

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 30, 2007

BLM Seeking Public Comments on Proposed Permit Change for Heli-Skiing Operation

The BLM is seeking public comments on a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on a proposal to allow Telluride Helitrax to change the terms of its Special Recreation Permit for commercial heli-skiing services on BLM lands in the Silverton area. The proposal calls for increases in the amount of service days and permit term length, but does not call an expansion of the authorized permit boundary into any other new areas not previously permitted.

Telluride Helitrax has held a one-year permit with the BLM since 1995, allowing it to conduct commercial helicopter skiing on BLM lands in the Alpine Loop Backcountry area near Silverton. The Telluride-based company has renewed this permit each year for the past 10 years, averaging 35-50 service days annually (one service day = one person for one day).

Three alternatives and their impacts are studied in the Draft EA, along with proposed mitigation and monitoring requirements. The Preferred Alternative would allow Helitrax to operate under a multi-year permit for a five-year period. At the end of the five years, the permit would be reevaluated for a possible increase to a 10-year permit.

This alternative would allow for skiing in eight specific areas on about 14,183 acres. It would allow for up to 300 service days annually under the five-year permit, with an opportunity to apply for additional service days at the end of the five years, if the 300 days are consistently being used.

Written comments will be accepted until Monday, December 3, 2007. Comments can be mailed to Richard Speegle, Project Manager, San Juan Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court, Durango, CO 81301, emailed to richard_speegle@blm.gov or faxed to 970 375-2331.

The draft EA is available for review online at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/sanjuan/projects/projects.shtml>.

Hard copies are available by calling the San Juan Public Lands Center at 970-247-4874.

For more information, contact Richard Speegle at 970 375-3310.

For Immediate Release: October 30, 2007

Contact: Jaime Gardner 303-239-3681

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BLM Updates Parcels for November Lease Sale

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will offer 135 parcels, totaling 129,726 acres, in its November 8, 2007 oil and gas lease sale. The BLM has made a decision to defer a number of parcels in Grand and Jackson counties from the sale, in order to conduct additional analysis and public outreach with local communities.

BLM Colorado Deputy State Director Lynn Rust said "We acknowledge that, with little Federal oil and gas leasing in Grand County in recent years, all parties involved will benefit from additional discussions and outreach on the Federal oil and gas leasing process. To facilitate this outreach without impending deadlines, I have decided to defer a portion of the parcels from the November 2007 oil and

gas lease sale.” Rust continued, “I am deferring some additional parcels outside of Grand County, for further analysis.”

The original decision to offer these proposed lease parcels in the November competitive oil and gas lease sale was not undertaken lightly. Consistent with regular practice, BLM thoroughly analyzed each Resource Management Plan and documented that the planning decisions regarding oil and gas leasing are still valid in all affected area.

BLM will work with Grand county, as well as local Congressional Delegation offices, in the near future to facilitate any requested outreach meetings with the interested public.

The Bureau of Land Management manages 8.3 million acres in Colorado, as well as 27 million acres of federal sub-surface mineral estate. Under the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, energy production and mineral development, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural and other resources on the public lands. BLM Colorado holds lease sales quarterly, on the second Thursday of February, May, August and November.

-BLM-

For Immediate Release: October 29, 2007
Contact: Mel Lloyd BLM 970-244-3097

BLM Uncompahgre to provide update on travel planning for Dry Creek Area

MONTROSE, Colo. — The Bureau of Land Management Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) has scheduled an open house for Thursday, Nov. 8, 2007, to provide the public with an update on travel management planning activities for the Dry Creek area. To accommodate everyone’s work schedule, the public may choose to attend either a 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., or 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., session at the DMEA Building located at 11925 6300 Road in Montrose. UFO initiated a travel planning process last spring, and since that time, BLM staff has been hard at work considering public scoping comments to develop four draft Alternative Travel Network Systems for eight travel management areas, or sub-regions, established for planning purposes. BLM is seeking additional public comment through Jan. 10, 2008, to ensure that staff has captured comprehensive data prior to devising a preferred Alternative Travel Network System for the Dry Creek area.

“BLM is committed to keeping the communities, stakeholders and user groups engaged throughout this planning process,” said Barb Sharrow, Uncompahgre Field Manager. “We need their input and support in developing a travel plan for the Dry Creek area that not only protects public land resources but one that everyone can live with.”

BLM specialists will be on hand to describe management objectives and answer questions about the range of draft Alternative Travel Network Systems developed for the Dry Creek area. The 115,000-acre Dry Creek planning area is defined by the U.S. Forest Service boundary on the west, private land on the east, 25 Mesa Road (Delta-Nucla Road) on the north, and Dave Wood Road on the south. Travel planning in this area addresses all modes of travel including motorized, mechanized, equestrian and hiking routes.

Planning documents, as well as a summary of public scoping comments will be available for review at the meeting, as well as on-line at <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo.html>. The public may submit written comments on the range of draft Alternative Travel Network Systems at the meeting, or by mailing them to the BLM Uncompahgre Field Office, ATTN: Dry Creek Travel Management, 2465 S. Townsend Ave., Montrose, Colorado 81401; by fax to (970) 240-5368; or by e-mail to cotmpufo@blm.gov. For further information or to have your name added to a mailing list, contact Outdoor Recreation Planner Julie Jackson, at (970) 240-5310, or send an e-mail to cotmpufo@blm.gov.

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Editor's Note: Map to DMEA Building available upon request

For Immediate Release: October 26, 2007

For More Information Contact: Mel Lloyd at (970) 244-3097

Local firefighters to teach at New York Fire Academy

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — Two local Bureau of Land Management firefighters headed to Long Island this week to instruct at the New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy. Clay Fowler and Tim Foley, both from Grand Junction and employees with the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit, will be teaching East Coast firefighters through November 13, 2007, a number of firefighting techniques and incident management methods such as those being used to fight the current wildfires in southern California.

“In 1995 the East Coast had a series of major wildfires,” Fowler said. “The academy started as a result of those events. An increased emphasis on all-risk emergency management began after September 11.”

Students come from federal, state, and local fire organizations including some from the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). Learning from others through their on-the-ground experience, students go home with better knowledge of how to work together in the event of a major emergency.

“FDNY used to consider itself a stand-alone organization that would never require outside assistance,” Foley said. “This changed after the 9-11 attacks. Now they are very active in working with other agencies. This paid off when they were able to send personnel to assist in the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort.”

This will be Foley's fourth year as an instructor at the New York Fire Academy, and Fowler's first. For more information about the Interagency Fire Program, go to www.nifc.gov or contact Mel Lloyd at (970) 244-3097.

-BLM-

For Immediate Release: October 17, 2007

Contact: Denise Adamic BLM 303-239-3671

Colorado volunteer work on BLM public lands valued at nearly \$4 million

DENVER — Colorado volunteers worked over 210,400 hours on public lands in Fiscal Year 2006 according to the recent Bureau of Land Management national Volunteer Report, which tracks and highlights the hours BLM volunteers contribute to the health and benefit of the public lands. These

volunteer hours equate to nearly \$4 million dollars in service on public lands.

From building and maintaining the Trail through Time in Rabbit Valley near Grand Junction, to helping preserve the cultural landscape in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument near Dolores, volunteers in Colorado contribute many services that assist with the BLM's land management mission.

"Volunteers are incredibly valuable to public lands management," said Sally Wisely, BLM Colorado State Director. "We appreciate the tremendous work volunteers do; they exemplify a great citizen stewardship ethic."

The BLM national report ranks Colorado third in volunteer hours. California and Oregon/Washington (managed by one BLM state office) round out the top three states in the country for BLM volunteer hours.

Across the country this year, volunteers working individually, in teams and in partnerships contributed more than 1.3 million hours of work on public lands. The hard work of these individuals would equal the labor of more than 700 full-time agency employees.

Beyond their on-the-ground action, volunteers also help the BLM connect to the communities in which there are public lands. Through volunteer work and partnerships, the BLM hopes to create connections with interested people who can help foster and encourage stewardship of the land.

The BLM manages over 8 million acres of land in Colorado for multiple uses including recreation, grazing, improving species habitat, preserving native species, guarding heritage resources, and energy development. Year round, BLM Colorado works with local schools and volunteer groups such as Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Colorado Plateau Mountain Biking Association, Friends of the Mustangs, and many others, to improve the public lands.

For more information about volunteer opportunities with BLM in Colorado, please contact Jack Placchi, 303-239-3832 or Jack.Placchi@blm.gov To view the BLM 2006-2007 Volunteer Annual Report please visit <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/res/Volunteer.3.html>

-BLM-

For Immediate Release: October 16, 2007
Contact: Peter Doran, BLM 303-236-1601
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BLM Opens National Operations Center in Denver

DENVER – Bureau of Land Management Director Jim Caswell today attended the formal opening of the BLM's National Operations Center at the Denver Federal Center where many of the agency's operational functions will be located.

"This Center is essential to the success of the BLM," Caswell said at the opening ceremony. "What we're doing here will reduce duplication, improve effectiveness, and save taxpayers dollars."

The new Center will consolidate the BLM's National Science and Technology Center, responsible for the operational aspects of the BLM's science programs, including data and records management; the National Information Resources Management Center, responsible for the day-to-day operations of the BLM's computer and communications systems, including data storage; the National Business Center,

responsible for asset management and the operation of the BLM's accounting, acquisition, and financial systems; the National Human Resources Management Center, responsible for position classification and staffing; and the Land and Resources Project Office, responsible for developing the BLM's custom computer applications.

Don Simpson, BLM's associate state director in Wyoming, is overseeing the opening of the National Operations Center and serving as acting Director. Currently, the National Operations Center employs nearly 300 federal employees and about 100 contractors and has a budget of about \$50 million.

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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For Immediate Release: October 16, 2007
Contact: Tom Gorey BLM 202-452-5137
Denise Adamic BLM 303-239-3671

BLM Sets Meeting of National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board for November 5 in Portland

The Bureau of Land Management's National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board will meet on Monday, November 5, 2007, in Portland, Oregon, to discuss issues relating to the management, protection, and control of wild horses and burros on Western public rangelands. The one-day meeting will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., local time, at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower in Portland.

The Advisory Board provides input and advice to the BLM as it carries out its responsibilities under the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The law mandates the protection, management, and control of these free-roaming animals in a manner that ensures healthy herds at levels consistent with the land's capacity to support them. The BLM manages about 29,000 wild horses and burros that roam BLM-managed rangelands in 10 Western states.

The public may address the Advisory Board at the November 5 meeting at an appropriate point in the agenda, which is expected to be about 3 p.m., local time. Individuals who want to make a statement should register with the BLM by noon on the day of the meeting at the meeting site (Hilton Portland & Executive Tower, 921 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204; phone number: 503-226-1611). Depending on the number of speakers, the Board may limit the length of presentations, set at three minutes for previous meetings.

The agenda of the meeting can be found in the October 12, 2007, Federal Register. Speakers must submit a written copy of their statement to the BLM at the meeting; those who would like to comment but are unable to attend may submit a written statement by October 31, 2007, to: Bureau of Land Management, National Wild Horse and Burro Program, WO-260, Attention: Ramona DeLorme, 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, Nevada, 89502-7147. Comments may also be e-mailed to:

Ramona_DeLorme@blm.gov. Those submitting comments electronically should include the identifier “WH&B” in the subject of their message and their name and address in the body of the message.

For additional information regarding the meeting, please contact Ramona DeLorme, Wild Horse and Burro Administrative Assistant, at 775-861-6583. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may reach Ms. DeLorme at any time by calling the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

The Advisory Board meets at least two times a year and the BLM Director may call additional meetings when necessary. Members serve without salary, but are reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses according to government travel regulations.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

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For Immediate Release: October 11, 2007

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West Douglas wild horse decision affirmed

MEEKER, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management announced today that its decision to remove a small herd of wild horses south of Rangely has been affirmed.

BLM will now begin the public process of developing a Gather Plan to remove approximately 120 horses in the West Douglas Herd Area. The first gather is expected next year, and more than one gather will be needed to remove all the horses from the area. The majority of the horses gathered will be available for adoption through BLM’s wild horse and burro program. The remaining horses will be placed in long-term holding facilities.

The 1997 Resource Management Plan for the BLM White River Field Office recommended the removal of the West Douglas Herd, while expanding a larger wild horse management area in better habitat to the east.

“Wild horses are an integral part of the multiple use management of the 1.5-million acre White River Resource Area,” said Field Manager Kent Walter. “We will continue to manage for wild horses in the better-suited, 190,000-acre Piceance/East Douglas Herd Management Area west of Meeker. In 1997, we expanded the appropriate management level of that area by 65 percent – from 140 to 235 horses.”

In September 2005, BLM completed an Environmental Assessment that concluded the herd should be removed because the 123,000-acre West Douglas Herd Area could only support up to 60 horses, too

small a herd to maintain genetic viability naturally.

BLM engaged state and local government agencies and the public to help determine the management plan for the West Douglas Herd Area. Rio Blanco County, the State of Colorado Department of Agriculture, and the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council are among those who support the decision to remove horses from the West Douglas Herd Area.

BLM received several protests during the 30-day protest period that followed the 2005 decision. These protests have now been resolved by the BLM's Washington D.C. headquarters, allowing the White River Field Office to implement its decision.

Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, BLM manages, protects, and controls wild horses and burros as part of its overall multiple-use mission. The Bureau works to ensure that population levels are in balance with rangeland resources and other uses of the public lands. BLM removes wild horses and burros from the range each year to control the size of herds. Wild horses have virtually no predators and can double in population about every four years if not managed.

BLM manages four Herd Management Areas in western Colorado for wild horse herds: The Piceance/East Douglas west of Meeker, the Little Bookcliffs Herd northeast of Grand Junction, the Sand Wash Herd west of Craig, and the Spring Creek Herd southwest of Montrose.

The Bureau's goal is to place as many of the wild horses and burros gathered from the range into private care. Since 1973, the BLM has placed more than 217,500 animals into private ownership through adoption. Under a December 2004 amendment to the 1971 law, the Bureau also seeks good homes through sales of horses and burros that are more than 10 years old or have been passed over for adoption at least three times. Since that amendment took effect, the BLM has sold more than 2,500 eligible horses and burros.

BLM encourages those who are interested in providing good homes to wild horses or burros to visit http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro.html for information about adoptions or sales.

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NOTE: This release discusses two wild horse herds in the White River Field Office. A map showing these areas is available at: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo/wrfo_wild_horses.html

For immediate release: October 5, 2007

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LINK to Federal Register Notice of Availability:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/pdf/E7-19699.pdf>

LINK to Vegetation PEIS Overview with Success Stories:

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis/0.html

BLM Issues Decision on Vegetation Treatment and Fuels Reduction Study

The Bureau of Land Management issued a decision today that will help improve the health of public lands by enhancing the agency's ability to control and manage vegetation – including invasive and noxious weeds – and helping reduce fire-prone fuels, such as cheatgrass. The BLM's decision – known as the Record of Decision for the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on vegetation treatment and fuels reduction – was developed on a national level to analyze the environmental effects of herbicides for treating and managing vegetation on Western public lands.

“Today's decision is the result of extensive public participation and careful, comprehensive environmental study,” said BLM Director Jim Caswell. “We now have clear direction on using new but proven tools to support such important projects as the Healthy Lands Initiative.” (The Healthy Lands Initiative, as called for by the President in his Fiscal Year 2008 budget proposal, is aimed at restoring the health and productivity of the public lands at landscape levels.)

Published in today's Federal Register, the BLM's Record of Decision allows for the use of four new approved herbicides, provides updated analysis on 17 currently approved herbicides, and identifies those herbicides that the Bureau will no longer use on public lands. The decision also guides the use of herbicides for field-level planning and on-the-ground projects designed to restore and sustain important riparian, range, and wildlife habitat on public lands under BLM management. In addition, the decision establishes a protocol for assessing human health and ecological risks of future herbicide use. The decision issued today does not authorize any specific actions on the ground; site-specific analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is still required at the project level.

The BLM uses herbicides selectively and conservatively in combination with other treatment methods, such as mechanical or manual removal of vegetation and biological control, to achieve specific goals. Herbicide treatments can slow the spread of noxious weeds and invasive species, which in turn helps restore the natural role of fire and improves watershed function. For example, herbicide treatments help prevent exotic fire-prone annuals such as cheatgrass from out-competing reseeds of native vegetation. Similarly, spot treatment of weeds that had spread into a travel corridor support seeding with perennial grasses that provide better forage for wildlife and lower the risk of wildfire. Once the natural cycles and systems of an area are re-established, herbicide use can be reduced and eventually may be eliminated in favor of other, non-chemical means of control.

The text of the ROD as published in today's Federal Register, along with more information on the use of herbicides as detailed in the BLM's Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, may be viewed online at http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis.html . Copies of the ROD may also be viewed in electronic and printed form in BLM Field Offices. Additional printed copies of the ROD will be available by mail upon request.

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