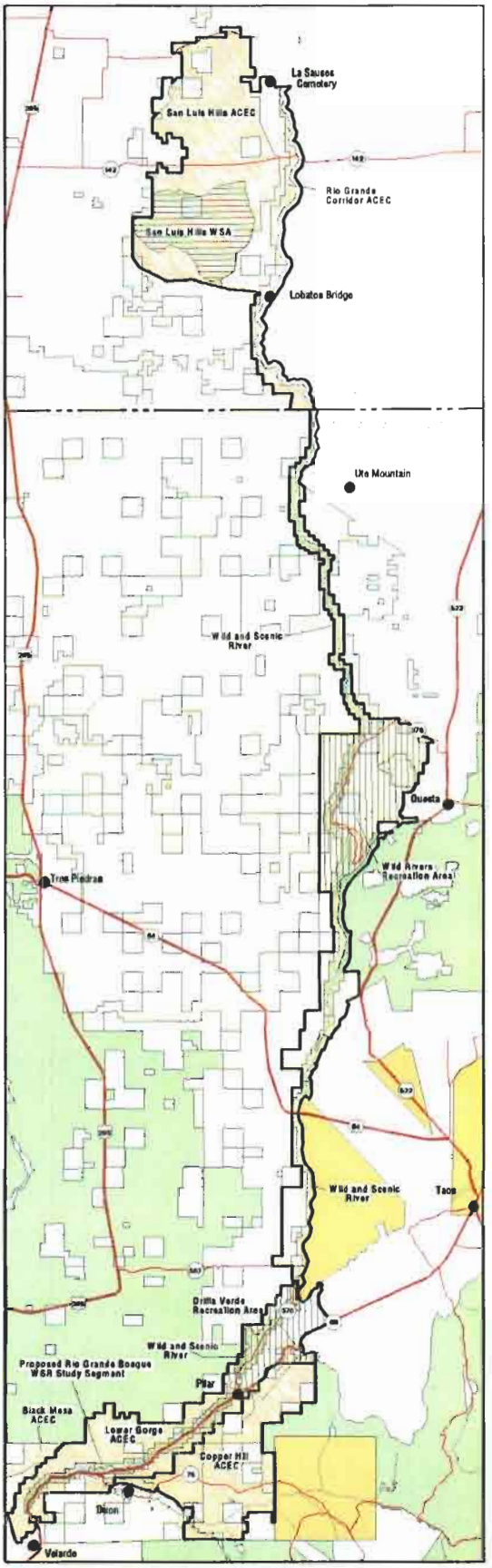
Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, August 03, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 3

Planning Area

Rio Grande Corridor Coordinated Resource Management Plan



Surface Ownership

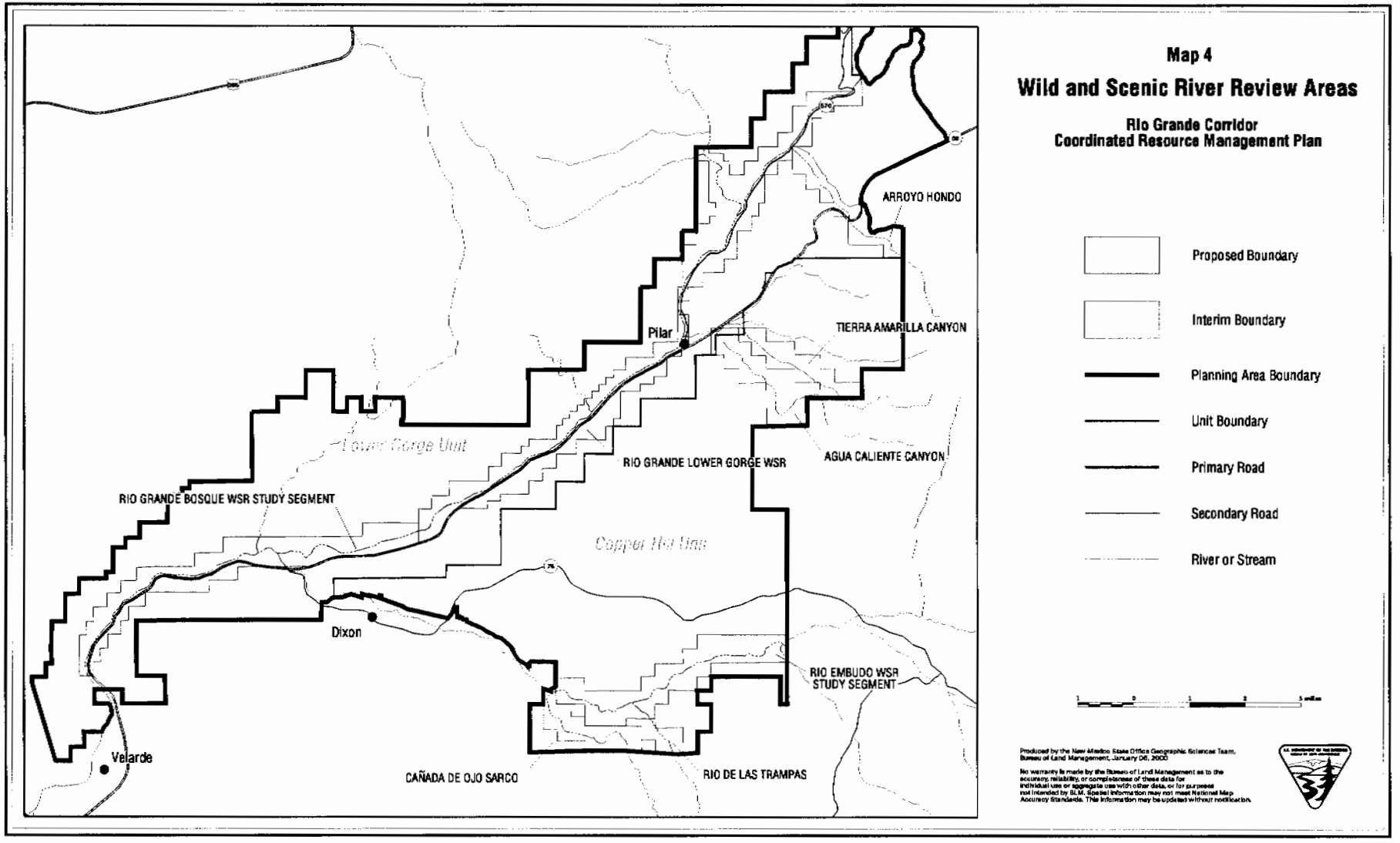
- BLM
- Carson National Forest
- State
- Tribal
- Private

Special Management Areas

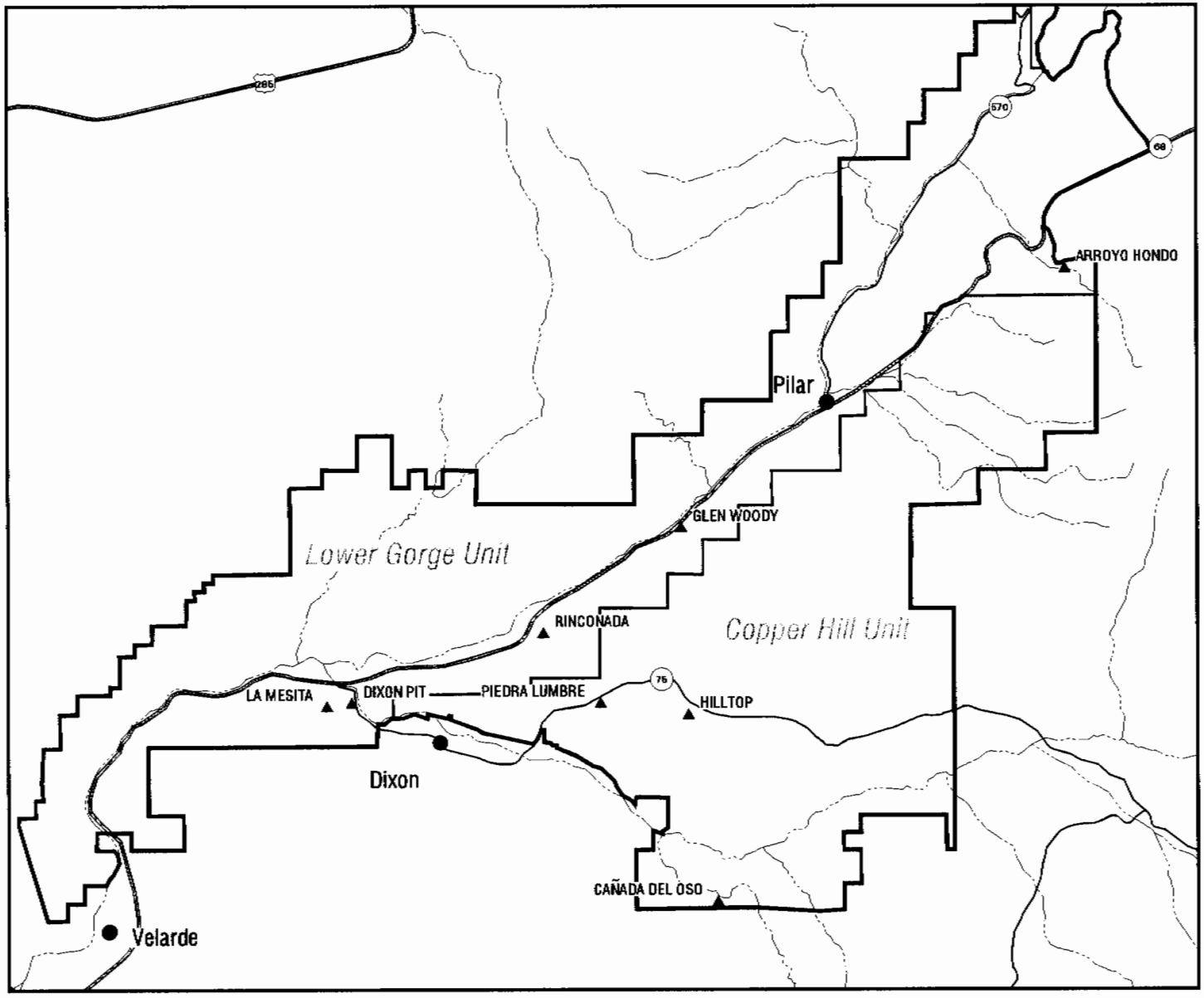
- Wild and Scenic River (1968 Designation)
- Wild and Scenic River (1994 Designation)
- Proposed Rio Grande Bosque (WSR Study Segment)
- Special Management Area (SMA)
- Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
- Wilderness Study Area (WSA)
- BLM Recreation Area
- Planning Area Boundary
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- River or Stream

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 22, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.


Map 4
Wild and Scenic River Review Areas
Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan
Proposed Boundary
Interim Boundary
Planning Area Boundary
Unit Boundary
Primary Road
Secondary Road
River or Stream
ARROYO HONDO
TIERRA AMARILLA CANYON
Pilar
AGUA CALIENTE CANYON
RIO GRANDE LOWER GORGE WSR
Lower Gorge Unit
RIO GRANDE BOSQUE WSR STUDY SEGMENT
Copper Hill Unit
Dixon
RIO EMBUDO WSR
STUDY SEGMENT
Velarde
CAÑADA DE OJO SARCO
RIO DE LAS TRAMPAS
Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, January 06, 2000
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 5
Mineral Material Sites



Mineral Material Site

Planning Area Boundary

Unit Boundary

Primary Road

Secondary Road

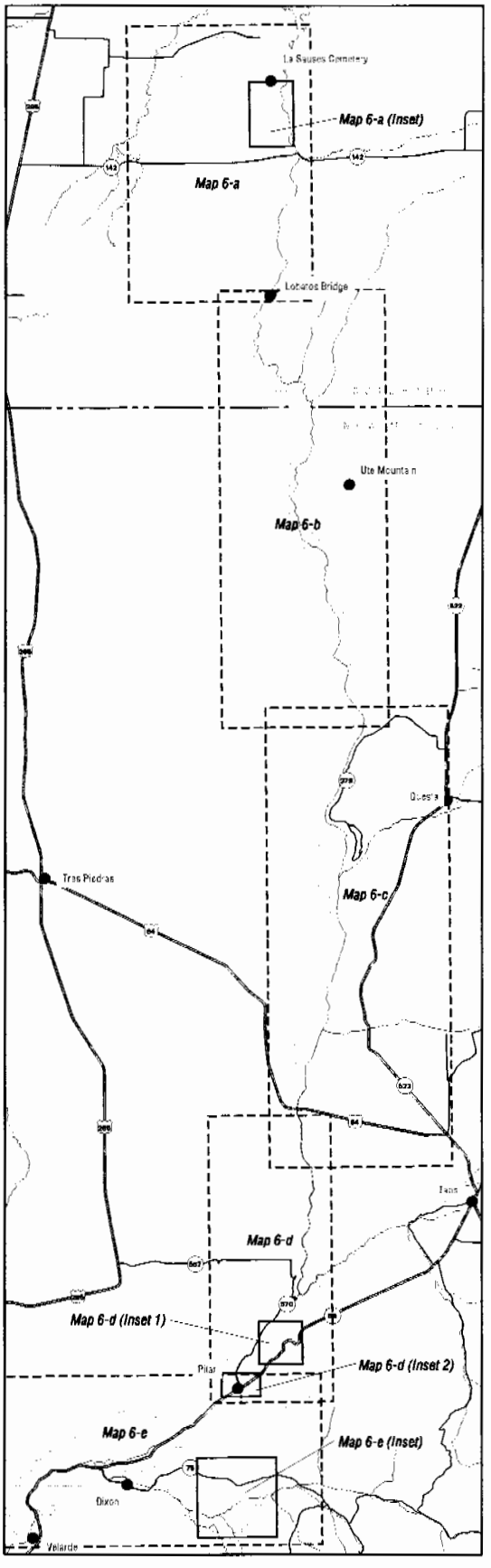
River or Stream

1 0 1 2 miles

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, November 28, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 6

Route Designations
Map Index

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

Primary Road

Secondary Road

Planning Area Boundary

River or Stream

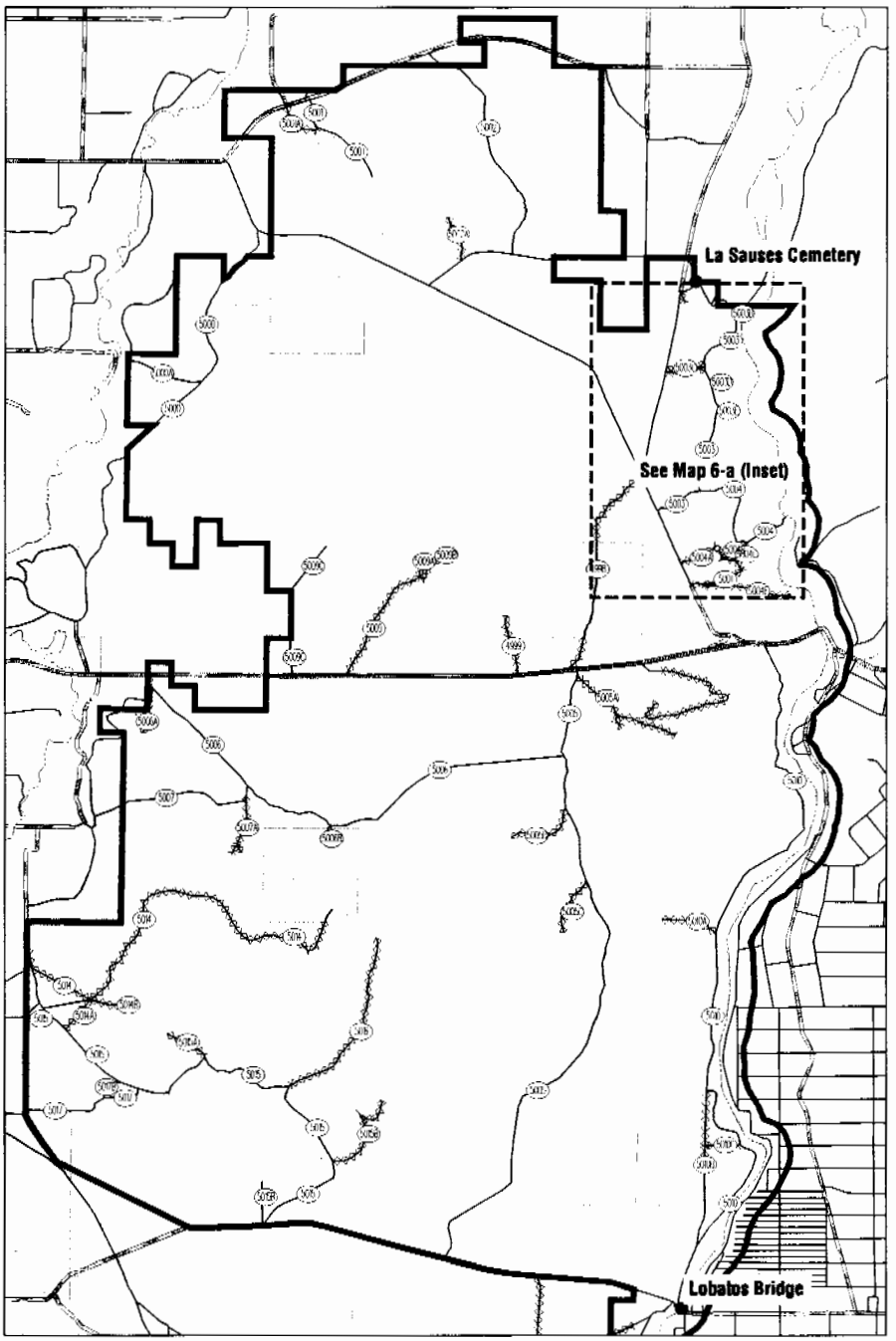
Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, November 23, 1989

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 6-a

Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan



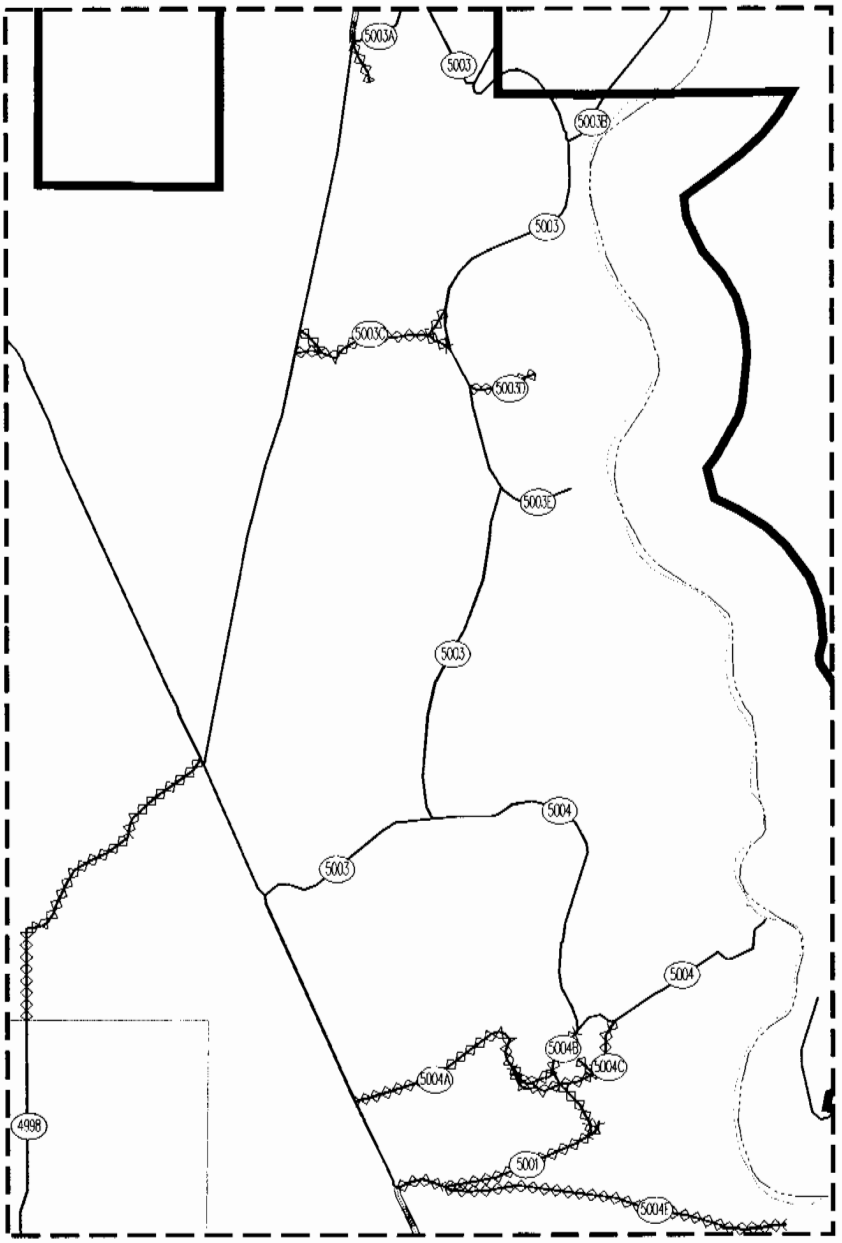
miles

BLM
State
Private
Planning Area Boundary
River or Stream
State Boundary

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
Other road or street
Trail, 4WD Vehicle
Seasonally Closed 12/1 - 3/15
Seasonally Closed 4/1 - 5/31
Closed

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 6-a (Inset)

Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

BLM

State

Private

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface

Other road or street

Trail, 4WD Vehicle

Seasonally Closed 12/1 - 3/15

Seasonally Closed 4/1 - 5/31

Closed

Planning Area Boundary

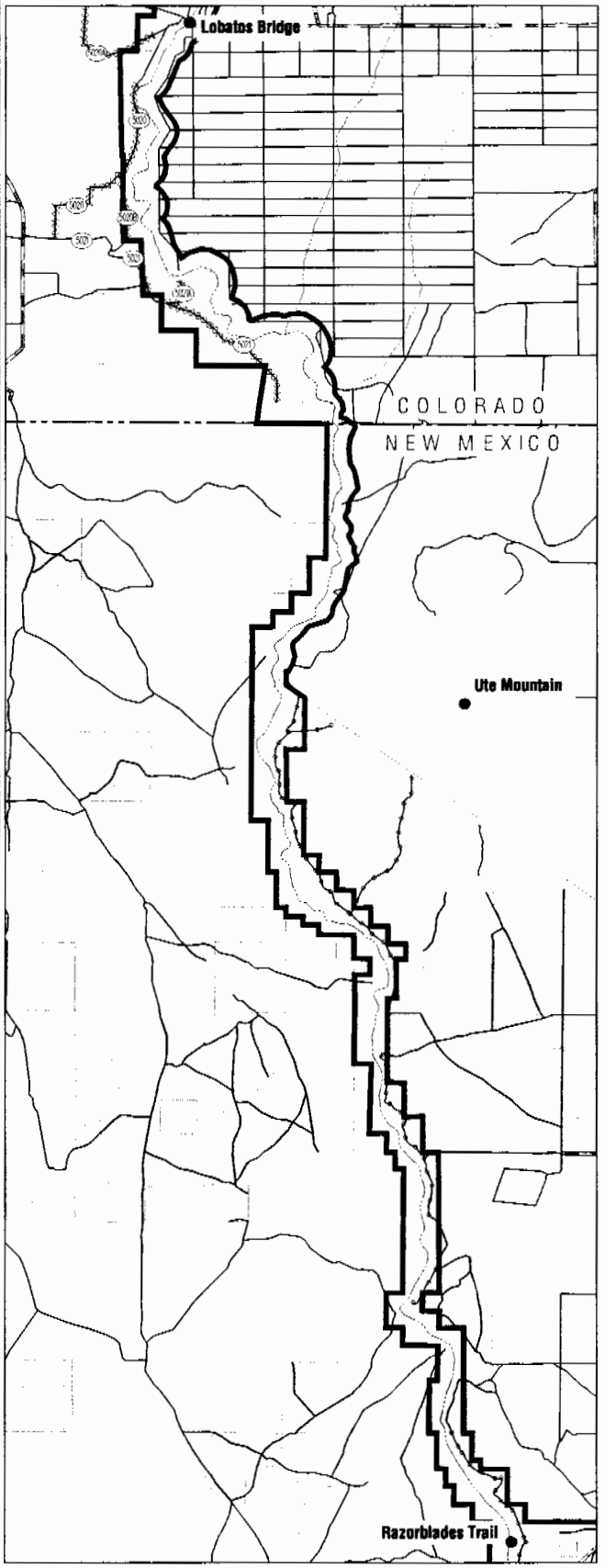
River or Stream

State Boundary

0.5 0 0.5 1 miles

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 6-b

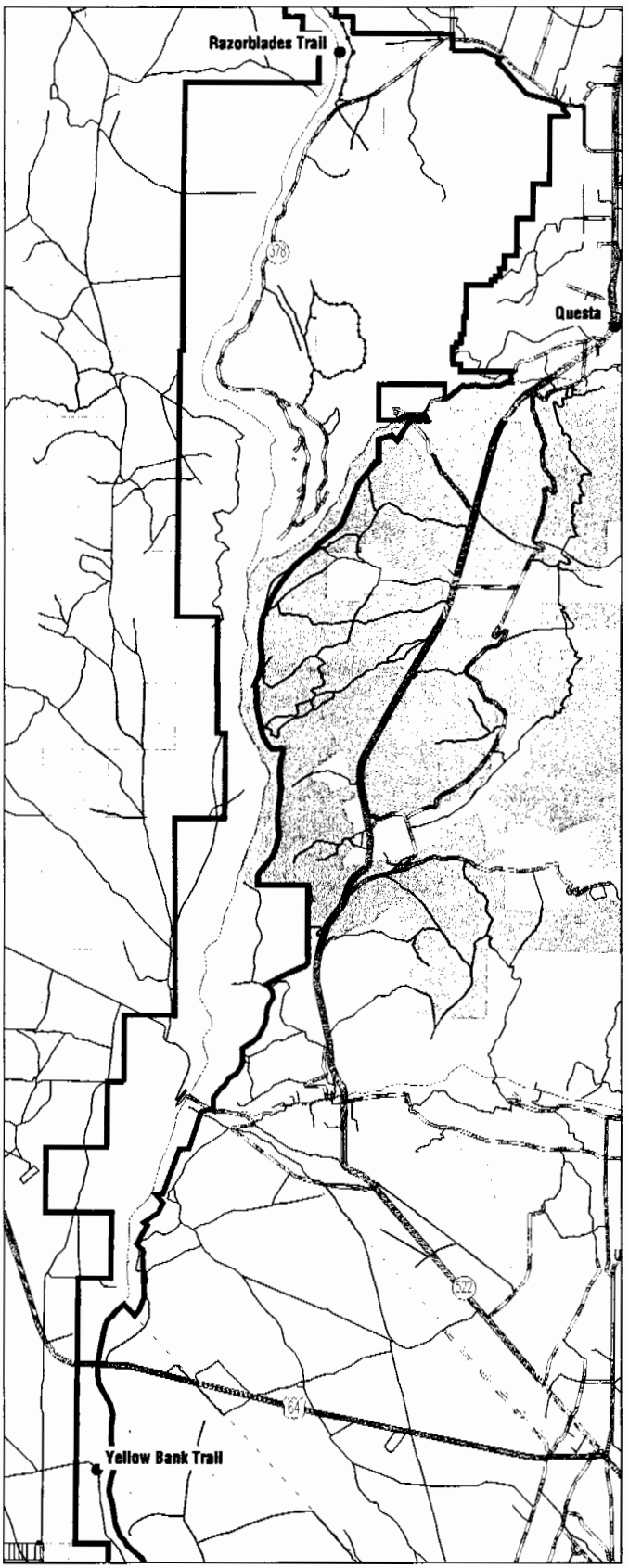
Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
- Other road or street
- Trail, 4WD Vehicle
- Seasonally Closed 12/1 - 3/15
- Seasonally Closed 4/1 - 5/31
- Closed
- BLM
- State
- Private
- Planning Area Boundary
- River or Stream
- State Boundary

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 6-c

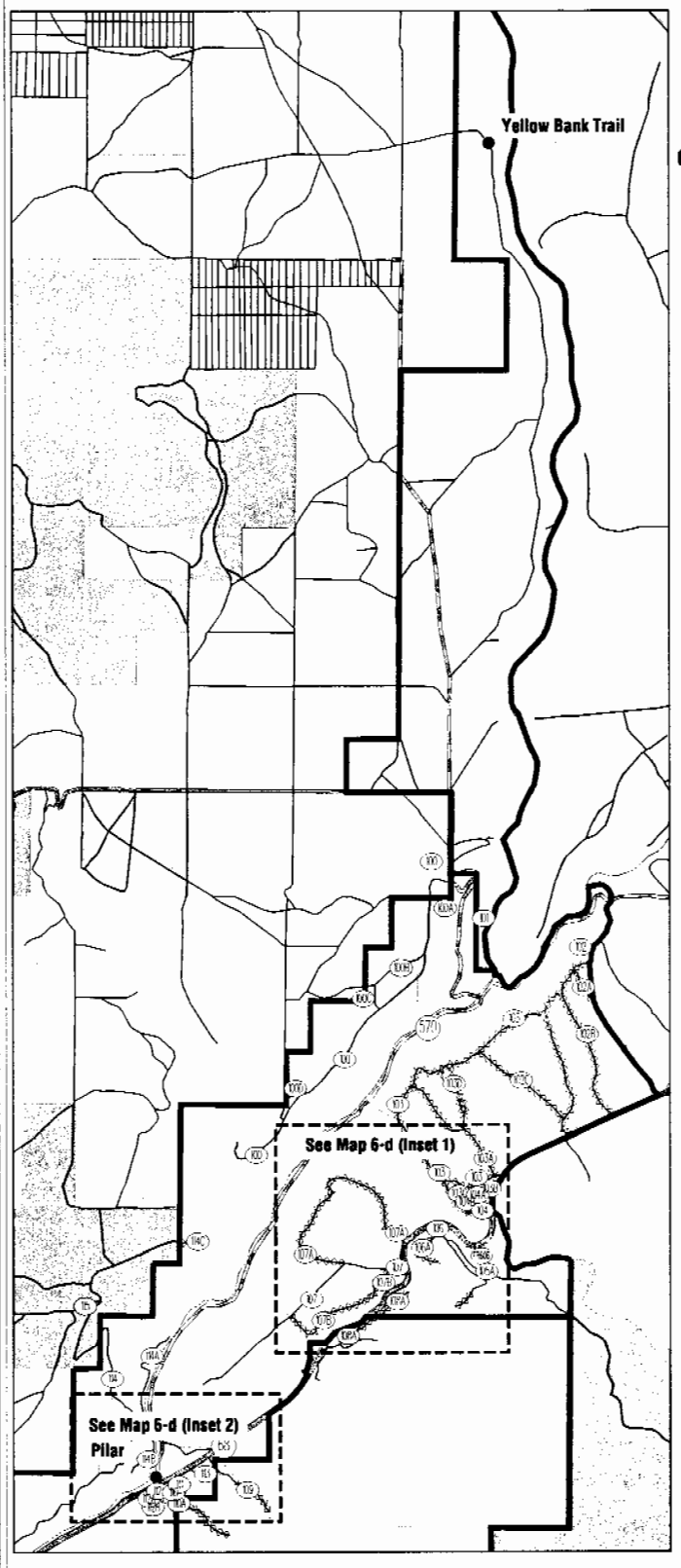
Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
- Other road or street
- Trail, 4WD Vehicle
- Seasonally Closed 12/1 - 3/15
- Seasonally Closed 4/1 - 5/31
- Closed
- BLM
- Tribal
- State
- Forest Service
- Private
- Planning Area Boundary
- River or Stream
- State Boundary

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 6-d

Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor Coordinated Resource Management Plan

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface

Other road or street

Trail, 4WD Vehicle

Closed

BLM

Tribal

State

Forest Service

Private

Planning Area Boundary

River or Stream

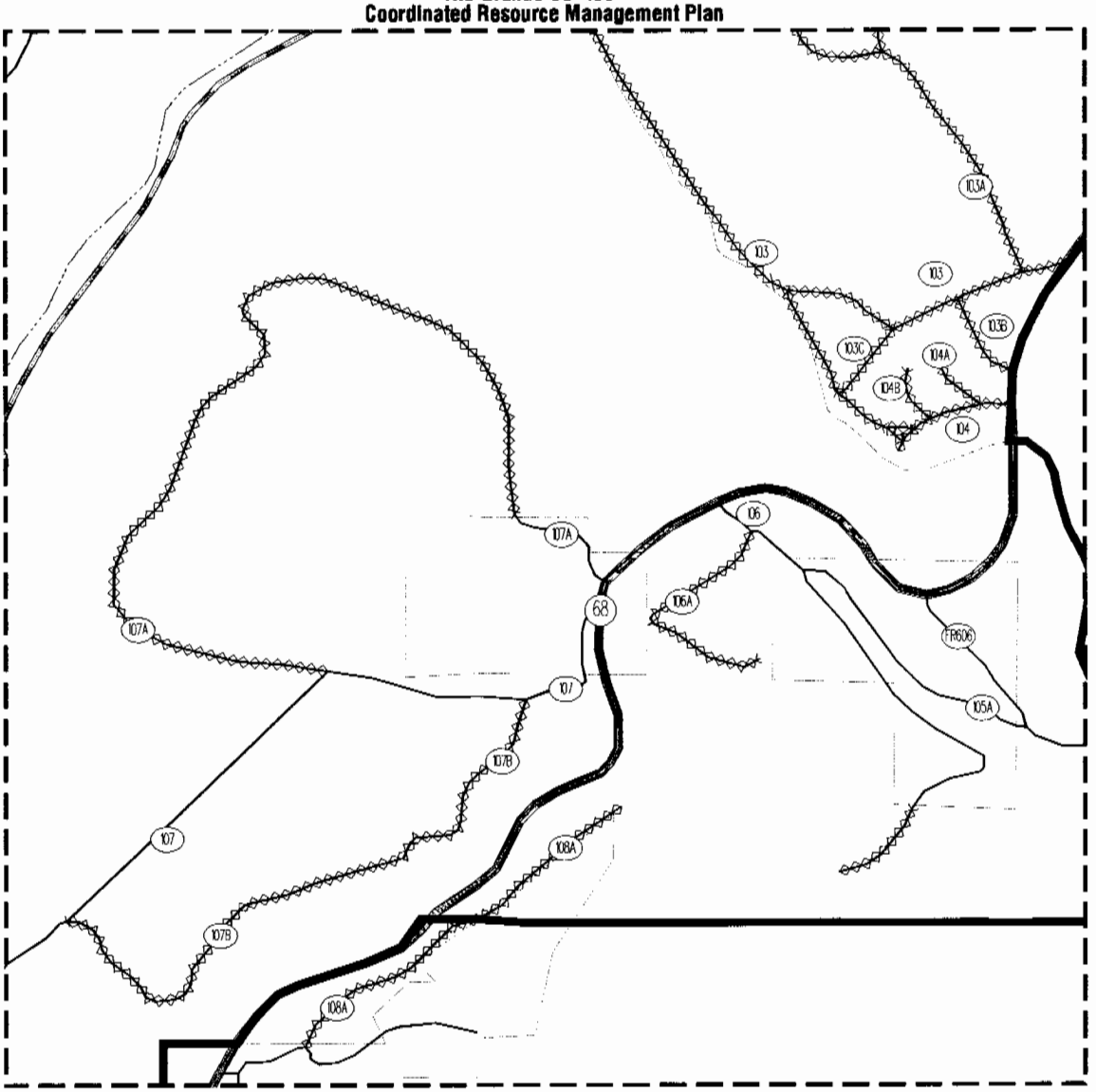
Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 6-d (Inset 1)

Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

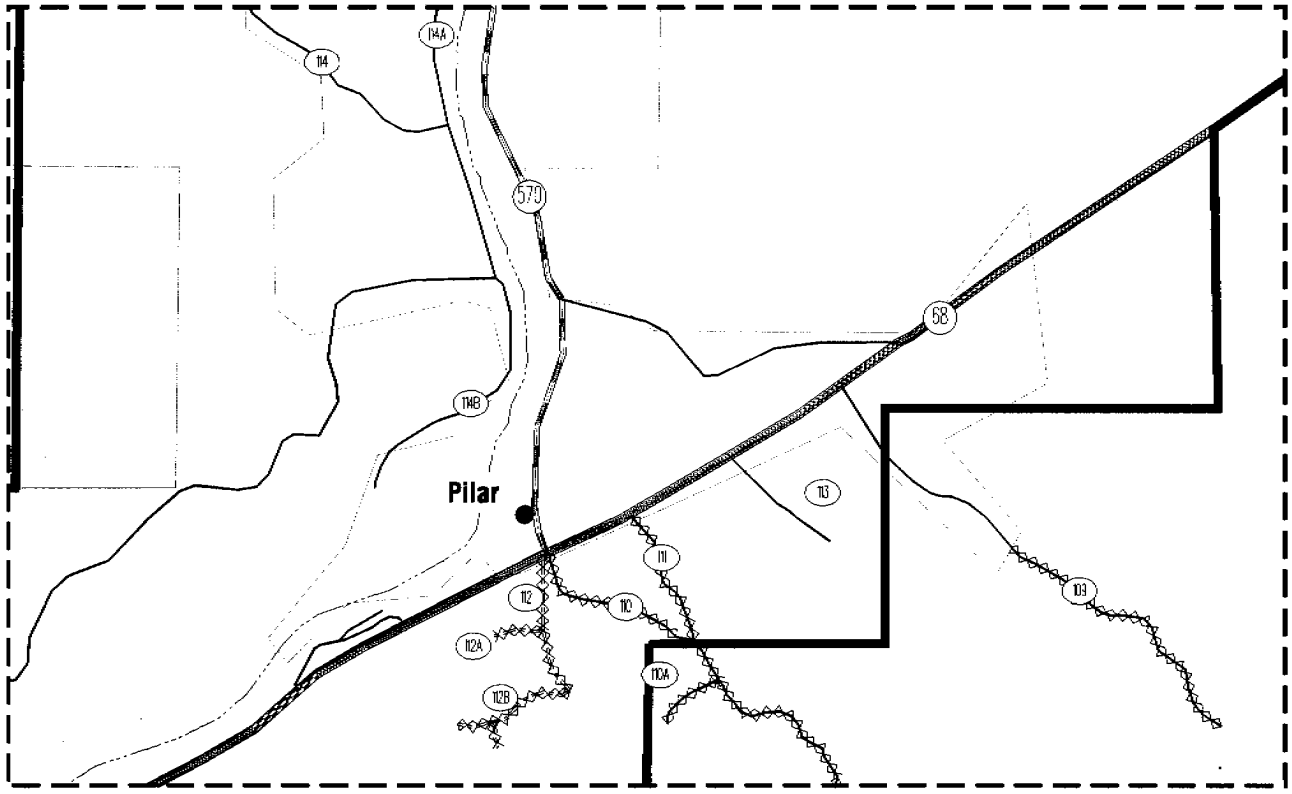


0.5 0 0.5 1 miles

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
Other road or street
Trail, 4WD Vehicle
Closed
BLM
Private
Planning Area Boundary
River or Stream
State Boundary

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Map 6-d (Inset 2)

Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

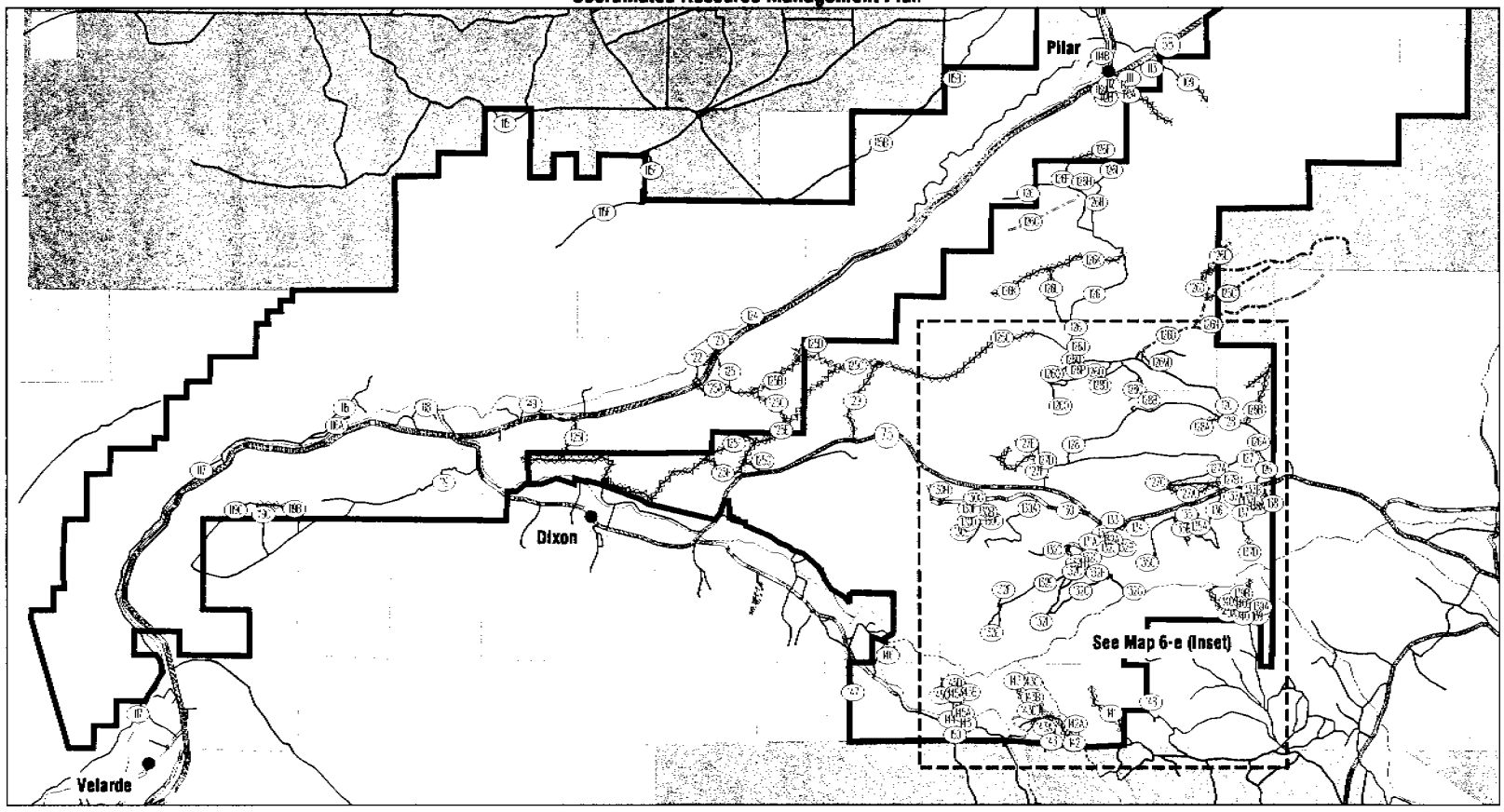
0.2 0 0.2 0.4 miles

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
- Other road or street
- Trail, 4WD Vehicle
- Closed
- BLM
- State
- Private
- Planning Area Boundary
- River or Stream
- State Boundary

Map 6-e
Route Designations
Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan



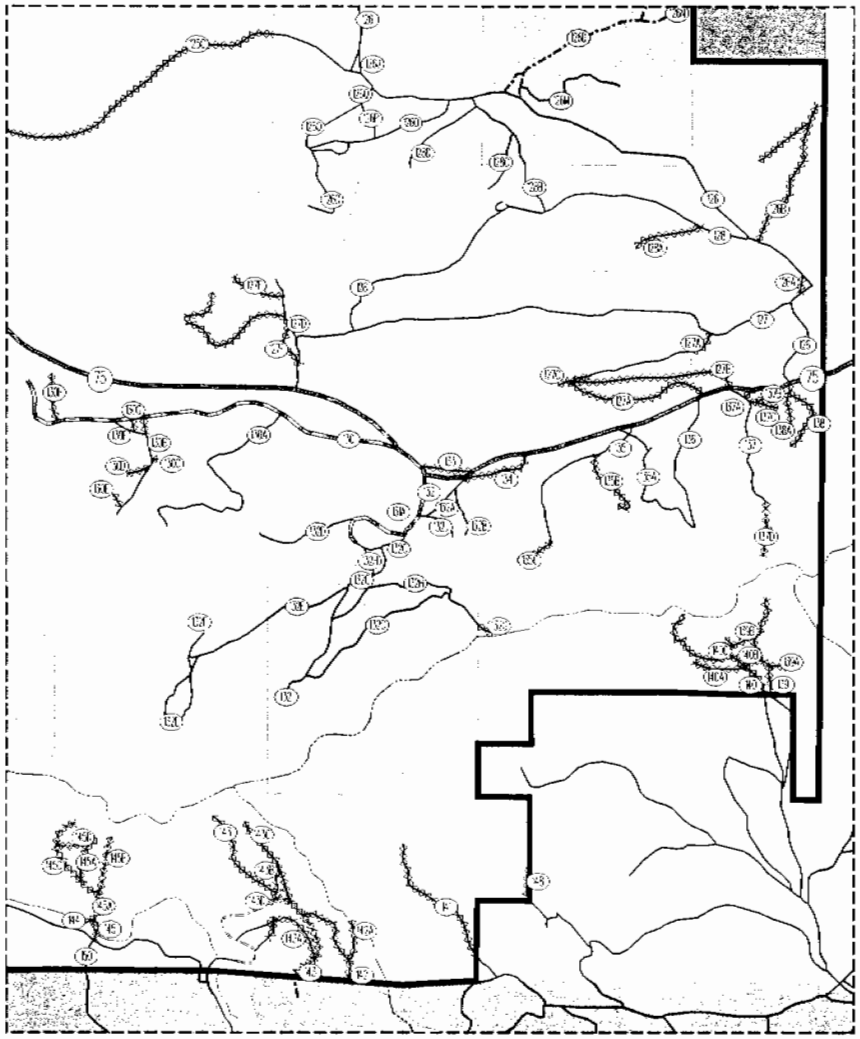
Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 08, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
Other road or street
Trail, 4WD Vehicle

Closed
BLM
Tribal
State
Forest Service

Private
Planning Area Boundary
River or Stream



Map 6-e (Inset)

Route Designations

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light duty road, principal street, hard or improved surface
- Other road or street
- Trail, 4WD Vehicle
- Closed
- BLM
- Tribal
- State
- Forest Service
- Private
- Planning Area Boundary
- River or Stream

0.5 0 0.5 1 miles

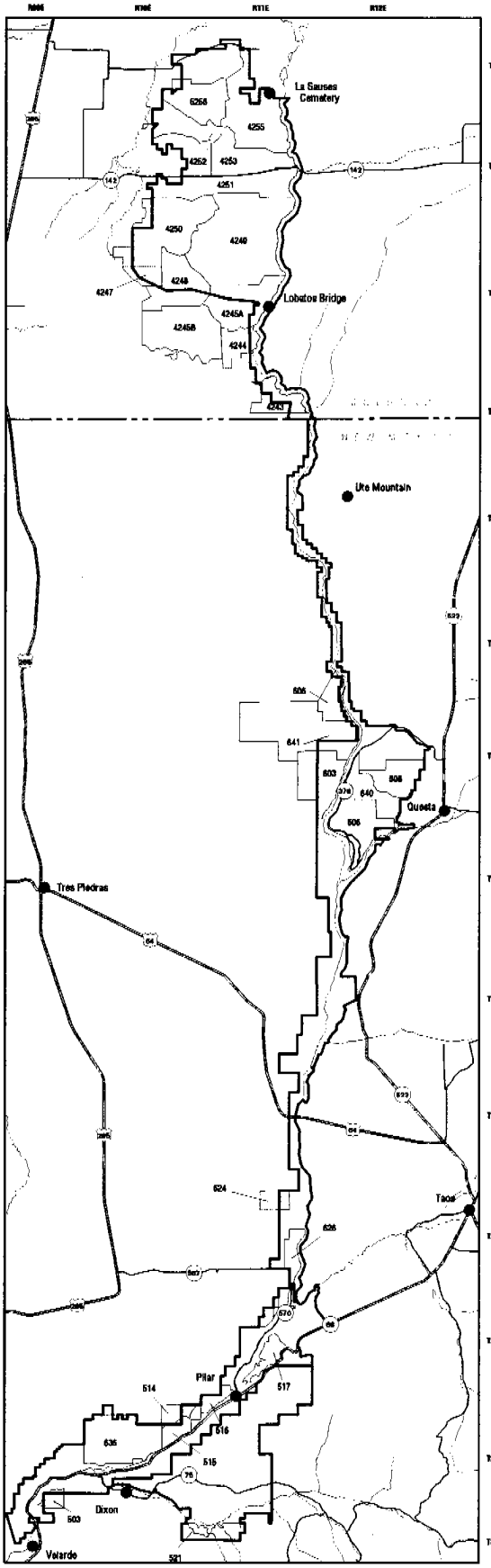
Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 02, 1998

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 7

Grazing Allotments

Rio Grande Corridor
Coordinated Resource Management Plan



Grazing Allotment

Planning Area Boundary

Primary Road

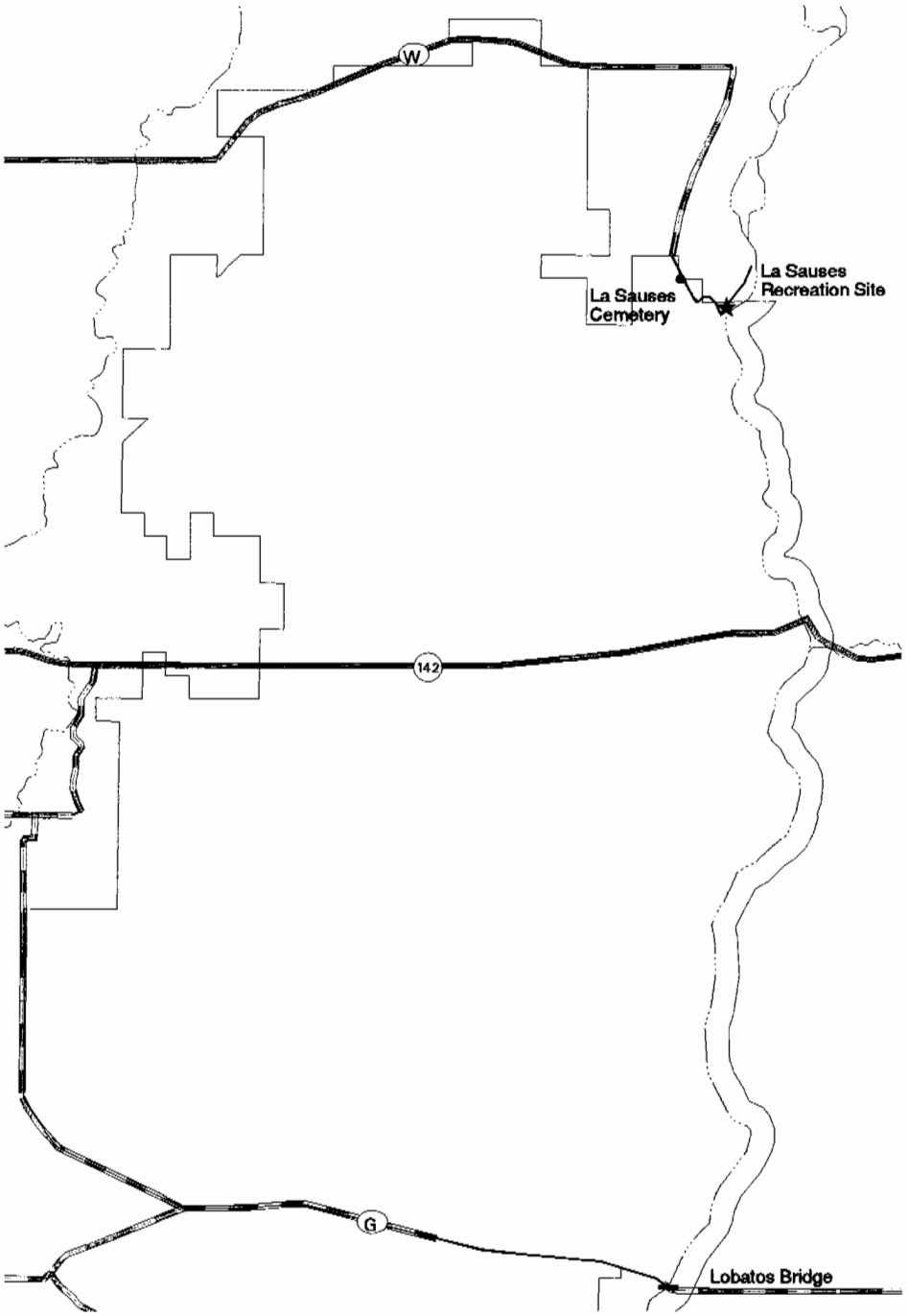
Secondary Road

River or Stream

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 06, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Special information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 8-a
RECREATION SITES

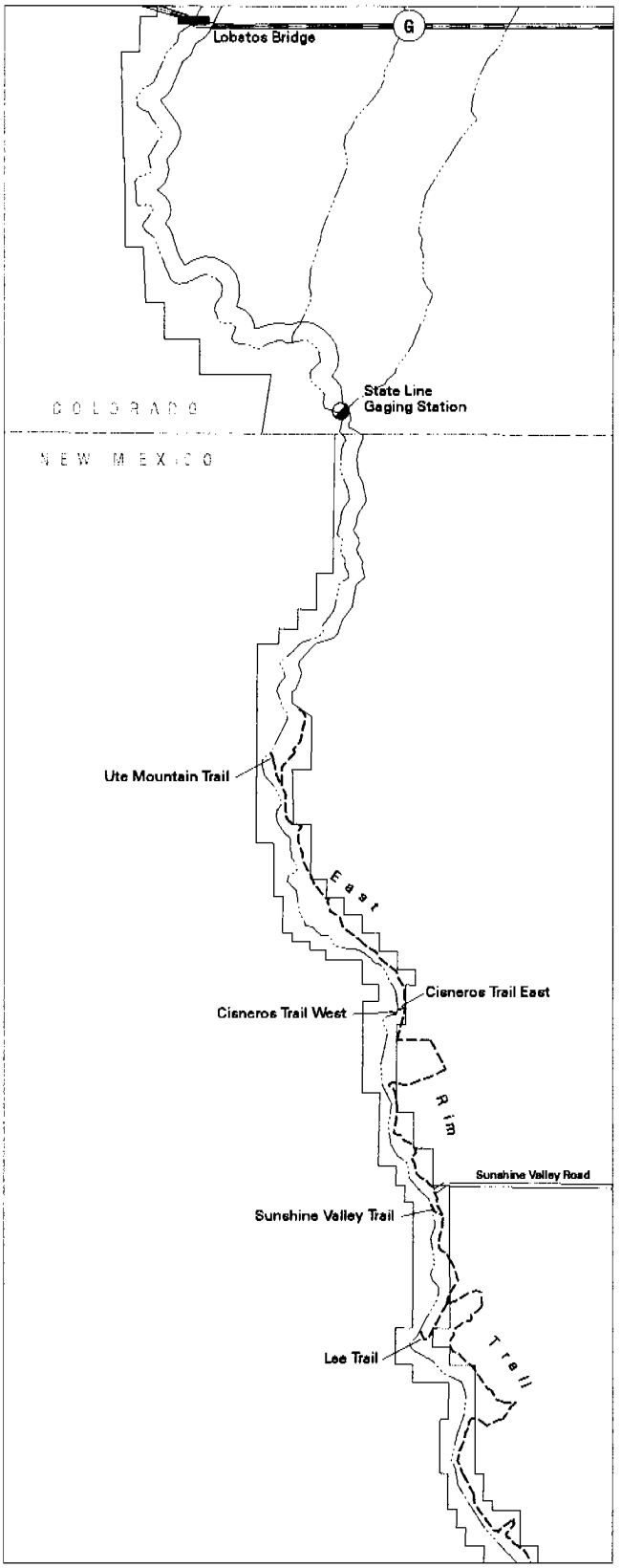


Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, November 29, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

1 0 1 2 3 4 miles

Map 8-b
RECREATION SITES

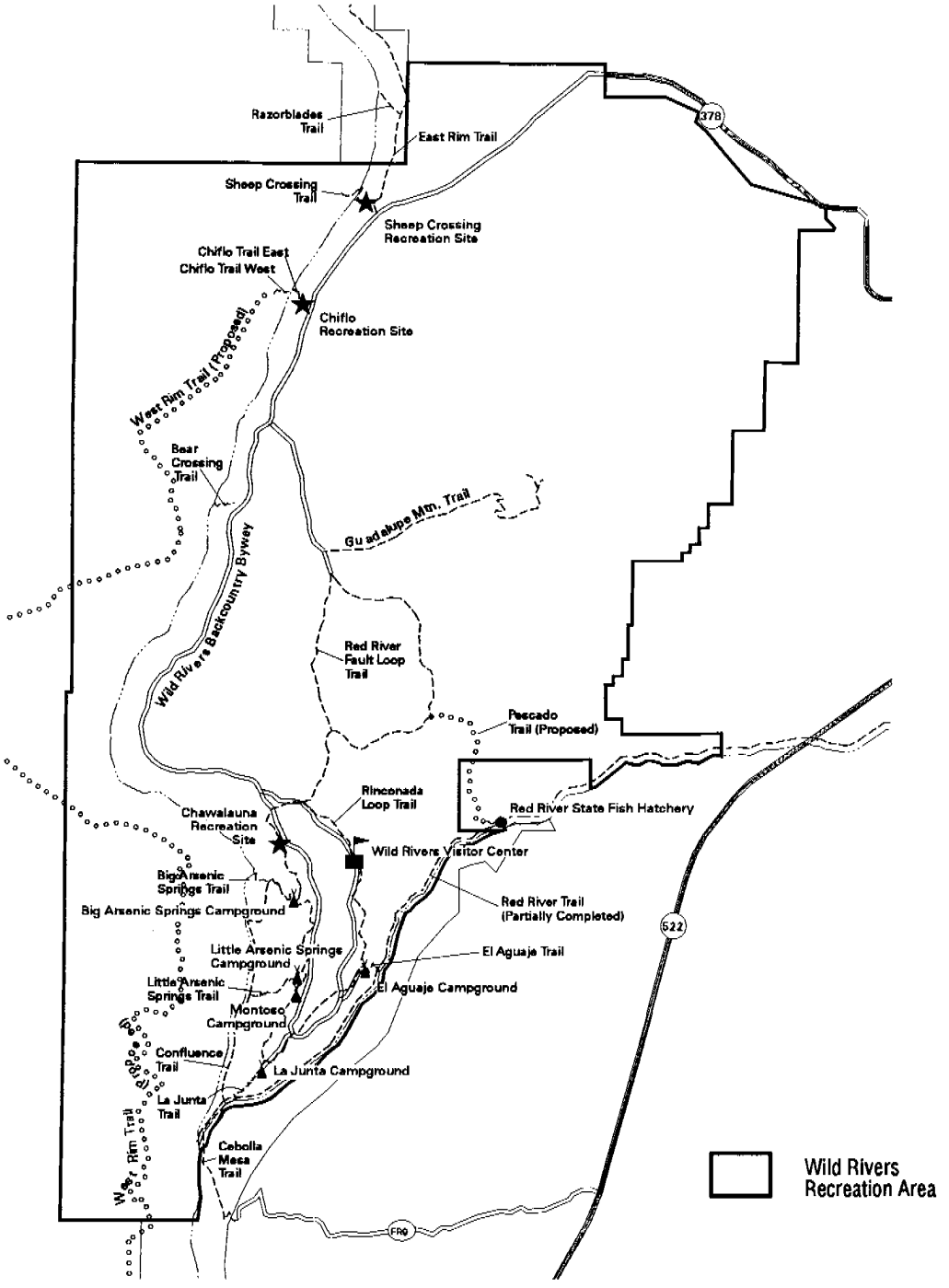


1 0 1 2 3 4 miles

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, November 29, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 8-c
RECREATION SITES

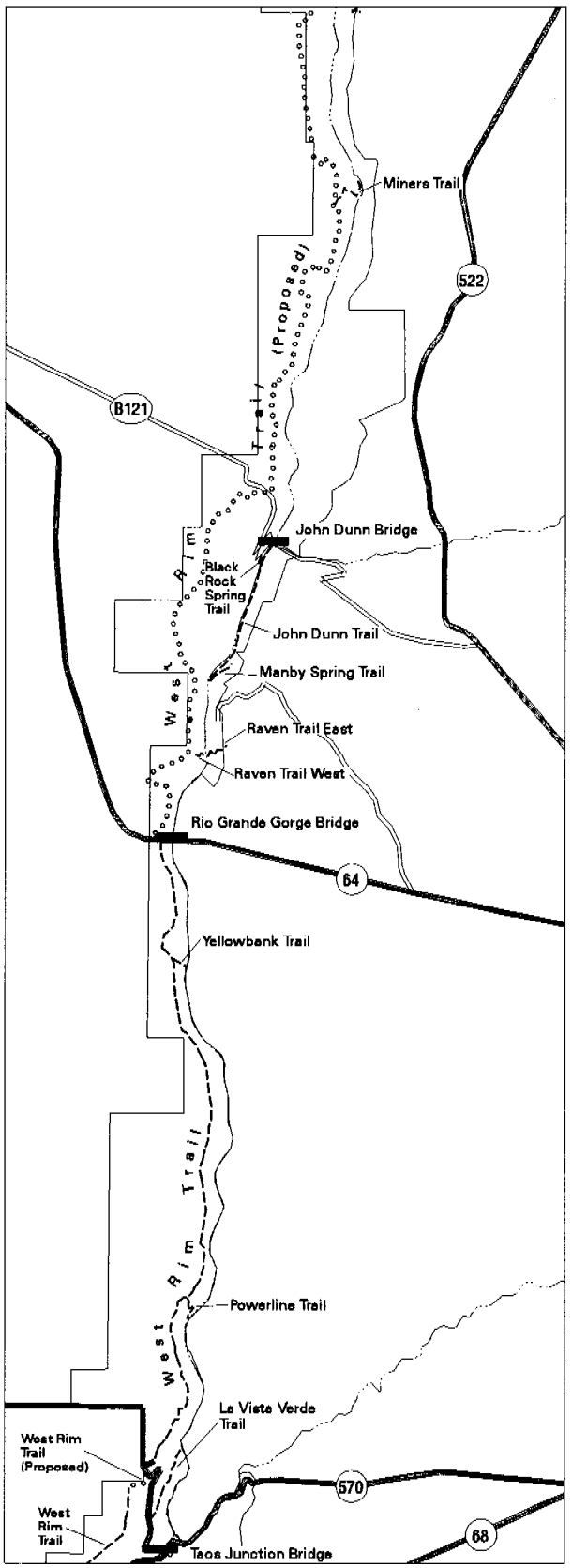


Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, January 11, 2000

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

1 0 1 2 miles

Map 8-d
RECREATION SITES

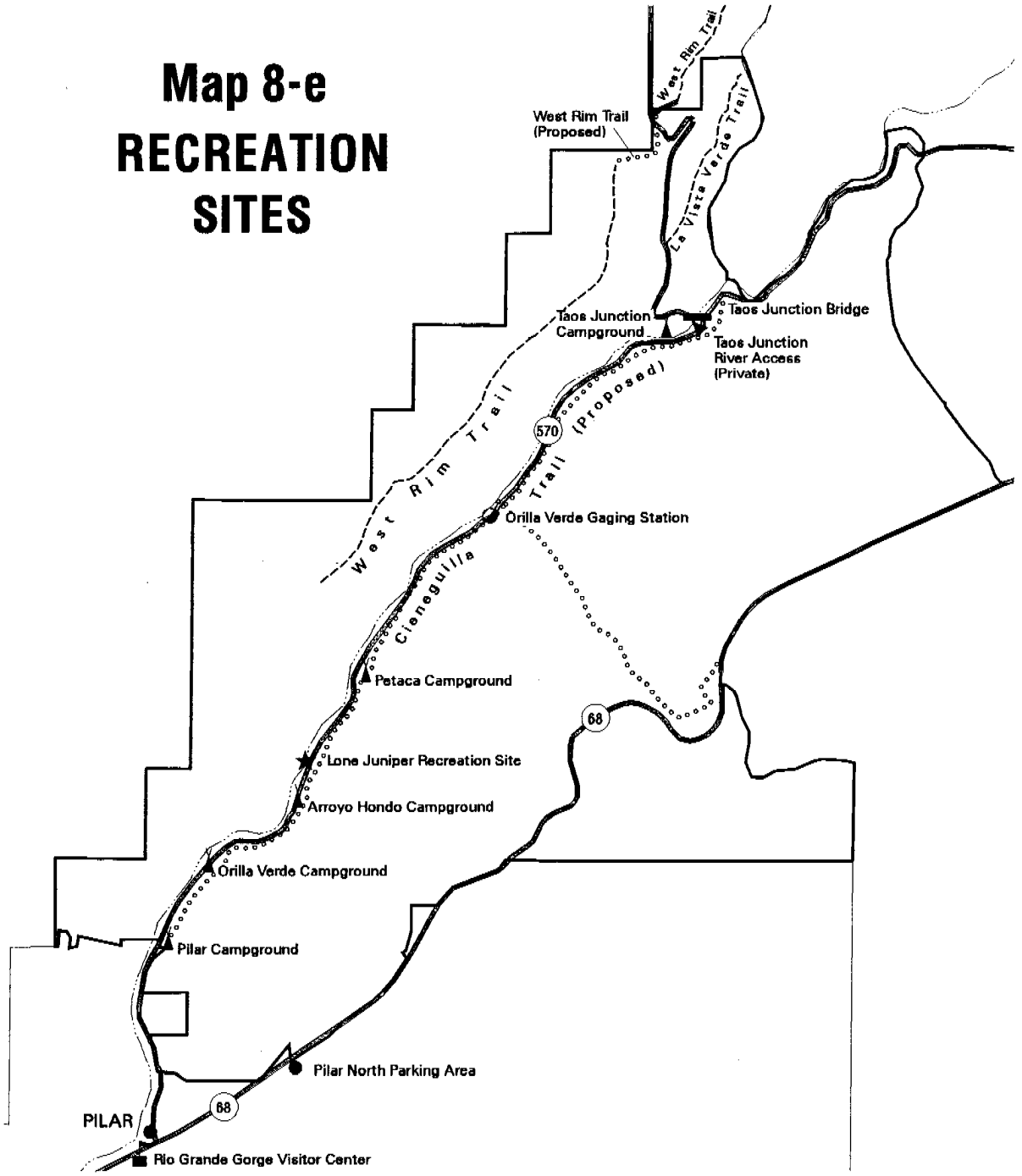


1 0 1 2 3 4 miles

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, November 29, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Map 8-e
RECREATION SITES



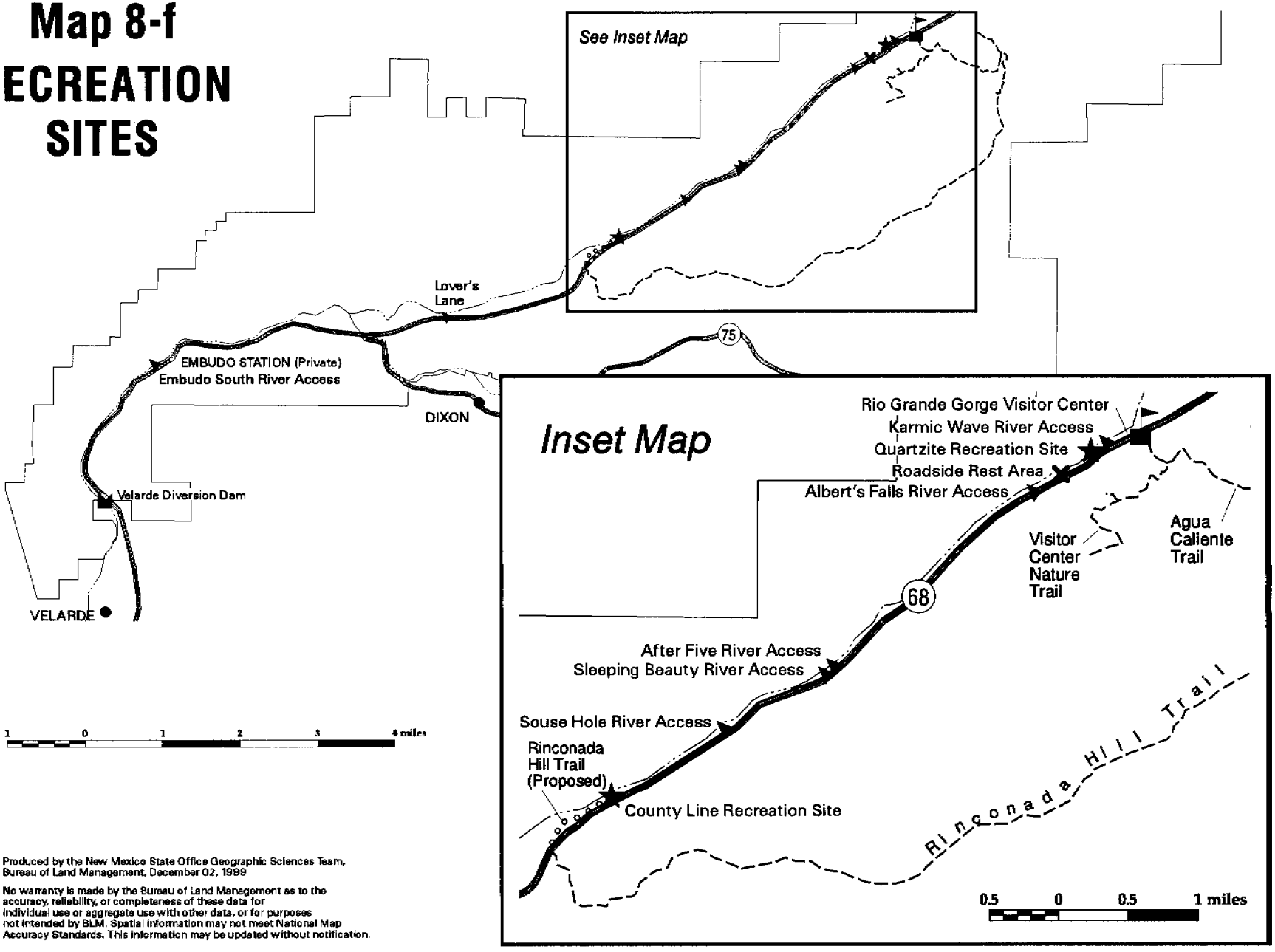
Orilla Verde Recreation Area

Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 02, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 2 miles

Map 8-f
RECREATION SITES



Produced by the New Mexico State Office Geographic Sciences Team, Bureau of Land Management, December 02, 1999

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.