

LOWER DOLORES WORKING GROUP FACT SHEET

Meeting #1

December 15, 2008

Getting started

Orientation to the Working Group

Presenter: Marsha Porter-Norton

Group facilitator

The Working Group's purpose is to assist the San Juan Public Lands Center in updating the current management plan for the Lower Dolores River. The Working Group was created by the Dolores River Dialogue ("DRD") and is made up of approximately 40 people chosen by the DRD.

Key laws and documents affecting management of the Lower Dolores River

Presenter: Steve Beverlin

Manager, Dolores Public Lands Office

- **The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968).** This national act provides for the preservation and protection of "certain selected rivers" that possess "outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values. . ."
- **Dolores River Wild and Scenic River Study Report (1976).** This evaluated the river's main stem from McPhee to Bedrock (105 miles). Certain segments were found either "eligible" or "suitable" for WSR designation.
- **BLM San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (1985).** The plan identified a multiple-use emphasis for the Dolores River corridor. It designated 28,539 acres as the Dolores River Wilderness Study Area. It specified that the Dolores River should be managed as a special Recreation Management Area and should have a management plan, which became the Dolores River Corridor Management Plan.
- **The Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (1990).** This is the plan the Working Group is to help update.
- **The San Juan Public Lands Draft Revised Resource Management Plan ("RMP") (2007).** As part of preparing the revised RMP, which should be finalized and adopted in 2010, officials with the San Juan Public Lands Center conducted a federally mandated WSR analysis to determine which streams were "eligible" for WSR consideration. The agency also decided to go one step further and determine which streams are "suitable", meaning potentially manageable as WSRs. Officials found 109 miles of the Lower Dolores and some tributaries from McPhee to Bedrock to be preliminarily "suitable". However, the draft RMP also provides that the recommendations of the Lower Dolores Working Group may be used "to supplement or replace this finding of suitability". Ultimately, Congress designates (or chooses not to designate) a WSR, based on local recommendations.



Dolores Public Lands Office

The Lower Dolores River Canyon

A stream is "eligible" for WSR consideration when:

- *It is free-flowing AND*
- *It possesses one or more Outstandingly Remarkable Values.*

WSR designation may or may not be the right tool for the Lower Dolores. The door is open for the Lower Dolores Working Group to recommend whatever it finds appropriate.

Lower Dolores
Working Group
Members & Alternates

Chester Anderson
Linda Bassi
Steve Beverlin
Ann Brown
Chris Burkett
Jon Callender
Randy Carver
Steve Chappell
Amber Clark
Scott Clow
Clint Cressler
Cole Crocker-Bedford
James Dietrich
Carolyn Dunmire
Nathan Fey
Jim Fisher
Lynn Gardner
Rick Gersch
Art Goodtimes
David Graf
Dave Harper
Vern Harrell
Al Heaton
Shauna Jensen
Rick Keck
Julie Kibel
Gerald Koppenhafer
Ted Kowalski
Tony & Peggy Littlejohn
Andy Logan
Joe Mahaffey
Meghan Maloney
Karel Miller
Ann Oliver
John Porter
Mike Preston
Larrie Rule
Rick Ryan
David Schneck
Lisa Schwantes
Don Schwindt
Leslie Sesler
Jim Siscoe
Bruce Smart
Dale Smith
Doug Stowe
Rowdy Suckla
Steve Trudeau
David Vackar
Chuck Wanner
Mely Whiting
John Whitney
Ernie Williams

Staff

Marsha Porter-Norton
Kathy Sherer
Gail Binkley
Gina Espeland

NEPA process

Presenter:

Shauna Jensen

Hydrologist, Dolores Public Lands Office

Shauna presented a PowerPoint explaining the NEPA process the Dolores Public Lands Office will follow after the Working Group completes its recommendations. NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, is the law that requires the federal government to analyze potential environmental impacts of proposed actions. Updating the Dolores River management plan must comply with NEPA. The process will include a Plan-to-Project Period (December 2008 – October 2009) during which the Working Group considers how best to protect the values of the Lower Dolores. The remainder of the process involves primarily the Dolores Public Lands Office and includes “scoping” through news releases, public meetings and letters to interested parties; a NEPA analysis by the agency; preparation of a preliminary environmental assessment (EA); a public comment period; a final decision signed by the district manager; and an appeal period.

Dolores River Dialogue history and role in Lower Dolores River Management Plan update

Presenter:

Mike Preston

Manager, Dolores Water Conservancy District

The Dolores River Dialogue is a collaborative group involved in finding management opportunities for McPhee Reservoir. It has been meeting since 2004. The DRD learned about the possibility of the Dolores River being listed as a WSR and was concerned about the potential ramifications, especially because a WSR designation would likely carry a federal reserved water right. Steve Beverlin informed the DRD that there was a management plan already in existence for the Lower Dolores and suggested the plan-revision process as a formal way to evaluate alternative protection for the river. In February 2008, the DRD decided to form a separate group to help update the management plan, and selected members for that group. The Working Group now has the opportunity to flesh out management options for the Dolores River in an open and transparent fashion. The group will try to come up with a proposed action that most people can support. The Dolores Working Group is set to conclude its work in Fall 2009.

The Lower Dolores Management Plan Working Group is working to provide recommendations for updating the Dolores Public Lands Office (Forest Service/BLM) 1990 Dolores River Corridor Management Plan. The Working Group includes diverse stakeholders with many perspectives and interests in the Lower Dolores River Valley. Its goals are to gather information, identify values worthy of protection in the planning area, formulate ideas for protection of the values, and make recommendations to the Dolores Public Lands Office. The Working Group will meet until Fall 2009.

NO decisions or recommendations were made at this meeting.

Presentations, documents, meeting summaries, agendas and other information related to the Lower Dolores Working Group process are posted at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/>.