

*****SAMPLE COMMENTS for CRVFO dRMP*****

January 4, 2012

Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
RMP Comments
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

To John Russell, RMP Project Manager:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the BLM's Colorado River Valley Field Office's (CRVFO) draft Resource Management Plan (dRMP). I am a lifelong Colorado resident and have spent time on rivers throughout the region, including the Upper Colorado, Eagle, and Roaring Fork Rivers. I spent a great deal of time on these rivers growing up, and today I am sharing my passion for the landscapes with my children. I hope they will be able to do the same for decades to come. As a result, I write to support a combination of Alternatives B2 and C for the CRVFO. Alternative B2 is the most protective of instream flows on the Colorado River into the future and Alternative C provides additional protections to the rest of the rivers throughout the CRVFO region.

The Colorado River is one of the key recreation resources in the CRVFO region, bringing critical economic support to the area each year. Commercial rafting in Glenwood Canyon alone had over \$18 million in economic impact in 2010 to local economies. The river is also home to numerous species, including the sensitive Colorado cutthroat trout. The Upper Colorado River is also the largest supplemental source of water for the cities of Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs, and eastern Colorado towns and farms. As these demands increase, so does the threat to these flow-dependant resources.

Iconic river reaches, such as the Colorado River, deserve additional and permanent protection of their Outstandingly Remarkable Values, which includes whitewater boating. While a Wild and Scenic designation may do much towards this goal, it unfortunately can do very little to protect the streamflows needed to support recreation and the health of the river. The Stakeholder Agreement that would be implemented under Alternative B2 provides a much stronger framework for protection of streamflows into the future, while also balancing the needs for water supplies, including the Windy Gap and Moffat Projects.

[Express your opinion about whether there should be more Special Recreation Permits on the Colorado (for commercial outfitters), whether you agree that the current recreation facilities meet demand, and whether you agree with the group size limit of 15 people, including guides, between State Bridge and Burns under Alternatives B and C. Support maintaining the current boat ramps/river access locations, and specify which ones you use. Provide comment on the possibility that user fees will be implemented.]

While the Colorado River attracts the most attention, I support the continuation of whitewater boating within in the Bull Gulch Wilderness Study Area, and ongoing maintenance of river access sites on the Eagle River during the 6-8 week whitewater season, and the Roaring Fork River. *[If you would like to see whitewater recreation facilities expanded to other parts of the region, specify where.]*

Additionally, I support protecting the riparian habitat of all of the rivers throughout the CRVFO region. While Alternative B2 is the most protective of flows in the Colorado, and designates Deep Creek as Suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, Alternative C continues to protect the remaining 22 segments that are currently eligible for Wild and Scenic designation. The dRMP states that other BLM management actions will protect the ORV's of these segments, however these protections can be withdrawn in the future through a dRMP revision process. Wild and Scenic designation will help to provide the permanent protection that these rivers deserve.

Whether or not the remaining 22 river segments are found to be Suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS, I support protecting other important values of these rivers through other means. In particular, I support the designation of proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's) that are near river corridors that are proposed under Alternative C only. For example, the proposed Abrams Creek ACEC would protect the genetically pure population of native, wild and naturally reproducing Colorado River cutthroat trout. The proposed Colorado River Seeps ACEC would protect critical plant communities along the Colorado River. The Grand Hogback ACEC would provide additional protection to parts of Elk, Rifle and Government Creeks. While these segments are not currently eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, they are important as tributaries of the iconic Upper Colorado River and should be afforded protection.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Joe Boater