



Dolores River Management Plan

(Update of the 1990 Dolores River
Corridor Management Plan)

Dolores Public Lands Office
December 2008

Topics of Discussion

- 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542
- 1976 Dolores River Wild and Scenic River Study Report
(CO Dept of Natural Resources, USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Outdoor Recreation)
- 1985 San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan
(USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Montrose District, CO)
- 1990 Dolores River Corridor Management Plan
(USDI, BLM, Montrose District, CO)
- 2007 San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan – Volume 3 Appendices (USDI BLM, USDA FS)

Wild and Scenic River Act (1968)

- Wild and Scenic River Act, P.L. 90-542 signed October 2, 1968
- '...preserves "certain selected rivers" that "possess *outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values*"...in their free-flowing condition...for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.'
- Amended three times (most recent 1/3/1975) at this time identified the Dolores River for study (29 total rivers, 12 in Colorado)
- '...McPhee Dam to the Colorado-Utah border, excluding the segment from one mile above Hwy 90 to the confluence of the San Miguel River...this equaled 194 river miles to be studied....'

Dolores River

Wild and Scenic River Study Report (1976)

- Mainstem from McPhee Dam to Bedrock (105 miles) possesses *outstanding scenic, geologic, historic and cultural values*.
- Segments recommended from eligible to suitable for into Wild and Scenic River System into one of 3 classifications:
 - McPhee Dam to Bradfield Bridge = Recreational
 - Bradfield Bridge to Disappointment Creek = Scenic
 - Disappointment to Little Gypsum Valley Bridge = Recreational
 - Little Gypsum to 1 mile above Bedrock = Wild

Dolores River Wild and Scenic River Study Report (1976)

"The recommendations expressed are based on the premise that the Dolores Project will be constructed. Its construction and operation will *enhance most wild and scenic values* of the Dolores River and insure that a live streamflow will be maintained below McPhee Dam."

San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (1985)

- Identified Multiple Use Emphasis for the Dolores River corridor
 - ✓ Recreation
 - ✓ Wildlife – Aquatic & Riparian Management
 - ✓ DOE Energy Lease Tracts – Slickrock Uranium
 - ✓ Wilderness Study Areas
- Designated Dolores River Wilderness Study Area (28,539 acres)

San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (1985)

- Manage Dolores River as a Special Recreation Management Area
 - ✓ Individual river segments are managed for specific uses (i.e. semi-primitive non-motorized recreation)
 - ✓ Determine carrying capacity for the river
 - ✓ Develop a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP)

Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (1990)

Current BLM management direction

- Overall Goals
- Management Units
- Objectives per Management Unit
- Constraints

Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (1990)

- Overall Goals:
 - ✓ Protect/enhance natural & cultural resources while allowing compatible uses
 - ✓ Coordinate with DOW for management of wildlife & fisheries
 - ✓ Coordinate with DWCD to maximize availability of water releases for river mgt
 - ✓ Work closely with private landowners and users to minimize rec. impacts
 - ✓ Reaffirms BLM's support to include Dolores River into Wild and Scenic System.

Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (1990)

- Management Units
 - ✓ Unit I Disappointment Creek to Gypsum Valley
 - ✓ Unit II Dove Creek Pumps to Disappointment Creek
 - ✓ Unit III Bradfield Ranch to Dove Creek Pumps
 - ✓ Unit IV Gypsum Valley to Bedrock

Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (1990)

- Objectives per Management Unit
 - ✓ Management of human impacts vs. natural environment
 - ✓ ROWs, utility corridors, surface disturbing activities
 - ✓ Types of recreation activities occurring (fishing, car camping, hunting, etc.)
 - ✓ Consistent with potential wild/scenic classification (recreational, scenic, wild).
 - ✓ Wildlife objectives (monitoring, surveys, etc.)

Dolores River Corridor Management Plan (1990)

- Constraints
 - ✓ Manages Dolores River WSA consistent with wilderness until Congress acts
 - ✓ No surface occupancy for mineral leasing (Bradfield to Disappointment, Big Gypsum to Bedrock)
 - ✓ ORV restrictions
 - ✓ Management actions tied to Dolores River flows are constrained by upstream water commitments of BOR/DWCD
 - ✓ Existing private property rights may limit BLM actions
 - ✓ Action should consider potential impacts to WSR classification recommendations

San Juan Draft Management Plan (2007)

- Process for Wild and Scenic Designation
 1. Determine which streams are *eligible* and what classification (wild, scenic, recreational)
 2. Determine which streams are *suitable*
 3. Choose when to forward suitable streams for legislative consideration
 4. Congress designates Wild and Scenic River

San Juan Draft Management Plan (2007)

- Designated Dolores River (McPhee to Bedrock) *Eligible* as a Wild and Scenic River
 - ✓ Outstandingly Remarkable Values identified fish, wildlife, recreation, geography, scenery, ecology, archaeology
 - ✓ Classification 48.84 miles wild, 23.15 miles scenic, 37.04 miles recreational
 - ✓ 93% acres and 87.4% miles are public land (FS & BLM)

San Juan Draft Management Plan (2007)

- Dolores River (McPhee to Bedrock) Determined *Suitable*
 - ✓ Many outstandingly remarkable values, relatively few conflicts between uses, primarily involves federal lands
 - ✓ Most conflicts around mineral development
 - ✓ Consistent with previous finding of suitability (1976 WSR Study)

San Juan Draft Management Plan (2007)

“Should the DRD make substantial progress in identifying and securing needed protections of the ORVs, the recommendations of the group could be used to supplement or replace this preliminary finding of suitability.”