

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-06-05**

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**December, 2016**

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**Proposed Right-of-Way by San Juan County for an ATV Trail  
in the Indian Creek Area**

*Location:* T. 30 S., R. 21 E., Sections 7, 8, 17, 21 and 28

*Applicant/Address:* San Juan County  
Monticello, Utah

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# **Proposed Right-of-Way by San Juan County for an ATV Trail in the Indian Creek Area DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-06-05**

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of the right-of-way for an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trail in the Indian Area as proposed by San Juan County. The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action. The EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any “significant” impacts could result from the analyzed actions. “Significance” is defined by NEPA and is found in regulation 40 CFR 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a statement of “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). If the decision maker determines that this project has “significant” impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record may be signed for the EA approving the selected alternative, whether the proposed action or another alternative. A Decision Record (DR), including a FONSI statement, documents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in “significant” environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in the Monticello Resource Management Plan (November 12, 2008).

### **1.2 Background**

For the purposes of this document an ATV is defined as any motor vehicle designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain that is 65 inches or less in width and has three or more low-pressure tires. Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) are defined as any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain. It includes off-highway motorbikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), utility task vehicles (UTVs), dune buggies, 4-wheel drive jeeps, some types of 4-wheel drive automobiles (including sport-utility vehicles), and any other civilian vehicle specifically designed for off-road travel.

On November 1, 2005, San Juan County (County) submitted a right-of-way application (UTU-82366) for an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trail located in the Indian Creek area of San Juan County, Utah. In applying for the right-of-way (ROW) San Juan County said they were asking the BLM to authorize an ATV trail which connects to ATV use occurring on designated routes in the Lockhart Basin area and the Davis Canyon area and, to provide a unique recreational opportunity for ATV enthusiasts by precluding use of OHVs which are wider than 65 inches would potentially meet the above needs. As a result of discussions with the BLM, the County submitted revisions to the right-of-way application on February 26, 2006, June 30, 2008 and

finally on November 2, 2011 in order to revise, clarify, and finalize specifics of the proposal. An environmental assessment (EA) (UT-090-06-05-EA) was released for public comment on November 23, 2011 and addressed two action alternatives. In response to comments during the 30-day public comment period on the EA, the BLM developed a third action alternative, which addressed public concerns about the trail going through the Creek Pasture campground. After completing revisions, the revised EA was posted on the ENBB on August 2, 2012 for a second 30-day public comment period (same NEPA number, EA UT-090-06-05). During the second public comment period, the BLM again received public comments. As a result of these comments the BLM created another alternative to consider in the EA to address impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics. On July 1, 2013 San Juan County revised its ROW application to incorporate changes in alignment considered under this new alternative. This new alternative was presented in the EA as Alternative B. Finally, to respond to comments by the National Park Service (NPS) in 2011, 2012, and 2013, where they expressed concern “that issuance of the right-of-way and establishment of the connector route certainly would result in greater ATV use in areas directly adjacent to Canyonlands National Park that previously have seen little use”, the BLM proposed a mitigation segment designed to divert ATV traffic away from NPS boundaries in Lavender and Davis canyons. Although not a full ATV trail in and of itself, it is analyzed as Alternative C in this document so its effects can be disclosed. This EA (also EA UT-090-06-05) was made available for a 30-day public comment on November 18, 2014. Comments were received and the BLM responded to them in the EA.

As authorized by Title V of the Federal Land Policy Management Act, the BLM may issue a ROW grant to authorize the use of a specific piece of public land for a certain project, such as a road, pipeline, transmission line, or a communication sites. A ROW grant authorizes rights and privileges for a specific use of the land for a specific period of time. Generally, a BLM ROW is granted for a term appropriate for the life of the project.

Each of the route alternatives considers the issuance of a ROW. If approved, the ROW will have a term of 20 years. If a ROW is approved the routes would be added to the Monticello Travel Management Plan (Travel Plan). Per Appendix O of the 2008 RMP (page O-29) and as noted in IM 2004-061, the BLM has established procedures for making modifications to its designated route network (plan maintenance) through additional analysis, e.g., activity level planning.

In comments following release of the second EA (2012), concerns were voiced about BLM issuance of a ROW for this purpose. Although ROWs have been issued by BLM for this purpose in the past, some still consider this to be either “precedent setting”, or are concerned that BLM will lose future control over what happens on the ROW. Despite those concerns BLM has full authority to rescind a ROW whenever its terms and conditions are not being followed. In this EA BLM commits to also analyze the option of not issuing a ROW to San Juan County. Selection of this option may mean that if an ATV route is approved, instead of issuing a ROW to San Juan

County, the BLM will designate the route under the Travel Plan and assume all construction and maintenance responsibilities or share those responsibilities with interested parties.

On February 26, 2015, the BLM Monticello Field Office signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Decision Record (DR) that denied the County's application for a ROW, but designated the trail under its Travel Management Plan.

On March 30, 2015, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and the Grand Canyon Trust (SUWA) filed an Appeal and Request for Stay with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA).

On August 7, 2015, counsel for the BLM requested the Board to vacate and remand BLM's decision. In support of its request, BLM stated that it had decided to "conduct further analysis of the visual impacts of the proposed ATV trail and other project details." On August 10, 2015, the IBLA filed an Order vacating and remanding the decision back to the BLM. This revised 2016 EA addresses the issues of the March 30, 2015 appeal including adding documentation to support the analysis of impacts to cultural and visual resources as well as addressing other topics raised by the Appellants.

The proposed ATV trail is located about 25 miles northwest of Monticello, Utah and is north of the paved highway (SR 211/County Road B1291) which leads to the Needles Area of Canyonlands National Park (Map 1 in Appendix A). The right-of-way alternatives are shown on Map 2 of Appendix A.

### **1.3 Need for the Proposed Action**

The BLM's underlying need is to consider the County's application for a ROW for an ATV trail in the Indian Creek area. In analyzing this application the BLM will also consider the need to meet the Goals and Objectives of the applicable land use plan. In this case, the BLM addresses the need to provide for multiple recreational uses of the public lands and to sustain a wide range of recreation opportunities and potential experiences for visitors and residents while supporting local economic stability and sustaining the recreation resource base and other sensitive resource values (RMP at 88). Consistent with the Federal regulations at 43 CFR 2801.2 for protecting natural resources and preventing unnecessary or undue degradation to public lands, this consideration will be based on limiting the extent of new trails and minimizing the impacts to cultural resources, floodplains, lands and realty, noise, recreation, riparian areas, visual resources and wilderness characteristics.

The National Environmental Policy Act provides for the BLM to consider alternatives to proposed actions. These alternatives should be based on compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal regulations at 43 CFR 2800 and 8342. In consideration of both FLPMA and the Federal regulations at 43 CFR 2800, BLM determined that there was also a need to analyze whether to issue a ROW or not. In addition based on the regulations at 43 CFR 8342 BLM will have to determine if designation of routes appropriately

consider the protection of the resources of the public lands, the promotion of the safety of all the users of the public lands, and the minimization of conflicts among various uses of the public lands.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Proposed Action**

The BLM's purpose is to respond to a right-of-way application from San Juan County based on compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Federal regulations at 43 CFR 2800. San Juan County has filed a ROW application that would allow them to construct and maintain an ATV specific trail in the Indian Creek area.

The FLPMA authorizes the BLM to consider the issuance of right-of-ways (ROWs) for uses such as roads and trails on public lands. The cited Federal regulations state that it is BLM's objective to grant ROWs to any qualified individual, business, or government entity and to control the use of the ROW in a manner that protects natural resources and prevents undue and unnecessary degradation of public lands.

Furthermore, the Monticello Field Office Resource Management Plan recognizes the issuances of ROWs on appropriate public lands and the RMP specifies that the subject area is available for ROWs.

The decision to be made is whether to issue a ROW as proposed by San Juan County or not, and if not, whether to designate the proposed ATV trail under Monticello's Travel Management Plan.

#### **1.5 Conformance with BLM Land Use Plan**

The Proposed Action and alternatives analyzed in this EA have been determined to be in conformance with the current land use plan referred to as the Monticello Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) and approved on November 17, 2008. The Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the approved RMP based on the following:

1. Lands and Realty, Management Action LAR-14, page 72, which states: Consider lands available for ROWs except for exclusion and avoidance areas. Map 4 of the RMP shows that the proposed ROWs are not located within a ROW avoidance or exclusion area.
2. Recreation, Goals and Objectives, page 88, which states: To provide for multiple recreational uses of the public lands and to sustain a wide range of recreation opportunities and potential experiences for visitors and residents while supporting local economic stability and sustaining the recreation resource base and other sensitive resource values.
3. Recreation, Indian Creek Special Recreation Management Area, Goals and Objectives, page 106, which states: Provide for premier rock climbing experiences, outstanding OHV opportunities, scenic vistas, cultural site interpretation at Newspaper Rock, destination camping areas, and a gateway to Canyonlands National Park.



4. Riparian Resources, Riparian Action RIP 5, page 113, “No new surface-disturbing activities are allowed within active floodplains or within 100 meters of riparian areas unless it can be shown that: a) there are no practical alternatives or, b) all long term impacts can be fully mitigated or, c) the activity will benefit and enhance the riparian area”.
5. Travel Management, Management Action TM-6, page 141, which allows for modifications to the designated routes in the Travel Plan based on the opportunity to tie into existing or planned trail networks (RMP Appendix O, page 29).

### 1.6 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

The alternatives would be consistent with all applicable BLM policies, and other Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and plans. Specifically, Section 501 of the FLPMA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations for the use, occupancy, and development of the public lands for ROWs. Road ROWs are regulated under 43 CFR 2800 and the application received for the proposed ROW is consistent with these Federal regulations. FLPMA states at Sec. 501. [43 U.S.C. 1761]: *“The Secretary, with respect to the public [is] authorized to grant, issue, or renew rights-or-way over, upon, under, or through such lands for– (a) (6) roads, trails, highways, railroads, canals, tunnels, tramways, airways, livestock driveways, or other means of transportation except where such facilities are constructed and maintained in connection with commercial recreation facilities on lands in the National Forest System; ...”*

Table 1-1: Regulatory Authorities and Guidance

<b>Regulatory Authorities</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Cultural Resources Laws and Policies</b>	<b>Cultural Resources Effect on Process</b>
BLM Native American Trust Resource Policies (303 OM 2 and 512 OM 2); BLM H-8120-1 - General Procedural Guidance for Native American Consultation; BLM Manual 8120, Tribal Consultation under Cultural Resources; EO 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (65 FR 67249, November 2000); EO 13007 Indian Sacred Sites (61 FR 26671, May 1996); American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (PL 95-341; 42 USC 1996)	Native American consultation regarding possibly affected traditional cultural properties.
Archaeological and Historic Data Preservation Act of 1974 (PL. 86-253, as amended by PL 93291; 16 USC 469); Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (PL. 96-95; 16 USC. 470aa-mm); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 106, (PL 89-665; 16 USC. 407(f) and 36 CFR Part 800)	Requirement for cultural resource inventories to determine the presence of cultural resources and protection of sites discovered during project operations.
Native American Graves Protection and repatriation Act of 1990 (PL 101-601)	Procedures to be followed in the event of discovery of human remains.

<b>Regulatory Authorities</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Rangeland and Livestock Grazing</b>	
BLM Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines (43 CFR 4100. Subpart 4180)	Consistency with rangeland standards in grazing allotment.
<b>Paleontological Resources</b>	
Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009	Requirement for paleontological resource inventories to determine the presence of fossil resources and protection of sites discovered during project operations.
<b>Land Management and Use</b>	
Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Section 201 (a) (PL 94-579; 43 USC 1701 et seq.)	Management of federal lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield while protecting environmental resources.
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190; 42 USC 4321); 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 CEQ implementation of NEPA; BLM Handbook H-1790-1 ; U.S. Department of the Interior Department Manual 516, Environmental Quality	Evaluation of impacts to environmental resources that may result from a proposed action prior to its implementation.
<b>Water Quality</b>	
EO 11988 Floodplain Management (43 CFR 6030)	To avoid long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains.
<b>Wilderness Characteristics</b>	
BLM Manual 6310 Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands	Identification of lands displaying wilderness characteristics.
<b>Wildlife</b>	
Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (16 USC. 668-668d, 54 Stat. 250) as amended (PL 95-616 (92 Stat. 3114)) November 8, 1978.	Coordination, consultation and impact review regarding eagles.
Endangered Species Act of 1973 (PL. 85-624; 16 USC 661, 664 1008)	Coordination, consultation and impact review regarding federally listed threatened and endangered species.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 USC 703-712, as amended); EO 13186 Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Migratory bird impact Protect Migratory Birds; BLM MOU W0-230-2010-04 To Promote the Conservation of Migratory Birds	Coordination and protection of nesting migratory birds.
<b>State of Utah Authorities and Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	
Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) and Advisory Council Regulations on the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties, as amended (36 CFR. Part 800)	Utah State Historic Preservation Office consultation on cultural resource survey, evaluation, and mitigation.
<b>Wildlife</b>	
UDWR Rules and Regulations, Rule 657 series; UAC Title 23, Wildlife Resources of Utah.	Coordination on wildlife and state-sensitive species; management of big game and wildlife.

The alternatives are consistent with the San Juan County Master Plan (2008) based on the following desired conditions as stated in the Transportation Plan section of the Master Plan (Page 27):

1. It is the desire of San Juan County to have routes of travel accessible by motor vehicle for all users, including the elderly, physically handicapped and disabled, to gain access to the public lands.
2. It is San Juan County's desire to provide access throughout the county to meet the needs of both residents and visitors for a wide variety of purposes. These purposes range from consumptive (mining, oil, gas, etc.) to recreational uses (hiking, biking, ATViing, horseback riding, etc.).
3. San Juan County desires to have a fully developed trails plan which will complement the diverse landscape and balance access between consumptive, recreational, motorized and non-motorized uses.

This EA incorporates tiers to the analysis for the "Integrated Invasive Plant Management Plan for the Monticello Field Office". The decision record for this EA was signed December 15, 2014. (BLM, 2014).

### **1.7 Identification of Issues**

Typically, this section describes the process that the BLM used to identify the resource issues that require analysis in the EA. This process is called scoping. The proposal to construct an ATV trail in the Indian Creek area has been in the public view since notification of the project was posted on the Utah Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) on November 3, 2005. However, through time, the scoping and comment periods on subsequent EAs have become intertwined. Therefore, the public involvement process for the project to date is included here, with the hope of clarifying how the issues and alternatives evolved to those presented in this EA.

The BLM conducted an internal review of the Proposed Action using an interdisciplinary team (ID Team). The ID Team identified resources that may be affected by the Proposed Action and documented this information in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist (Appendix B). The resources identified as potentially impacted in the ID Team Checklist are floodplains and riparian areas, recreation, wilderness character and the issuance of a ROW.

In response to the November 3, 2005 ENBB posting, the BLM received letters from a total of 10 individuals and groups. A summary of the comments within these letters and the BLM responses is included in Appendix C.

A 2011 EA was prepared based on the initial scoping comments received. This EA evaluated two alternatives, a Proposed Action, which utilized roads designated in the Monticello Travel Management Plan as D1453 and D0507, and non-designated travel routes. The proposed route at that time went through Creek Pasture Campground. The primary issue analyzed in the 2011 EA was recreation. This EA was presented to the public for a 30 day comment period that began on

November 23, 2011. Over 2,000 comment letters from individual members of the public were received. The comments mainly expressed concerns about the ATV route passing through Creek Pasture Campground. These comments and responses are included in Appendix C.

After analysis of the comments on the 2011 EA, another alternative was developed and referred to as the preferred alternative in a second EA that was posted on the ENBB on August 2, 2012 for a 30-day public comment period. This alternative avoided using the designated road through Creek Pasture Campground. To aid in consistency and provide for a comparative analysis the preferred alternative from the 2012 EA is presented in this, the 2014 EA, as Alternative A. The comments on the 2012 EA are presented in Appendix C.

Based on the comments that the BLM received on the EA posted in August 2012, regarding wilderness character the BLM created another alternative that is presented in this EA as Alternative B. A map of this route was posted on the ENBB in June 2013. Also as a result of the June 2013 ENBB posting, the National Park Service reiterated their concerns regarding potential impacts to Canyonlands National Park. These concerns lead to the development of a new trail segment described as a mitigation segment and is described as Alternative C. Chapter 2.0 of this EA provides a description of each alternative.

In 2015 the BLM interdisciplinary team conducted another internal review in order to address the issues associated with the IBLA's remand of the 2012 EA, and cultural resources, noise, and visual resources were added to the list of resources (Issues) to analyze in detail.

Based on internal and external scoping and comment periods on the previous EAs, the following issues are carried forward for analysis:

### **1.7.1 Cultural Resources**

- What are the potential impacts to cultural resources along the proposed ATV route and along the designated routes the trail would connect to?

### **1.7.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas**

- How would the floodplains on Indian Creek at the proposed mitigation route be affected?
- What methods would be used to keep riders of ATVs from driving off trail in Indian Creek?
- How much of the Riparian Area would be affected?
- Would an ATV trail across Indian Creek be in conformance with the Monticello RMP? Specifically, will it meet Riparian Resources, Riparian Action RIP-5?

### **1.7.3 Lands and Realty**

- What are the effects of issuing a Title V ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

#### **1.7.4 Noise**

- Will noise from the ATV trail impact Canyonlands National Park?
- How will noise impact other recreationists in the vicinity of the ATV Trail?

#### **1.7.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will intrusion into Canyonlands National Park Result from the ATV trail?

#### **1.7.6 Visual Resources**

- Will the proposed trail and associated site developments create visually contrasting impacts that alter the landscape character, including potential impacts to views of Indian Creek from the highway 211/County Road B1291?
- Will the proposed trail and site developments meet the VRM objectives for the project area?

#### **1.7.7 Wilderness Characteristics**

- How would the trail impact the lands with wilderness characteristics values and inventoried acres in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

### **1.8 Issues Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis**

During scoping, BLM resource specialists identified resources that are either not present within the project area or would not be impacted by the Proposed Action. These resources are listed in the IDT Checklist, which is presented in Appendix B.

The following issues were also raised by the public during scoping and comments on the 2011, 2012, and 2014 EAs. The comments are compiled in Appendix C. These issues were considered but eliminated from further analysis.

#### **1.8.1 Air Quality**

The alternatives would result in emissions of fugitive dust from the operation of ATVs on unpaved surfaces and emissions from the operation of internal combustion engines. These emissions would be sporadic, would rapidly disperse, and are not likely to cause or contribute to a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The proposed action is consistent with the Recreation and Air Quality management decisions in the RMP. Air quality need not be analyzed in detail in the EA.

Dust is raised by motorized vehicles as they travel the designated roads within the Indian Creek SRMA. Road use is highest in the spring and fall months. Dust generated by road use is generally localized and disperses quickly. There are currently approximately 130 miles of unpaved roads on the Monticello Travel Management Plan within the Indian Creek SRMA.

These roads are available for motorized travel including by OHVs. The alternatives would add approximately 5.5 miles of motorized routes (ATV), or an increase of 4 percent. The addition of the traffic from any of the action alternatives would not significantly increase fugitive dust. It is impractical and unnecessary to conduct a detailed air quality analysis for the alternatives. The ATV trail is not expected to increase the dust in the area to a noticeable or measureable degree and therefore air quality was not analyzed in detail in this EA.

### **1.8.2 Soils**

The alternatives presented in this EA are consistent with the Monticello RMP. The alternatives contain built-in mitigation measures to minimize impacts to soil resources. The trail would be established by ATV operation along the flagged route and, where necessary, a trail cat. The BLM, applicant or partner user groups would routinely monitor the trail for erosion or off-trailing and install appropriate water control measures and signs as needed to reduce off trail use and unnecessary soil disturbance.

The project area was included in the Soil Survey of Canyonlands Area, Utah, issued January 1991. The trail crosses seven soils (plus rock outcrop). These soils are fine sands, fine sandy loams, and gravelly loamy sands on 2 to 15 percent slopes. These soils vary from 3 to more than 80 inches in depth and have a slight to moderate water erosion hazard, and none to high wind erosion hazard. Refer the soil survey for additional information.

These soils are capable of supporting biological soil crusts. However, the potential is low due to the coarse texture (high sand content). Vegetation will be removed from the trail tread through the use of the trail.

Soils will be mixed and exposed to events of rain and wind erosion at varying degrees based on soil type. The Proposed Action and alternatives include erosion control structures and trail maintenance that will mitigate impacts to soils. The area impacted by the proposed action is not significant when compared to the area as a whole. The alternatives would not impact the overall soil function and productivity to the degree that would require detailed analysis in the EA.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has presented the purpose and need of the proposed project, as well as the relevant issues, i.e., those elements of the human environment that could be affected by the implementation of the proposed project. In order to meet the purpose and need of the proposed project in a way that resolves the issues, the BLM has considered and/or developed a range of action alternatives. These alternatives are presented in Chapter 2. The potential environmental impacts or consequences resulting from the implementation of each alternative considered in detail are analyzed in Chapter 4 for each of the identified issues.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING PROPOSED ACTION

### 2.1 Introduction

The BLM ID Team rigorously explored for all reasonable alternatives that meet the underlying purpose and need for the proposed project and that respond to the issues. Three alternatives are carried forward for full analysis within this EA: Alternative A, appeared as the preferred alternative in the 2012 EA and was the County's ROW proposal at that time; Alternative B-Proposed Action, is San Juan County's most recent proposal that is an alternative route that reduces impacts to lands with wilderness characteristics; Alternative C presents a trail segment that could be added to either Alternative A or Alternative B and is described as the Mitigation Segment; and the No Action alternative, which is required by the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1502.14) and provides important baseline information. Alternative A is described in Section 2.3, Alternative B is described in Section 2.4, Alternative C is described in Section 2.5, and Alternative D is presented in Section 2.6. Seven additional alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis either because they did not meet the purpose and need for the project, or they resulted in similar or greater impacts than under Alternative A and B. The alternatives considered but eliminated from analysis are described in Section 2.7.

### 2.2 Actions Common to All Alternatives

#### 2.2.1 Cultural Resources

- a. Interpretive materials for prehistoric and historic sites and archaeological site etiquette information would be posted at all kiosks.
- b. Known sites would be monitored by BLM personnel and BLM volunteers.
- c. Designated routes between Canyonlands National Park and Highway 211/B1291 would continue to be a priority for Class III cultural resource inventories. These inventories would be completed as funding becomes available.

#### 2.2.2 Noxious Weeds

- a. The ATV trail route would be monitored by the BLM and/or San Juan County and volunteer groups for infestations of noxious weeds.
- b. Invasive and noxious weeds would be treated per the *Integrated Invasive Plant Management Plan for the Monticello Field Office* (BLM, 2014).

#### 2.2.3 Recreation

- a. Speed limit (5 miles per hour) and directional signs would be placed to control ATV use in the Hamburger Rock and Creek Pasture camping areas.
- b. All camping areas are open to all visitors to the Indian Creek SRMA. Joy riding in the campgrounds would be discouraged through posting signs.

- c. ATV riders would be required to not operate their vehicles between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am. The normal quiet hours for the campgrounds.
- d. If ATV use becomes an issue at some camping areas they could be closed to ATV use.

#### **2.2.4 Visual Resources**

- a. If construction is anticipated to last beyond the proposed four days, consider scheduling construction in the winter or summer to minimize disruption to highly sensitive populations such as climbers and park visitors.
- b. Minimization of the visual impact of trailhead structures would be achieved through careful siting of kiosks and other structures to take maximum advantage of existing vegetative screening.
- c. Natural or natural-appearing materials would be used. Kiosk and other trailhead structures will be constructed of natural materials such as self-weathering metal, natural stone, gravel, and wood or will be painted with appropriate selections from the standard environmental color palate. Colors appropriate for the area include grays, reds, salmons, rusts, browns, and buffs. Shiny and reflective materials will be avoided.
- d. Interpretive materials placed into the kiosk should be carefully selected to match the pallet, and use of yellow and white in text should be kept to the minimum necessary to convey Tread Lightly messages. Further mitigation could be accomplished by siting the kiosk to repeat the basic horizontal elements found in the cliff bands.
- e. Fences should be self-weathering metal or wood, and any barricade boulders should be placed “sunny side up” with caliche edges buried if possible. Consider organic shaping of parking area edges, rather than clearing a rectangle. If fill is needed for the parking area, consider fill that would match color of surrounding landscape.
- f. Reseed area if vegetation outside of the proposed “footprint” is damaged by vehicle tires.

#### **2.3 Alternative A –“Preferred Alternative” from 2012 EA**

San Juan County requested a ROW (UTU-82366) which would allow for construction, maintenance, and use of an ATV trail located in the Indian Creek area, north of the Highway 211 that provides access to Canyonlands National Park (Map 3 in Appendix A). The County’s ROW proposal calls for an ATV trail that would be 10 feet wide with a normal travel surface width of about 5.0 feet (60 inches). The 10 foot ROW width would allow for passing or meeting of vehicles and would also allow for maintenance work and placement of signs and barriers within the ROW.

The proposed ATV trail would connect ATV use that takes place on designated routes in the Lockhart Basin area to designated routes in the Bridger Jack Mesa area and the west side of the Abajo mountains. The proposed ATV trail would provide a unique opportunity for ATV



enthusiasts by precluding use of OHVs, which are wider than 60 inches. The use of other narrow recreational vehicles such as motorcycles and bicycles would be allowed on the trail. Non-motorized and non-mechanized modes of travel would not be precluded from use of the proposed trail; however, the primary intent is to provide a unique recreational experience for ATV riders.

The total time to complete all the work associated with the construction and improvement of the proposed ATV trail route is estimated at about 4 days. Work is expected to begin immediately after authorization. The trail route would be flagged before work begins on upgrading and constructing the segments. The proposed ATV route for Alternative A is described in 4 segments as follows:

Segment 1 – This segment begins approximately 2,000 feet north of Hamburger Rock on the east side of County Road B122, the Lockhart Road. The Falls/Missile trail (CR D1449) joins the Lockhart Road on its west side, opposite the proposed trail entry. From this location, the segment follows portions of an existing user-created trail that runs east and then curves to the south and it crosses areas of grass and low brush. Establishing this segment would involve repeated ATV trips or could possibly require the use of a bobcat to construct the trail where it crosses a low hill. Construction of this short hill crossing (estimated 60 feet) would allow the route to contour over the hill, minimizing erosion. Trail Segment 1 would be approximately 4,500 feet in length (0.85 miles) and would be about 1.0 acre of disturbance to set the trail along the user-created route. This trail segment ends where it crosses a designated route, County Road D1543, east of Hamburger Rock Campground.

Segment 2 - This segment would begin at County Road D1543, where Segment 1 ends. Segment 2 consists of a faint trail established by existing ATV use (created prior to the 2008 RMP and Travel Plan was approved) that crosses relatively flat terrain consisting of sandy soils and vegetation with grasses and brush. This segment does cross areas of bedrock. Segment 2 would be about 1.4 miles (7,191 feet) long. Earth moving equipment would not be used to construct this segment of the trail. The segment would be established on the ground through repeated ATV use to better define the existing route. About 1.7 acres of surface disturbance would be involved with establishing this segment. This segment ends where it connects to an existing (non-designated) road.

Trail Segment 2 would require the construction of one ATV cattle guard to allow ATVs to pass through the fence. A horse gate would be installed adjacent each cattle guard to allow horseback riders passage through the fence line.

Segment 3 – Segment 3 follows an existing (non-designated) two-track “route” (i.e., linear disturbance) that crosses relatively flat terrain and was originally created prior to the 2008 RMP and Travel Plan was approved. The existing route averages 12 feet in width. This segment begins where Segment 2 ends and runs in a southerly direction and ends about 700 feet northwest

of the terminus for a designated County D road (D0570) (see Map 4). This segment would be about 0.9 miles long. No new surface disturbance would be necessary for utilizing the existing route.

Segment 4 – This segment would begin at the point 700 feet northwest of the end of designated route (D0570). It would go southwest and then southward for approximately one mile (5,280 feet). The trail would then turn southeast and continue cross country bisecting D0570 and continuing approximately 3,850 feet (about 0.73 miles) southeast crossing the paved highway and continuing another 1,000 feet (about 0.20 miles) to intersect with the road to Davis Canyon. This portion of the trail would be across open terrain which is relatively flat, though rolling enough to shield most of this trail from being viewed from the paved highway. The terrain consists of sandy soils vegetated with grasses and brush and some bedrock. This segment would cross two washes which are dry most of the year. Crossings would be angled to best alleviate erosion. Total surface disturbance for this segment is 1.44 acres. This segment would not require earth moving equipment to construct and would be defined by driving ATVs along the route.

Trail Segment 4 would require the construction of two ATV cattle guards to allow ATVs to pass through fence lines. A horse gate would be installed adjacent each cattle guard to allow horseback riders to move through the fence lines. These fences are located where the proposed route crosses the highway. One would be placed in the fence line that is along the north side of the highway crossing and the second one would be placed on the south side of the highway crossing.

### **2.3.1 Design Features**

The following information describes the trail design features that would become part of the conditions attached to the ROW.

1. Signs would be placed to clearly mark the route and discourage off trail use. Signs would be replaced and maintained as necessary. The portion of the existing (non-designated) two-track “route” (Segments 2 and 3) that was originally created prior to the 2008 RMP and Travel Plan that is not included in this alternative would be signed and rehabilitated as needed to emphasize that it is not part of the route.
2. ATV crossing signs would be placed along the highway to warn motorists of the crossing at the end of Segment 4. Stop signs would be placed where the trail intersects the highway as a safety precaution for ATV users.
3. Effective barriers (i.e. boulders and fencing), and signs would be placed at the access points of trails to prevent use by motorized vehicles other than ATVs (60 inches wide or less).

4. Routine maintenance would consist of repairing or replacing signs, collecting trash, filling in minor ruts and placing small water control structures to preclude erosion as necessary. Routine maintenance work would be accomplished by hand and utilizing ATVs for transport.
5. The BLM would work with the County and partnered user groups to monitor the trails during peak seasons of use, to assess the condition of the trail and identify problem areas which would require more than routine maintenance. These areas would include any off trail use or locations of more substantial washouts, rutting, and soil erosion. As a result of this monitoring, it may be necessary to take corrective actions to prevent off trail use and excessive soil erosion. These actions would include placement of closure signs, barriers, and water control structures. Although unlikely, should it become necessary to correct or repair locations on the trail where substantial wash-outs or rutting occurs, a trail cat (small steel tracked vehicle with a 4 foot blade) to fill in wash-outs and install water control structures such as diversion berms or water bars. The BLM would approve work before taking any corrective actions other than routine maintenance.
6. To minimize erosion, drainage crossings would be constructed to cross at a near right angle.
7. The BLM works with and through San Juan County to implement an active weed control plan. The trail route would be monitored by BLM and San Juan County for noxious and invasive weeds, which would be controlled by the County's licensed applicator.
8. The trail would be approximately 60 inches; however, the maintenance corridor for the trail would be 10 feet.
9. Two parking areas would be constructed to accommodate staging for ATV riders and provide kiosks with trail information. The parking areas would not be included in the County's ROW and would be constructed and managed by the BLM. These are described below:
  - a. Parking Area 1: This parking area would be located at the trail's start point north of Hamburger Rock Campground. This location has user-created surface disturbance. It would be about 280 feet long and 82 feet wide. The parking area would be delineated with effective barriers such as boulders or fencing to prevent user-created expansion. This parking area would include a kiosk that would provide trail use information and a map of the route. The size of the kiosk may vary based on the amount of information to be displayed. A single-panel kiosk would be approximately 8 feet tall x 4 feet wide with an area of ground disturbance usually less than 10 feet by 20 feet. A two-panel or three-panel design, thus the area of disturbance would potentially be two to three times wider. Typical installation requires digging two post holes (2 to 3 feet deep), usually using motorized equipment, and installing two metal or wooden 4

inch x 4 inch posts permanently into place. The acreage disturbed for the parking area installation would be about 0.60 acres.

- b. Parking Area 2: This parking area would be located just north of where the proposed trail segment 4 joins County road D0571 (Davis/Lavender Canyons road). This parking area would be located in an area disturbed through use by visitors to the area. It is located on the east side of County road D0571 would be about 180 feet long and 85 feet wide. The parking area would be delineated with effective barriers such as boulders or fencing to prevent user-created expansion. This parking area would include a kiosk like that described for Parking Area 1, and could vary in size and would have the same construction requirements as described above. The kiosk for this parking area would provide trail use information, and a map of the route and direct those wanting to visit Canyonlands National Park to obtain information at the Park's visitor information center. The acreage disturbed by the parking area would be about 0.40 acres.

10. Information posted at the kiosks would include, but not be limited to, designated trail and road maps, protection of cultural resources, general trail etiquette, and other information as deemed appropriate by the BLM. For the kiosk at the Davis Canyon road and other needed signing in the area, the BLM would work cooperatively with the National Park Service (NPS) and The Nature Conservancy on the appropriate messaging for off-highway users.

This ATV route would be approximately 5.2 miles (27,456 feet) in length and would require about 3.1 acres (27,456 feet long by 5 feet (60 inches) wide) of surface disturbance to define the trail alignment. The ROW, if authorized, would be 6.3 acres (5.2 miles (27,456 feet) long by 10 feet wide) and have a term of 20 years. An additional acre (1.0 acres) of surface disturbance would be required to construct the parking areas. Total potential surface disturbance is 7.3 acres.

Potential disturbance could occur anywhere along the trail due to the installation of trail signs, maintenance activities and the occasional passing of vehicles.

## **2.4 Alternative B – Proposed Action**

Alternative B – Proposed Action (Map 4 in Appendix A) was designed to minimize impacts to lands that have been inventoried and determined to have wilderness characteristics. San Juan County has revised their application to make this their preferred alignment.

Under Alternative B two options are being considered. The first option is to issue a ROW to the County. The second option, based on public comment is to not issue a ROW to the County, and instead, designate the proposed trail as a designated route in the Monticello Travel Plan.

Under Alternative B, the proposed trail tread width would be 65 inches (5.4 feet) to better accommodate ATVs and UTVs that would use the trail. A 12-foot wide corridor with the trail

occupying the middle of it is being analyzed as the area of disturbance. This area is wider than the trail because the BLM assumes that disturbance would occur in this area, due to the need for on-coming vehicles to safely pass each other, the installation of signs and to accommodate any maintenance work and barriers along the trail route. If authorized as a ROW the ROW width would be 12-feet wide. If designated as a trail in the Travel Plan, the trail's maintenance corridor would be 12 –feet wide, but the trail itself would be 65 inches wide.

Alternative B is the same as Alternative A except for the information provided below:

Segment 1: This segment is the same as that described in Alternative A, except that because of the 12-foot width the number of acres disturbed would be 1.2 acres (4,500 feet long by 12 feet wide).

Segment 2: This segment would be about 0.90 miles (4,603 feet) long and uses a faint trail or two-track route that was originally created prior to the 2008 RMP and Travel Plan was approved. It crosses relatively flat terrain consisting of sandy soils vegetated with grasses and brush and some bedrock. The segment would begin at the end of Segment 1 and would run in an easterly direction to within about 200 feet of an existing fence. Earth moving equipment would not be planned to construct this segment of the trail. The segment would be firmly established on the ground with about a 65 inch width through repeated ATV use until the trail is well-defined. This segment would end about 300 feet west of an existing fence line.

Segment 3: This segment would be about 2.26 miles long and crosses relatively flat to gently rolling terrain consisting of sandy soils, that is sparsely vegetated with grasses and brush. This segment crosses some areas of bedrock. The segment would begin at the end of Segment 2 and turns toward the south up a gently sloping draw to a point about 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile north of the paved road County Road B1291 (the highway to Canyonlands National Park) where it turns eastward and generally parallels the County road (about 545 feet to 1,470 feet north and away). The topography would keep the trail out of view of the County Road B1291. About 2,932 feet (0.6 miles) west of Class D road D0570 Segment 3 ends (refer to Map 4 in Appendix A). Earth moving equipment would not be needed to construct most of this trail segment, but would be authorized if needed to assure safe crossings of the two dry washes that exist about ½ mile west of the end of this segment. It would be established by driving ATVs over the trail route to define it.

Trail Segment 3 would require the construction of one ATV cattle guard to allow ATVs to pass through a fence. A horse gate would be installed adjacent the cattle guard to allow horseback riders passage through this fence line.

Segment 4: From the end of Segment 3, the route follows the alignment proposed in Alternative A. This segment would begin 2,932 feet (0.6 miles) west of Class D road D0570, cross the Class D road, and continue approximately 3,850 feet (about 0.73 miles) southeast, cross the paved

highway and continuing another 1,000 feet (about 0.20 miles) to intersect with the road to Davis Canyon. This portion of the trail would be across open terrain which is relatively flat, though rolling enough to shield most of the trail tread from being viewed from the paved highway (County road B1291). The main parts that would be visible are near where the trail crosses County road B1291. The terrain consists of sandy soils, vegetated with grasses and brush. This segment crosses a wash that is dry most of the year. Crossings would be angled to best alleviate erosion. This segment would not require earth moving equipment to construct and would be defined by driving ATVs along the route.

Trail Segment 4 would require the construction of two ATV cattle guards to allow ATVs to pass through the fence. A horse gate would be installed adjacent each cattle guard to allow horseback riders to move through the fence lines. These fence lines are located where the proposed route crosses the highway. One would be placed in the fence line that is along the north side of the highway crossing and the second one would be placed on the south side of the highway crossing.

This alternative would not be visible from the Creek Pasture Campground.

#### **2.4.1 Design Features**

The trail design features listed in section 2.2.1 for Alternative A also apply to Alternative B. However, Alternative B adds the following features:

1. The trail tread would be 65 inches however the maintenance corridor for the trail would be 12 feet.
2. To add stability to the ATV route geotextile, gravel, or other stabilizing materials would be placed to harden areas as needed.
3. If the decision is made to designate this route under the Travel Plan, instead of issuing a ROW to the County, trail maintenance would be the same as other designated routes with the Monticello Travel Plan.
4. If this route is designated in the Travel Plan, the BLM would monitor the route for invasive and noxious weeds and work with San Juan County to have them removed.
5. To help prevent incursions into the Canyonlands National Park and Dugout Ranch, the BLM would work with these landowners and Canyonlands National Park to establish and maintain signage and maintain closures to off-route travel and travel on non-designated routes on lands managed by the BLM. Closures would include signs, boulders and possibly fencing, and could also include reclamation in the form of raking out tracks and seeding the area with a native seed mix.
6. Traffic counters would be installed and maintained by the BLM at the trailhead north of Hamburger Rock Campground and right before the end of the trail at its junction with the

Davis/Lavender Canyon Road. Another traffic counter would be placed near the gate on the Davis/Lavender Canyon Road. This would help monitor the number of users and which access they are using. This traffic data would be collected for the first three years and then as needed by the BLM.

7. The wider right-of-way and maintenance width is designed to allow passing. If the trail width exceeds 130 inches along 30 percent of the trail or if new user-defined routes are repeatedly established BLM will pursue a variety of options from enforcement to closing the route in the most extreme situation.
8. The portion of the existing (non-designated) road two-track “route” that was originally created prior to the 2008 RMP and Travel Plan that is not included in this alternative would be signed and rehabilitated as needed to emphasize that it is not part of the route.

The trail under Alternative B would be 5.66 miles long (about 29,885 feet) and 65 inches wide and would require about 3.7 acres of surface disturbance to define the trail alignment. The designated trail corridor would be 8.3 acres (5.66 miles (29,855 feet) long by 12 feet wide). The ROW if authorized would have a term of 20 years. An additional acre (1.0 acres) of surface disturbance would be required to construct the parking areas. Total potential surface disturbance is 9.3 acres.

Potential disturbance could occur anywhere along the trail due to the installation of trail signs, maintenance activities and the occasional passing of vehicles.

## **2.5 Alternative C – Mitigation Segment**

Alternative C is a BLM proposed mitigation segment that could be selected in combination with either Alternative A or B (see Maps 3 and 4 in Appendix A). This alternative would allow ATV riders to loop back to the trailhead north of Hamburger Rock Campground using D Road 0570, D Road 1346 and B Road (See Map 5 in Appendix A) rather than riding out toward Bridger Jack Mesa. The alternative was developed to address the concerns from the National Park Service and other citizens and groups regarding the possible increase in ATV use near Canyonlands National Park and within the Davis Canyon, Lavender Canyon, Bridger Jack Mesa areas and along the west side Dugout Ranch.

*“In our December 2011 and October 2012 comments, we expressed concern that issuance of the right-of-way and establishment of the connector route certainly would result in greater ATV use in areas directly adjacent to Canyonlands National Park that previously have seen little use. This could lead to incursions of ATVs into the park itself where they are prohibited, with associated damage to natural and cultural resource values and conflicts with non-motorized users. In both the original and the revised EA, BLM did not identify and analyze indirect impacts attributable to increased ATV use in Davis and Lavender Canyons directly adjacent to the park.*

*The new Proposed Action recently posted by BLM [Alternative 2 of this EA] does nothing to mitigate these significant concerns” (NPS July 19, 2013). The full NPS letter is in Appendix D.*

While Alternatives A and B would connect to the routes that lead south from Highway SR 211/CR B1291 the BLM assumes that the majority of users will choose to drive the mitigation segment route if constructed instead of towards the Davis and Lavender Canyon areas. Under Alternative C two options are being considered. The first option is to issue a ROW to the County. The second option, based on public comment is to not issue a ROW and instead designate the proposal as a limited trail in the Travel Plan. If selected, this Mitigation Segment would either be issued as part of the ROW grant to San Juan County or designated in the Travel Plan. The full description of the proposed route is as follows:

**Mitigation Segment:** The Mitigation Segment would be constructed from the east side of Segment 4 of Alternative B, about 570 feet north of where Segment 4 crosses the paved highway. From this proposed junction, the route would cross Indian Creek and connect to County Road D0575. This would allow ATV riders to ride north on County Road D0575 and then west on road D1346 back to the starting point of the proposed ATV trail route. Signs would be posted to direct people along the trail route and to prevent off-trail riding. The Mitigation Segment would be about 3,825 feet (0.72 miles) in length with a disturbance of approximately 1.05 acres. This segment crosses a floodplain and a riparian area. Roads D1346 and D0575 are roads that are not restricted to ATV use. ATV users would share these routes with all other vehicles that use these roads.

This route crosses the floodplain and riparian of Indian Creek. Of the three locations considered and reviewed in the field, it is the most practicable route available that would turn ATV users back north toward the trailhead north of Hamburger Rock.

The Mitigation Segment would require the construction of one ATV cattle guard to allow ATVs to pass through the fence. A horse gate would be installed adjacent the cattle guard to allow horseback riders to move through the fence.

The trail under Alternative C would be 0.72 miles long (about 3,825 feet) and 65 inches wide and would require about 0.48 acres of surface disturbance to define the trail alignment. The ROW if authorized would be 1.05 acres (0.72 miles long by 12 feet wide) and would have a term of 20 years. An additional 0.40 acres of surface disturbance would be required to construct the parking area. Total potential surface disturbance is 1.45 acres.

If a trail is designated under the travel management plan, then the trail designation would include the trail tread and the maintenance corridor, which would have the same potential area of disturbance as the ROW.



Potential disturbance could occur anywhere along the trail due to the installation of trail signs, maintenance activities and the occasional passing of vehicles.

### **2.5.1 Design Features**

1. To add stability to the ATV route geotextile, gravel, or other stabilizing materials would be placed to harden areas as needed.
2. The trail tread would be 65 inches however the maintenance corridor for the trail would be 12 feet.
3. Place maps at trailhead signs and kiosks of the authorized routes.
4. Place signs/carsonite posts with “No Motorized Vehicles Off Trail” stickers on both banks facing both upstream and downstream of the Indian Creek crossing.
5. Implement frequent checks of the Indian Creek crossing for any evidence of violations of off trail use; it is only about ¼ mile from the intersection with road D0575.
6. Work with ATV user groups including sending notifications and making contact at their periodic club meetings stressing the importance of protecting resources, and perhaps entering into an agreement to get their assistance with monitoring the trail.
7. A parking area, Parking Area 3 could be constructed and would be located on the east side of County Road D0575, at its east end junction with the proposed trail Mitigation Segment. The proposed parking area would be about 180 feet long and 85 feet wide. The parking area would be delineated with effective barriers such as boulders or fencing to prevent user-created expansion. As with Parking Areas 1 and 2, this parking area would also include a kiosk that would provide trail use information, and a map of the route back to the Lockhart Basin road. The size of the kiosk could vary in size and would have the same construction requirements as described under Alternative A. The acreage disturbed by the parking area would be about 0.40 acres. The parking area would not be included in a ROW and would be constructed and managed by the BLM.
8. If off-trail use shows changes in stream channel morphology, and destabilizes banks outside of the trail alignment, BLM will pursue a variety of options from enforcement to closing the route in the most extreme situation.

### **2.5.2 Floodplain/Riparian Area Mitigation**

To off-set the impacts of constructing 1,611 feet of trail (0.44 acres of surface disturbance) of ATV trail across the floodplain and riparian area of Indian Creek, 3.0 acres of riparian and floodplain improvement immediately upstream and downstream of the ATV trail crossing is proposed. This mitigation concept is for every one acre that is disturbed, three acres would be

treated. This ratio was selected as it has been the general practice within the Canyon Country District to off-set the surface disturbance in riparian areas along the Colorado River. For this area the proposed area of disturbance within the floodplain and riparian area is rounded up from 0.44 acres to 1.0 acre. The 3 acre area for improvement (3 x 1.0 acre) is of an adequate size to be effective. This proposed improvement would include the removal of tamarisk and any noxious weeds identified in the area and would include the planting of native riparian vegetation species. This would provide and improve the habitat for animal species displaced by the construction of the trail.

The tamarisk and any identified noxious weeds would be treated as described in the December 2014 Decision Record for the *Integrated Invasive Plant Management Plan for the Monticello Field Office Environmental Assessment*. The EA for which this decision record was signed analyzes the various weed treatments that are available to use within the Monticello Field Office and includes both upland and riparian areas. These weed treatments include mechanical, manual, fire and the use of pesticides.

To help stabilize the stream banks and dissipate the energy during high stream flows adjacent the points where the trail enters the floodplain and enters the stream bed, anchored rocks and/or logs would be placed. Other best management practices may be used such as willow wattles along the stream banks and the placement large boulders placed in the stream channel upstream of the trail crossing.

## **2.6 Alternative D – No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, San Juan County's right-of-way application would be denied, and a trail would not be designated under the travel plan. Therefore, the construction and use of the proposed ATV trail would not occur.

## **2.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis**

Several alternatives were considered, but eliminated from further analysis. These alternatives are described below.

- One alternative route was proposed by the public in the 2006 scoping comments and comments on the 2011 EA. This alternative route would utilize County road B122 from the Lockhart Basin/Hamburger Rock area to the highway to Canyonlands National Park and then continue on the highway to the intersection with the Davis Canyon road, a total distance of about 4 miles. This alternative was eliminated from further analysis because the operation of relatively slow moving ATVs on the highway would present a serious public safety hazard and because the route would not meet the need to provide a recreational opportunity for ATV enthusiasts by excluding use of OHVs wider than 65 inches. See Map 5 for the designated routes in the project area. This alternative was addressed in the 2011 EA.

- The public proposed a similar alternative route during the 2006 scoping period and during the comment period for 2011 EA. Rather than utilize the highway, this proposed route would involve ATVs traveling alongside the highway within the highway right-of-way. This alternative was also eliminated because, although it would exclude OHVs wider than 65 inches, it would not give ATV riders a trail experience due to its parallel course and extremely close proximity of the highway. Although not to the same degree, this alternative would also present some safety concerns, as a result of the use of ATVs immediately adjacent to the highway which could distract motor vehicle operators and at the bridge, the ATVs would have to utilize the highway on the bridge that crosses Indian Creek. This alternative was addressed in the 2011 EA.
- A third alternative route was considered which would largely utilize designated routes (County routes D1346 and D0575). The route would begin at the intersection of County road D1346 and the Lockhart Basin road (County road B122) about 4 miles north of Hamburger Rock and would run in a southeasterly direction for about 3 miles along County Road D1346 to the intersection with County road D0575. From this intersection, the route would run in a southerly direction for about 5 miles along County road D0575 to the intersection with County road D2385. At this juncture, the route would run in a southwesterly direction for a short distance along County road D2385 to the intersection with the highway to Canyonlands National Park. The route would then proceed along an undetermined course across Indian Creek to connect with the Davis Canyon road. This alternative was eliminated from further analysis because it would not meet the need to provide a recreational opportunity for ATV enthusiasts by excluding use of OHVs wider than 65 inches. Surface disturbing activities such as a new ATV trail would have to meet the RMP criteria that long term impacts would be fully mitigated for riparian areas (Management Action RIP-5). This alternative was addressed in the 2011 EA.
- A fourth alternative that was considered but eliminated approximates the route of the proposed action but includes short routes to bypass the Creek Pasture and Hamburger Rock Campgrounds. One bypass route at Creek Pasture would require leaving the designated route and crossing the east side of Indian Creek and then crossing back to the designated route on the west side of the creek. This would require two crossings of the riparian area along Indian Creek which the RMP. Another bypass route was considered along the bluff to the southwest of Creek Pasture. This route was eliminated from further analysis because of conflicts with cultural resources identified in this area. The construction of a new alternative bypass route around the Hamburger Rock Campground was also considered. This route would intersect with the Lockhart Basin road (County road B122 shown on Map 2) about ¼ mile south of Hamburger Rock and would run in an easterly direction for about ½ mile to where it would connect with the proposed ATV trail at the south end of Segment 1. This alternative bypass route would result in about 0.3

acres of surface disturbance and the removal of vegetation consisting of blackbrush and grasses. In each case, the alternative bypass would increase surface disturbance and would not accomplish its intended purpose of avoiding ATV use in the Creek Pasture and Hamburger Rock Campgrounds. The relative short bypass routes would still connect with designated routes near the camping areas which would continue to allow ATV access into the campgrounds for camping. This alternative was addressed in the 2011 EA.

- In the 2012 EA, an ATV route that began near Hamburger Rock Campground and passed through Creek Pasture Campground before continuing southeast to an intersection with the Davis/Lavender Canyon roads was analyzed. Based on public comment this ATV route was eliminated from analysis in this EA because of the conflict in recreation use within the Creek Pasture Campground. This alternative was not carried forward into this 2014 EA.
- Two alternative mitigation segments were considered by the BLM during a March 2014 site visit. The first one would have had ATV riders cross the highway and travel east on the bridge that crosses Indian Creek and then cross the highway again to turn north onto to County Road D0575. This alternative was eliminated from further analysis because the operation of relatively slow moving ATVs on the highway would present a serious public safety hazard. The second mitigation segment considered was an old road that used to cross Indian Creek, south of the highway and north of Super Bowl Campground. This route would have bisected a popular dispersed camping area, required removal of well-established riparian vegetation and required ATV riders to cross the highway twice which is a safety concern. It would also have placed ATV traffic close to Super Bowl Campground.
- On October 10, 2014 an informal discussion took place between BLM and Heidi Redd, the local rancher, to talk about the new proposed mitigation segment. Ms. Redd said she preferred to see the route (when travelling from west to east) turn north on County road 0570 towards Creek Pasture campground, leave the road just outside of the campground, cross Indian Creek and travel northeast to connect with road D0575. This was eliminated from detailed analysis for the following reasons: potential greater impacts to Creek Pasture campground users; it would likely have to cross State of Utah lands (School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration or SITLA); and it would impact a much larger area of lands inventoried with wilderness characteristics than the proposed mitigation segment.

## **3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the potentially affected existing environment (i.e., the physical, biological, social, and economic values and resources) of the impact area as identified in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist found in Appendix B and presented in Chapter 1 of this assessment. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in Chapter 4.

The project area refers to the lands the proposed ATV routes cross (See Appendix A-Map 2). Resources potentially affected by the alternatives include: cultural resources, floodplains/riparian areas, lands and realty, noise, recreation, visual resources and wilderness characteristics.

### **3.2 General Setting**

The proposed ATV trail is located in the lower Indian Creek Area. Indian Creek is about 25 miles northwest of Monticello, Utah and about 50 miles southwest of Moab, Utah. The proposed trail route is about 5 miles east of the entrance to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. State Highways 191 and 211 provide access to the Indian Creek area (Map 1-Appendix A).

The proposed ATV trail and Indian Creek area are within the Inner Canyonlands Section of the Colorado Plateau Physiographic Province. The heart of this physiographic province is the intersection of the Green and Colorado Rivers. Indian Creek is a tributary to the Colorado River. The upper portion of Indian Creek is a deeply entrenched narrow canyon with massive cliffs of the Wingate Formation overlying colorful talus slopes of the Chinle Formation. The lower portion of Indian Creek broadens out into a valley with flat to gently rolling terrain. Wingate cliffs and spires border this valley.

Indian Creek is an intermittent stream at this lower reach that flows only at certain times of the year when it received water from springs, some surface source such as melting snow, or in response to precipitation events that can cause periodic flooding. Riparian vegetation is present along the drainage and floodplain which provides hydrologic functions and wildlife habitat.

The project area is located at an elevation of approximately 4,800 feet above sea level. The proposed ATV trail is situated on an upland bench ranging in elevation from 40 feet to 150 feet above Indian Creek. The average annual precipitation is 7-8 inches. Soils are fine sands, fine sandy loams, and gravelly loamy sands. The site is generally relatively flat-lying with maximum slopes of two to eight percent.

Except for three BLM-developed recreational facilities and the Dugout Ranch, the Indian Creek corridor is generally primitive and undeveloped. The primary land uses consist of seasonal recreational use, including scenic driving, camping, mountain and road biking, off-highway

vehicle (OHV) use and ATV use, and rock climbing. Historically, the area has also been used for livestock grazing, oil and gas exploration and uranium mining.

The Indian Creek area is a popular filming area because of its classical “western” look. Both commercial advertisements and major motion pictures have been filmed in the area.

The area has become a very popular recreation area because of its scenic quality and proximity to Canyonlands National Park. Hamburger Rock Campground and the dispersed camping sites in the Indian Creek area provide overflow camping for the National Park.

### **3.3 Resources/Issues Brought Forward for Analysis**

#### **3.3.1 Cultural Resources**

- What are the potential impacts to cultural resources along the proposed ATV route and along the designated routes the trail would connect to?

The project would occur in the Indian Creek area which is known for its cultural resources, specifically archaeological sites affiliated with ancestral Puebloans/Anasazi. Southeast Utah is one of the richest areas archaeologically in the United States. The cultural history of southeast Utah is divided into periods marked by specific material culture assemblages, technological advances, and settlement strategies (Lipe, Varien and Wilshusen, eds. 1999).

The prehistory of this region begins with the Paleoindian period. These hunter-gatherers were highly mobile, leaving few cultural imprints on the landscape. The evidence for the Paleoindian period is virtually nonexistent in southeast Utah except for isolated finds of representative projectile points, and therefore remains largely undated.

More represented, but still ephemeral in terms of overall frequency in the archaeological record of the region, is the Archaic period (7500 to 2500 years before present). The Archaic period is characterized by broad-spectrum hunting and gathering populations who used ground stone technology (mano/metate) to process vegetal resources and the atlatl to hunt with. Archaic period archaeological sites are often difficult to identify, but are often marked by the presence of thermal features such as hearths and scatters of fire-cracked rock used in the cooking of food, but their pit structures are generally very difficult to identify from the surface.

The transition from the Archaic period to the Basketmaker II period (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500) is marked by the introduction of maize agriculture and increased sedentism, represented by substantial subterranean pit houses. Basketmaker II populations were dependent upon corn and squash horticulture and had more standardized architectural styles and site layout. Bow and arrow technology may have also been used at this time. As reflected in the period name, finely woven baskets are commonly found in dry contexts, but the ceramic technology that would come to define later Ancestral Puebloan periods is absent. Basketmaker III period (A.D. 500–750) traits include plain gray and early decorated white ware ceramics, slab-lined storage pits and

surface structures, and burned jacal concentrations. Pit structures are often deeper than those of the Basketmaker II period and often include surface storage structures made of adobe and a single course of stone.

During the Pueblo I period in southeastern Utah (ca. A.D. 700–900), use of pit structures continued, but jacal surface rooms were also constructed; often, all that remain of these surface structures are scatters of burned and hardened jacal or clay. Sites of this period indicate large-scale population aggregation, which tended to be located at higher elevations than sites of later time periods. Ceramic technology remains dominated by gray ware, but by the end of the period decorated white and red wares are common.

The Pueblo II period is divided into early (A.D. 900–1050) and late (A.D. 1050–1150) periods. This division reflects the population decline that began during the terminal Pueblo I period and the florescence of the Chacoan phenomenon during the latter half of the Pueblo II period. Architectural sites are predominantly the Prudden unit pueblo consisting of a kiva and an associated above-ground masonry pueblo, often arranged linear to curvilinear north of the kiva. Extensive middens are generally located east of the site. Late Pueblo II sites are typically enclosed square roomblocks with a kiva to the south-southeast and row of rooms to the north-northwest.

The Pueblo III period (A.D. 1150–1290) is best known for the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings of southwestern Colorado. Settlements were located on mesa tops during the late 1100s where arable land could be found. By the latter half of the period (post-A.D. 1200), settlements shifted to canyon heads and large alcove sites where Ancestral Puebloan populations were tightly aggregated for the remainder of their presence in the Four Corners region.

The post-Puebloan occupation of the region (A.D. 1300–1840) is marked by the abandonment of the area by Ancestral Puebloans, a probable settlement hiatus, and the arrival of Numic (Ute) and Athabaskan (Navajo) speakers from the west and north, respectively. Historically, Indian Creek was used by Anglo settlers for ranching and farming and later explored and developed for its mineral resources (oil and gas, uranium). Today, the area is still grazed and increasingly used for a variety of recreation activities.

Class III (intensive) cultural resource inventories have been completed for the alternatives presented in this, the 2016 EA, as well as for routes proposed in previous versions of the Indian Creek EA.

The ATV route described in Alternative A was presented as the preferred alternative in the 2012 EA. A Class III cultural resource inventory was completed for the route. This inventory included a revisit of all sites located near the trail that were identified in previous surveys and the recording of one new site. The identified sites consist of isolated lithic scatters and isolated corrugated sherds. The BLM determined that the area of potential effect (APE) for the preferred

alternative would be an area 100 feet wide and centered on the preferred route. All except one of these sites were more than fifty feet from the trail, and therefore outside of the APE. This one site that was mapped closer than previously recorded would not be affected by the trail because the trail does not pass through the site and it is not visible from the proposed route. The BLM determined that the identification effort of cultural resources was adequate, and that the undertaking under the preferred alternative would result in No Historic Properties Affected. SHPO concurred with this determination on May 3, 2012.

A Class III survey was conducted in 2013 for the Proposed Action described as Alternative B in this EA. No cultural resources were identified within the APE which was 100 feet wide centered along the proposed trail route. The BLM determined the undertaking under the Alternative B would result in No Historic Properties Affected. SHPO concurred with this determination on June 17, 2013.

A Class III survey was conducted in 2014 for the Mitigation Segment described as Alternative C. No cultural resources were identified within the APE which was also 100 feet wide centered along the proposed trail route. The BLM determined that the undertaking in Alternative C would result in No Historic Properties Affected. SHPO concurred with this determination on May 27, 2014.

In their July 2013 comments, the National Park Service expressed concerns regarding impacts on the cultural resources in the Davis and Lavender Canyon areas if the proposed ATV trail is authorized. These concerns were also stated previously by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance in its comments on the 2012 EA. As a result of these comments a literature review and assessment using the Monticello Field Office files and the Utah State History database and on-the-ground cultural review was completed by the Monticello Field Office in the fall of 2015.

The literature review assessed 15 designated routes (D0492, D0494, D0497, D0571, D0575, D1291, D1297, D1346, D1439, D1443, D1493, D1456, D3265, D3266, and D4858) using BLM Monticello Field Office files and the State Historic Preservation Office GIS data to identify known sites along or in these designated routes. The 15 routes total 63.06 miles of which 26.50 miles (42 percent) have been inventoried. Ten sites were identified as being within the 100 foot corridor of inventory (50 feet on either side of the center line of the road). These sites range from lithic scatters, quarries, petroglyph and pictograph sites, Ancestral Puebloan cliff structures to a log cabin. On December 8, 2015, the BLM visited the two cultural resource sites located within the alignment of road D1346. The determination was made that continued use of this route as designated would have no adverse effect on the two sites provided that vehicle traffic does not leave the designated route. The two sites are lithic scatters, in a deflated surface, with no diagnostic tools or artifacts.

Road D0459 was surveyed under contract for a Class III cultural survey. No cultural sites were found in the road. One petroglyph was located near the road on a boulder. Map 6 in Appendix A



shows the designated routes that were evaluated in the literature review and assessment and the designated route that underwent Class III Survey

### 3.3.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas

- How would the floodplains on Indian Creek at the proposed mitigation route be affected?
- What methods would be used to keep riders of ATVs from driving in Indian Creek?
- How much of the Riparian Area would be affected?
- Would an ATV trail across Indian Creek be in conformance with the Monticello RMP? Specifically, will it meet Riparian Resources, Riparian Action RIP-5?

Floodplains are typically defined as topographically flat areas that lies adjacent to a drainage, are composed primarily of unconsolidated depositional material (e.g. sediments) derived from the drainage, and are subject to periodic flooding. Floodplains are an integral part of the stream system and are the adjustment mechanism needed to meet the requirements of discharge and load imposed by its watershed (BLM, 1998).

Riparian zones are generally defined as areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support vegetation that is typically adapted for life in saturated soils, characterized by hydrophilic plants. Riparian vegetation often occurs along the floodplains and serves as the green-zone interface between the uplands and a stream (BLM, 1998).

Riparian zones in the Monticello Field Office are some of the most diverse and productive systems, but on a field office level they are a minor component of the total land area. Drainages containing riparian areas comprise approximately 1 percent of the 1.8 million acres in the Monticello Field Office and are composed of 1,078 liner miles (RMP, 2008). However, even though they are a small component to the overall landscape, functions and habitat values provided by these areas are essential to humans (e.g. recreation, scenic, water, agriculture, livestock production, hunting, etc.), wildlife species (e.g. habitat, forage, water, migration, life cycles, etc.), and ecological processes (e.g. sediment detainment, filter, drainage stability, hydrologic functions, etc.) (RMP, 2008).

Goals and objectives for managing riparian resources are to ensure ecological diversity, stability, and sustainability, manage for properly functioning condition (PFC), and ensure stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to the local soil type, climate, and landform. This is accomplished, in part, by avoiding or minimizing the destruction, loss or degradation of riparian and associated floodplains, and preserving and enhancing natural beneficial values (RMP, 2008).

The Monticello RMP includes the following for floodplains and riparian areas: *“No Surface-disturbing activities are allowed in active floodplains, public water reserves and within 100 meters of riparian areas along perennial streams and springs. Exceptions may be granted if: (a)*

*there are no practicable alternatives, (b) impacts could be fully mitigated, or (c) the action is designed to enhance the riparian resource values” (RMP RIP-5, page 113).*

As measured between the boundaries of the Manti-La Sal National Forest and Canyonlands National Park (Park) boundary Indian Creek is 64 miles long and has 1,747 acres of floodplain/riparian area. Based on GIS data the stream channel of Indian Creek intersected by the proposed mitigation segment (Alternative C) is classified as intermittent, not perennial. This intermittent creek segment flows with seasonal water from snow melt and in direct response to seasonal precipitation events that can cause flooding.

Though the creek segment where the proposed ATV route would cross is intermittent it does have a floodplain and has riparian vegetation. The drainage exhibits the presence of vegetation dependent upon free water in the soil. Riparian vegetation is primarily composed of Fremont cottonwoods, tamarisks (invasive, non-native), willows, inland saltgrass, and miscellaneous sedges and rushes. Other upland vegetation intermixed in the area include rabbitbrush, greasewood, sagebrush, sand dropseed, galleta grass, Indian ricegrass, and alkali sacaton. These riparian and upland plant communities help stabilize the stream channel, dissipate streamflow energy, protect against accelerated erosion, capture sediment, and provide bank stability with root masses capable of withstanding most high flow events.

As outlined in TR 1737-15 *A User Guide to Assessing Proper Functioning Condition and the Supporting Science for Lotic Areas* (1998), (pg. 6), “Each riparian-wetland area has to be judged against its capability and potential.” In June 2014, BLM assessed the Indian Creek segment and determined it was in a Properly Functioning Condition (PFC) in relation to the drainage’s capability and potential, which is characterized by the system’s hydrology, vegetation, and soils (BLM 2014b). In reaching this conclusion, the BLM used guidance outlined in TR 1737-15 (pg. 1), which states “the method developed for assessing PFC is qualitative and is based on using a checklist to make a relatively quick determination of condition.” This conclusion was supported by an active floodplain, intact riparian vegetation with attributes capable of withstanding high streamflow events, and maintenance of riparian and wetland soil moisture characteristics in consideration of soil type, climate, and landform. The Indian Creek segment has elements for PFC that dissipates stream energy associated with high waterflow, filters sediment, and stabilizes streambanks as expected for a desert landform with limited seasonal waters available for riparian development. High intensity storm events cause periodic flash flooding of the drainage, which are the greatest influencing factors on the riparian system.

The proposed mitigation segment would cross 1,611 feet, about 800 feet each of floodplain and riparian area. Table 3.1 presents a breakdown by area of the number of feet and acres that would be crossed by the proposed ATV route.

Table 3-1: Breakdown of Crossings by the proposed ATV route.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Length (feet)</b>	<b>Width (feet)</b>	<b>Number of Acres</b>
Floodplain	811	12	0.22
Riparian	800	12	0.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,611</b>	--	<b>0.44</b>

The floodplains border the riparian area. The active channel of Indian Creek is bordered on both sides by a riparian area and then the floodplain.

This proposed route would cross the floodplain and riparian area of Indian Creek. Two other locations for the mitigation route were considered but had greater potential riparian area impacts (see Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis). This route is the most practicable route available that would allow ATV users to potentially turn them back north toward the trailhead located north of Hamburger Rock and away from the Lavender and Davis roads.

Presently there are nine designated routes within the Indian Creek Special Recreation Management Area that cross floodplain and riparian areas of Indian Creek. Two of these crossings are Class B roads, one B-road is the North Cottonwood Road (B107) and the other is the B-road that crosses east of Indian Creek Falls (B122). Six Class D roads cross Indian Creek, or parallel the creek within the floodplain and riparian Area. Class D roads, D1368 and D1363, cross Indian Creek near Newspaper Rock. Class D road D0494, sometimes referred to as the Lavender Canyon Road, exits the highway about 2.8 miles northwest of the North Cottonwood Road (Appendix A-Map 7). About 0.2 miles west of the highway Class D road D0494 forks, the left fork, D0494 turns to the south and drops into Indian Creek. The road that goes straight through the fork becomes Class D road D1297 and turns to the north and crosses Indian Creek. This road is referred to as the Lavender/Davis road. Class D road D1429 crosses Indian Creek east of Indian Creek Falls, and the Class D road D1182 crosses west of Indian Creek Falls. The Falls Missile ATV and motorcycle trail parallels Indian Creek’s riparian area and crosses Indian Creek five times. Table 3-2 lists the roads that cross Indian Creek with the acres of disturbance associated with that crossing. Map 7 in Appendix A shows the locations of the creek crossings.

Table 3-2: Route Crossings and Disturbance within Indian Creek’s Riparian Area

Road #	Length (feet)	Width (feet)	Square Feet	Acres	Location
D1368	369.6	14	5,552.4	0.13	East of Newspaper Rock
D1363	422.4	14	5,913.6	0.14	East of Newspaper Rock
B107	422.4	20	8,448.0	0.19	North Cottonwood Road
D0494	686.4	14	9,609.6	0.22	2.8 miles north of the N. Cottonwood Road junction with highway, left fork near creek crossing. Called the Lavender Canyon Road.
D1297	2,745.6	14	38,438.4	0.88	2.8 miles north of the N. Cottonwood Road junction with highway. Route straight at fork. Called the Lavender/Davis Road
B122	1,531.2	20	30,624.0	0.70	East of Indian Creek Falls
D1459	369.6	14	5,552.4	0.13	East of Indian Creek Falls
D1182	2,640.0	14	36,960.0	0.85	West of Indian Creek Falls
Falls Missile Motorize Trail	5,646.6 feet	10	56,466	1.3	West of Indian Creek Falls
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>14,833.8</b>	--	<b>170,564.4</b>	<b>4.54</b>	--

Off-trail ATV use has been observed in the creek bottom near Indian Creek Falls. No impact to riparian species or to channel characteristics that determine the proper functioning condition of Indian Creek channel were observed because the tracks were on the sandy wash bottom. The BLM does manage these types of impacts by closing, signing, and brushing out tracks when use occurs off of designated routes. This use is in the form of driving in the creek bed and is usually one or two riders. Little evidence exists to show that ATV riders ride up and down the stream banks, as most of the banks along Indian Creek are steep.

### 3.3.3 Lands and Realty

- What are the effects of issuing a ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

As documented in Appendix O of the Monticello RMP, the San Juan Public Entry and Access Rights organization (SPEAR) submitted a proposal during the scoping period for the RMP for a loop system of roads and trails throughout San Juan County. The submission by SPEAR predates the RMP, but comments made for this current action prompt a discussion of this submission here. While there is not an actual map of the original proposal submitted during RMP scoping, Monticello Field Office does have a later map (dated 2008) which would appear to contain similar information. This map is titled “San Juan County ATV Trail System” with indication that it was produced by SPEAR. A single loop trail system is hand drawn on this map that loops around much of the Monticello Field Office and a portion of the Moab Field Office. SPEAR’s submitted proposal seems to have included both existing routes and recommendations for new construction (RMP Appendix O.8.2.3). This Appendix in the RMP indicates that the proposal

would not be considered as a whole at that time but would be compared with the Travel Plan then under development. For portions not coincident with the Travel Plan BLM would “consider on a site-specific basis NEPA process which routes, connectors, and staging areas are consistent with the goals and objectives of the [RMP].”

This 2008 map indicated use of existing routes and displayed recommendations of new construction to make what would amount to an approximate 400 mile “master trail” or motorized loop around San Juan County. Portions of this Indian Creek ATV trail are generally consistent with some portions of this loop. Other routes which are coincident with the map include the Cedar Mesa ATV Connector Trail, portions of the Chocolate Drop Road, the Route Designations for San Juan ATV Safari 2012, portions of Red Canyon, Comb Wash and Peters Point Ridge, and possibly a portion of the routes Southwest of Blanding.

The Monticello RMP designates 2,820 miles of routes open to vehicle use and closes 316 miles of routes to recreational vehicle use. Since the establishment of the Travel Management Plan, 7.1 miles of designated routes have been added and 5.04 miles have been deleted through nine separate actions analyzed under NEPA. This has increased the mileage of open routes in the Travel Management Plan from 2,820 miles to 2,822 miles. Part of the 2,822 miles of routes open to vehicle use in the Monticello Field Office area are six designated ATV trails totaling 16.8 miles (11.4 miles on BLM-managed lands). Depending on the combination of Alternatives selected, if authorized the Indian Creek ATV trail would add up to 6.4 miles to the Travel Management Plan, which would make the open routes in the Travel Management Plan 2,828.68 miles.

The proposed ATV trail is within an area managed as the Indian Creek Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). The Travel Management Plan identifies 241.3 miles of designated routes. This includes 1.8 miles for the Falls Missile ATV/Motorcycle Trail.

San Juan County holds 36 right-of-way grants within the Monticello Field Office, if authorized as a ROW this San Juan County would hold 37 right-of-way grants. None of San Juan County’s ROWs are located within the Indian Creek SRMA. The ROWs within the SRMA are held by the State of Utah for the Class B road 1291 by the National Park Service, and State Highway 211. The State of Utah maintains the ROW between Newspaper Rock and Dugout Ranch. San Juan County has a road maintenance agreement with the Monticello Field Office or the maintenance of several travel routes within the County. Travel-routes designated in the Travel Plan not maintained by the County or the Utah Department of Transportation are maintained as follows: “With thousands of miles of routes in the field office area, maintenance is an on-going need. The costs in money and personnel time have to be considered. It is anticipated that the use of volunteer help will provide an additional support system for the maintenance of the motorized trail systems, just as volunteer work is currently being utilized on the maintenance of non-

motorized trails” (RMP, Appendix O, page 34). See Map 5 in Appendix A for the designated travel routes within the SRMA.

The Monticello Field Office completed an evaluation of the Proposed Action and Alternatives through the route designation process required by 43 CFR 8342.1-2, Handbook-8342 Travel and Transportation Handbook, and Instruction Memorandum No. UT 2012-066 Utah Bureau of Land Management BLM Motorized Travel and Transportation Management Planning Policy. This policy establishes route designation criteria.

The authorized officer shall designate all public lands as either open, limited, or closed to off-road vehicles. All designations shall be based on the protection of the resources of the public lands, the promotion of the safety of all the users of the public lands, and the minimization of conflicts among various uses of the public lands; and in accordance with the following criteria:

(a) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, air, or other resources of the public lands, and to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability.

(b) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats. Special attention will be given to protect endangered or threatened species and their habitats.

(c) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.

(d) Areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated wilderness areas or primitive areas. Areas and trails shall be located in natural areas only if the authorized officer determines that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, esthetic, scenic, or other values for which such areas are established.

Routes were located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, air, minimize harassment of wildlife and disruption of habitat and minimize conflicts between recreational users. The Monticello interdisciplinary team evaluated the proposed routes according to the above criteria and documented that review both in ID Team Checklist and in a Route Designation Evaluation Form. An updated interdisciplinary team route evaluation form is included as Appendix E.

#### **3.3.4. Noise**

Noise is defined as unwanted or excessive sound (FHWA 2011). Noise can be caused by a variety of sources, but with the proposed ATV trail, the sound levels generated by ATVs are the concern. In Utah ATVs are required to have approved spark arrester mufflers that generate sound

levels in the range of 96-100 decibels. Sound generated by ATVs would attenuate and be within EPA standards but could be an annoyance to some non-motorized users.

Currently the sounds heard in the proposed project area are either natural or human generated. The human generated sounds come from traffic travelling on the highway and designated roads, and the general sounds people make in camping areas. A decibel (dB) is the unit used to indicate the intensity of a sound wave. Sound (noise) is often measured in decibels using an A-weighted scale (dBA) because this method approximates the way humans hear sound. Table 3-5 lists typical sound levels at distances measured from the sound's source (Center for Environmental Excellence by AASHTO website <http://www.environment.transportation.org/environmental/issues/noise/>).

Table 3-3: Typical Sound levels

Outdoor Sound Levels	Sound Level (dBA)	Indoor Sound Levels
	110	Rock Band at 16 feet
Jet over-flight at 1,000 feet	105	
	100	Inside a New York subway train
Gas Lawn Mower at 3 feet	95	
	90	Food Blender at 3 feet
Diesel Truck at 50 feet	85	
Noisy Urban Area – Daytime	80	Garbage Disposal at 3 feet
	75	Shouting at 3 feet
Gas Lawn Mower at 100 feet	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 10 feet
Suburban Commercial Area	65	Normal Speech
Quiet Urban Area-Daytime	55	Quiet Conversation
	50	Dishwasher in next room
Quiet Urban Area at Night	45	
	40	Empty Theater or Library
Rustling Leaves	20	
	15	Broadcast and Recording Studios
Threshold of hearing	0	

Sounds in the environment typically vary with time making it awkward to describe them using a single number. One method used to describe variable sounds is the equivalent noise level, which is derived from a large number of moment-to-moment A-weighted noise level measurements.

The equivalent noise level (Leq) is the constant sound level that in a given period has the same sound energy level as the actual time-varying sound pressure level. Leq provides a methodology for combining noise from individual events and steady state sources into a measure of cumulative noise exposure. It is used by local jurisdictions, the Federal Highway Administration

(FHWA), and state departments of transportation (including Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT)) to evaluate noise effects. The day-night average noise level (Ldn) represents the 24-hour energy average noise level with a 10-dBA penalty (addition) applied to noise levels between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. The Ldn is a useful metric of community noise impact because people in their homes are much more sensitive to noise at night than during the day.

Daytime and nighttime Leq noise levels can be estimated based on the day-night average noise levels (Ldn) identified in the EPA publication "Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety" (1974). According to this document, typically, there is a 10-dBA change in noise levels between the daytime and nighttime. Table 3-6 presents a summary of the ambient noise levels associated with various land uses.

Table 3-4: Average Ambient Noise Levels for Various Land Uses Source

Land Use Description	Day-Night Average, Ldn (dBA)	Daytime Average, Leq (dBA)	Nighttime Average, Leq (dBA)
Wilderness	35	35	25
Rural Residential	40	40	30
Quiet Suburban Residential	50	50	40
Normal Suburban Residential	55	55	45
Urban Residential	60	60	50
Noisy Urban Residential	65	65	55
Very Noisy Urban Residential	70	70	60

Source: US EPA, 1974

Several factors affect the propagation of noise from these sources. The factors potentially applicable to the proposed ATV trail area are:

- a. Source geometry and type (point, line, coherent, incoherent)
- b. Meteorological conditions (wind and temperature variations, atmospheric turbulence)
- c. Atmospheric absorption of sound
- d. Terrain type and contour (ground absorption of sound, reflections)
- e. Obstructions (buildings, barriers, vegetation, etc)
- f. Topography

Generally, noise is most audible when traveling along a direct line-of-sight; noise levels from a point source will attenuate at a rate of approximately 6 decibels for each doubling of distance over hard surfaces. Barriers, such as walls, berms, or rows of buildings that break the line-of-sight between the source and the receptor can greatly reduce noise levels from the source because the barriers block sound. Solid, uninterrupted walls and berms may reduce noise levels by 10 dBA (Federal Highway Administration, 2011).



Decibel measurements for ATVs range from 91 to 100 decibels (Waters, 2004). This range is based on the model of the ATV and its exhaust system. Because they are not stationary point sources the level of noise heard by an observer will vary greatly as the ATV passes behind ridges or drops into valleys. An ATV will sound different when it is driving on a paved surface versus a gravelly or sandy surface. The softer ground materials absorb some of the sound waves instead of reflecting them. Pavement will reflect noise. Cliffs can reflect noise, but the proximity of the cliff relative to the route the ATV travels will affect how the sound reflects. The distance of any given observer, whether on a cliff face situated at an elevation above the travel route versus level will the travel route will hear different levels of engine noise.

Noise is currently generated along the designated routes and the highway within the Indian Creek Special Recreation Management Area. Ambient noise levels in most areas in the SRMA are characteristic of a quiet undeveloped rural area. Ambient noise levels are greater near the highway as a result of intermittent traffic noise generated by vehicles passing at high speeds, particularly during the day. Sound levels at developed campgrounds, and more heavily used informal use areas, such as climber parking areas and ATV parking areas, vary with the types of activities, vehicles, and number of people but have been estimated to range from 50-65 decibels (dBA)<sup>1</sup> as an average day-night level. Sound levels have not been measured at Hamburger Rock or Creek Pasture Campgrounds; however, daytime noise in the campground is likely substantially elevated by visitors in these areas as people generally tend to be more active during the day. Road traffic noise has been estimated to range from 80-100 dBA at a distance of 50 feet from the source (EPA, 1974). A quiet nighttime sound level of 35 dBA is typical of undeveloped rural areas (BOR, 2008).

The closest climbing walls to the proposed ATV trail are The Wall, 75 Cairns Wall, Back Wall and Cliffs of Insanity. These walls are located east and southeast of the southern end of the proposed trail route. The Wall, which is the northernmost wall in Indian Creek, is about 3.5 miles east of the proposed trail. The 75 Cairns Wall is adjacent The Wall and is about the same distance from the proposed trail. The south end of the ATV trail is about 1.75 miles west of Cliffs of Insanity (distances are measured point to point on a map).

### **3.3.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?

The proposed ATV trail is located within the Monticello Field Office's Indian Creek Special

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<sup>1</sup> Quantification of sound levels are measured in A-weighted decibels (dBA), which measures sound as perceived by human hearing.

Recreation Management Area (SRMA) (Appendix A-Map 5). The Indian Creek SRMA encompasses 89,271 acres of BLM-managed lands and an additional 17,705 acres of State and Private-lands for a total of 106,976 acres. The SRMA is bisected by State Highway 211<sup>2</sup> that accesses Canyonlands National Park's Needles District. The SRMA includes the Indian Creek stream corridor. It is bounded by the cliff rim to the east, the Manti-La Sal National Forest to the south, Canyonlands National Park to the west and Rustler Canyon to north. The goals and objectives for the SRMA are to provide outstanding recreational opportunities and visitor experiences including rock climbing, outstanding OHV opportunities, scenic vistas, cultural site interpretation at Newspaper Rock, destination camping areas, and a gateway to Canyonlands National Park while protecting natural and cultural resource values through integrated management between the BLM, National Park Service (NPS), State of Utah, and the Nature Conservancy.

Recreation activities that occur within the SRMA include scenic auto tours, camping, hiking, mountain biking, motorcycle riding, jeep touring, ATV riding, rock climbing, hunting and nature study. The heaviest recreation use (all activities) occurs in the spring when temperatures are relatively moderate. Recreation use lessens during the hotter summer months and then increases again in the fall. The fall season is particularly popular with rock climbers.

### ***3.3.5.1 Camping***

Based on public comments, the climbing community has a strong sense of ownership of the Indian Creek area, especially with its campgrounds. User conflicts between climbers and ATV riders are most likely to occur with the campgrounds. Three public campgrounds are located within the SRMA. These are Hamburger Rock, Creek Pasture, and Super Bowl campgrounds.

The Hamburger Rock Campground is a designated campground. The campground provides camping facilities for both tent and recreational vehicle campers. The campground currently has ten sites with room for expansion as demands increase. Facilities provided at this campground include restrooms, picnic tables, fire rings, delineated parking areas, campsite marker posts, and tent camping spaces. Camping fees are collected at this campground. The Indian Creek Falls Group Site is located north of Hamburger Rock.

The Creek Pasture Campground now provides fire rings, delineated parking areas, campsite marker posts, tent camping spaces, and permanent toilets. This campground also includes a large group site. Fees will be collected at this campground starting September 1, 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> State highway 211 is the paved access to Canyonlands National Park, and is maintained by the state of Utah for about 19 miles from its junction with state highway 191. From the end of state maintenance it becomes County Road B1291 and is maintained by San Juan County for about 13 miles to the park boundary. For ease the paved access to Canyonlands will be referred to as the highway.

Super Bowl campground offers designated camping sites with picnic tables, restrooms and delineated parking areas. Campground amenities are continuing to be implemented. Fees will be collected at this campground starting September 1, 2016.

Dispersed camping is authorized in disturbed areas 150 feet from designated roads. These disperse sites are scattered throughout the SRMA.

Based on general observations made by Monticello staff there appears to be a natural segregation of recreational user groups in the area. Most of the campers using Hamburger Rock also are ATV users, or they are camping there because the campground in the National Park is full. The dispersed camping areas north of the Hamburger Rock Campground, on road B122 are generally used by ATV riders and as overflow camping for the National Park.

The main user group that camps in Creek Pasture campground is climbers, however on occasion there are some people with ATVs that camp there. This campground also receives some use as overflow camping from the National Park. People camping in Superbowl tend to be climbers.

The designated dispersed camping area located about 1.5 miles north of the State maintenance on the highway, accessed by road D1293 tends to be used specifically by climbers. Map 8 in Appendix A shows the campgrounds and dispersed camping areas.

### ***3.3.5.2 Rock Climbing***

The cliffs bordering the Indian Creek basin offer world class rock climbing. Climbing occurs on the majority of the cliffs in the Indian Creek area, however climbers tend to concentrate on the routes located in the southern-most portions of Indian Creek, near Donnelly Canyon, North Cottonwood, and Bridger Jack Mesa. A statement made in a climbing guide for Indian Creek says "The Supercrack Buttress/Battle of the Bulge area sees more climbing traffic than all the other crags at Indian Creek combined" (Bloom, 2009). These walls are in the southern part of Indian Creek. Besides holding the more classic crack climbing routes in Indian Creek, the walls in the southern part of the area have short approaches which may add to their popularity.

Though the approaches are relatively long, the cliffs along the northern rims of Indian Creek offer optimal climbing and the climbing at North and South Six Shooter Peaks is gaining in popularity. The closest climbing walls to the proposed ATV trail are The Wall, 75 Cairns Wall, Back Wall and Cliffs of Insanity. These walls are located east and southeast of the southern end of the proposed trail route. The Wall, which is the northernmost wall in Indian Creek, is about 3.5 miles east of the proposed trail. The 75 Cairns Wall is adjacent The Wall and is about the same distance from the proposed trail. The south end of the ATV trail is about 1.75 miles west of Cliffs of Insanity (distances are measured point to point on a map). The North and South Six Shooter Peaks are accessed from the Lavender Canyon/Davis Canyon Roads. The climbing walls are noted on Map 8 in Appendix A.

### ***3.3.5.3 Mechanized Use***

All of the designated routes within the Indian Creek SRMA are open for mountain bike riding. Highway 211 is a popular for people riding road bikes. At this time, there are no designated mountain bike trails within the Indian Creek SRMA.

### ***3.3.5.4 Motorized Use***

Segment 3 that is proposed for use as part of both Alternatives A and B follows an existing (non-designated) two-track “route” (i.e., linear disturbance) that crosses relatively flat terrain and was originally created before approval of 2008 RMP and Travel Plan. This part of Indian Creek area was “open” to motorized (cross country) travel prior to the 2008 RMP. This route was not inventoried, so it was not evaluated for designation in the 2008 RMP.

The SRMA encompasses about 241.3 miles of designated roads, including the highway and the Falls Missile ATV trail. The Indian Creek area is popular for ATV use. The main area of concentration for ATV users is at the Indian Creek Falls - Hamburger Rock Campground area. However, ATV use occurs along all designated routes within the SRMA. ATV users will park their trailers (or stage) at pull outs on County roads that intersect with the highway including B107, the North Cottonwood road, D2385/D0575, Harts Draw road, and D0571 (Davis/Lavender Canyon road).

County Road D0571 (the beginning of the Davis/Lavender Canyon Road) connects to several designated roads two of which have access points into Canyonlands National Park (Appendix A-Map 5). D0571 becomes D1443 which ends at the Park boundary as a trailhead that provides access into Davis Canyon. According to the National Park Service sign near the highway it is 9 miles to Davis Canyon. Based on a GIS measurement along the designated route, it is about 7.6 miles from the highway to the trailhead for Davis Canyon. The boundary at the Davis Canyon trailhead is marked by a fence line with a space wide enough to allow hikers to pass through.

Another designated route, D0494, leads to Lavender Canyon. This access point is about 14 miles from the highway as measured in GIS. The National Park Service allows vehicle access into Lavender Canyon by permit only. Visitors can obtain a code to open the lock on the gate that blocks access into the Park, from the Canyonlands Needles District Visitor Center.

Two other designated routes end near the Park boundary, but offer no access into the Park. One designated road, County Road D4858 forks to the west from Davis/Lavender road about 5.2 miles (GIS measurement) south of the highway. This road ends about 200 feet from the Park boundary. The end of the road is signed. Just south of, and somewhat parallel to D4858 is a sandy draw wide enough for vehicles all the way to the Park boundary. The boundary is not signed or fenced at this location. A second designated road, County Road D 0497 reaches the Park boundary from a section of land managed by the State of Utah. The BLM has no control over roads on the State sections. The Park boundary is marked on the ground by a four strand

barb-wire fence in areas that are accessible to livestock. The BLM was notified that incursions into the Park occurred during the October 2013 government shut-down. This is the only recorded incidence of incursion into Canyonlands National Park that the BLM is aware of.

Dugout Ranch, a 5,200 acre parcel of land owned by The Nature Conservancy, is located between the highway and the Davis/Lavender Canyon area. Most of the property is centered along, or parallels, Indian Creek, however there are two detached portions of the ranch that are located to the west of the main property. One piece of land is located east of South Six Shooter Peak and the other is located off the northwest side of Bridger Jack Mesa (see Map 5 in Appendix A). The main private property is fenced with barb-wire fencing and posted with signs. The North Cottonwood Road, County Road B017 crosses the Dugout Ranch property and then parallels the Ranch property along North Cottonwood Canyon. Two detached pieces of Ranch property in the Davis and Lavender Canyon areas and Bridger Jack Mesa area are crisscrossed by designated Class D roads. No incursions into Dugout Ranch property have been brought to the attention of the BLM by The Nature Conservancy or the Redd family.

All of the roads in this area are used by ATV riders, four wheel drive vehicle riders, mountain bike riders and even hikers. Climbers use the Davis and Lavender Canyon roads to access North and South Six Shooter Peaks. Climbing also occurs on the cliffs of Bridger Jack Mesa however climbers tend to access the area from the North Cottonwood Road.

Like all other recreational activities that occur in southeast Utah, ATV/OHV use is on the rise. The typical expectations of this user group include scenery, naturalness, seeing a new area, and remoteness. Socializing within one's group is also identified as a high expectation of this user group. Typical users are not characterized as risk takers. The primary management priorities of this user group are to:

- protect natural resources;
- not close or restrict use on any existing routes;
- provide new trails;
- mark and sign popular routes;
- let existing trails get more difficult; and
- emphasize information and educational approaches to minimize impacts and to inform and educate OHV recreationists (Reiter and Blahna, 1998).

### **3.3.6 Visual Resources**

- Will the proposed trail and associated site developments create visually contrasting impacts that alter the landscape character, including potential impacts to views of Indian Creek from the highway?
- Will the proposed trail and site developments meet the VRM objectives for the project area?

The proposed project area is located on the rolling shrub and grasslands of Indian Creek, north and east of US Highway 211. Indian Creek consists of a broad, gently rolling valley bracketed by the sandstone cliffs of Harts Point to the northeast and Bridger Jack Mesa to the southwest. The valley is bisected by both the major thoroughfare of Highway 211 and Indian Creek itself. From Highway 211 interior of the valley is a classic western landscape with panoramic vistas, towering sandstone cliffs and spires, and rolling grasslands. Indian Creek is widely known for its visual appeal, and has been featured in major motion pictures and commercials due to the dramatic landscape.

The predominant lines in the foreground of the valley are the soft undulations of the valley floor and the winding riparian corridor flanking the creek, but strong horizontal and vertical sandstone cliffs and spires dominate the horizons. The immediate landscape is mostly a smooth, fine-textured gray-green sagebrush scrubland with some beige and gold grass. The adjacent massive landscape features provide high contrast in the form of coarse gray-purple, red-orange, and buff cliffs and spires. The southeast-northwest axis of Highway 211 adds a distinct band of light gray that directs the eye up the valley to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. There are few structures, and the area is substantially natural in character.

Indian Creek receives a combination of use from climbers, ATV/OHV enthusiasts, and visitors passing through on the way to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. This range of individuals defines the casual observer.

The proposed project is in Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes II and III (Monticello RMP, 2008). The objectives of these classes are to retain the existing character of the landscape or to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low for Class II or moderate for Class III. Map 9 in Appendix A shows the VRM classes and the Key Observation Points locations.

The proposed project was subjected to a thorough visual contrast rating evaluation. Ten potential Key Observation Points (KOPs) were identified through a combination of GIS analysis and field observation. The KOPs were selected to encompass all major travel routes and observation points, and also to target specific subsets of casual observers common to the Indian Creek area. Visual Contrast Ratings Forms (BLM Form 8400-4) were completed for the remaining six KOPs. The findings of the Visual Contrast Rating process are described in detail in Appendix F.

### **3.3.7 Wilderness Characteristics**

- How would the trail impact the lands with wilderness characteristics values and inventoried acres in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

The BLM defines “wilderness characteristics” as lands having naturalness, sufficient size, and possessing outstanding opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation. “Natural” lands and resources are affected primarily by the forces of nature, and the imprint of

human activity is substantially unnoticeable. Lands that clearly lack wilderness characteristics are those lands that lack the naturalness criterion because they have extensive surface disturbance and/or do not meet the size criterion of 5,000 acres or any of the size exceptions (BLM, 2012). For the BLM, inventories that identify lands with wilderness characteristics is an administrative process, and does not imply a recommendation regarding wilderness or wilderness study area (WSA) designation or alter management of these lands.

The proposed ATV trail is located on lands identified within America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA). It is also located within what is called Upper Indian Creek in the wilderness character survey that was evaluated as part of the Initial Wilderness Inventory in 1979. The area was found to be unnatural due to 0.5 miles of road, some evidence of past minerals activities and range improvements, especially fences. The area was not recommended for intensive inventory. As part of its 2008 RMP effort, Monticello BLM reexamined all areas then proposed by external groups for wilderness. Upper Indian Creek was not proposed for wilderness internally or externally during scoping for the RMP effort. Similarly, the area had not been proposed for wilderness leading up to the earlier 1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory. For these reasons, the area was not re-examined for wilderness characteristics as part of the 2008 RMP effort.

On December 22, 2011, Monticello BLM received new information from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), pursuant to BLM Manual 6310, contending that an area potentially affected by the proposed ATV trail possessed the wilderness characteristics of naturalness, size, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and/or solitude. Pursuant to the policy outlined in Manual 6310, the BLM undertook an on-the-ground inventory of the Indian Creek Wilderness Characteristics Area submitted by SUWA, in order to ascertain whether the area possessed the aforementioned wilderness characteristics. On the basis of several field trips from April, 2012, through March, 2013, BLM determined that an area of 6,350 acres possessed these wilderness characteristics (Appendix A Map-10). In previous inventories of the Monticello Field Office, BLM had determined that 582,360 acres of BLM-managed lands possessed wilderness characteristics. The new findings for Indian Creek, when added to this previous acreage, account for 1.08 per cent of all BLM lands within the Monticello Field Office boundaries determined to possess wilderness characteristics. Appendix G contains the signed findings.

## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 addresses direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the Alternatives A, B, and C for each affected resource. Temporary impacts would last less than one year. Short-term impacts would last from 1 to 5 years. Long-term impacts would last more than five years. A small impact means that the environmental effect is not detectable, or is so minor that it will neither destabilize, nor noticeably alter, any important attribute of the resource. A moderate impact means that the environmental effect is sufficient to alter noticeably, but not to destabilize, important attributes of the resource. A large impact means that the environmental effect is clearly noticeable and sufficient to destabilize important attributes of the resource.

The impact analyses presented in this chapter incorporate the trail design features outlined in Chapter 2.0 for Alternatives A, B and C. For the analysis, BLM staff used existing data, science, current methodologies, professional judgments, levels of use, and projected actions.

### **4.2 General Analysis Assumptions**

- Implementation of the authorized alternative(s) would take place in spring of 2017. The trail design, construction and maintenance standards would be the same under a ROW grant or a trail designation in the travel plan.
- The trail design features would be implemented during the construction and use of the ATV trail for all alternatives.
- Some disturbance would occur outside of the trail tread width (Alternative A = 60 inches; Alternative B and C = 65-inches), to allow ATVs to pass and for installation of signs and maintenance activities.

### **4.3 Direct and Indirect Impacts**

Direct effects are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect effects are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.

#### **4.3.1 Alternative A -“Preferred Alternative” from 2012 EA**

Under Alternative B two options are being considered. The first option is to issue a ROW to the County, the second option, based on public comment is to not issue a ROW and instead designate the proposal as trail in the Monticello Travel Plan.

##### **4.3.1.1 Cultural Resources**

- What are the potential impacts to cultural resources along the proposed ATV route and along the designated routes the trail would connect to?



Cultural resources, prehistoric and historic, are non-renewable resources. In the context of this cultural resources analysis, direct effects refer to those effects that could occur to known or unknown sites as a result of surface disturbing activities (e.g. construction of the trail). All other potential impacts to cultural resources are considered indirect. The categorization of direct and indirect impacts does not imply any greater or lesser degree of consequence, importance, or effect.

An adverse effect is found when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic property that qualify the property for inclusion on the NRHP in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Class III inventories have been conducted for the evaluation of direct effects along the proposed ATV trail route. The proposed ATV trail avoids direct effects to sites. A determination of no adverse effect on historic properties has been made for the proposed ATV trail.

Authorization of the ATV trail could increase the use on designated routes that the ATV trail would connect to. This increase in use could lead to an increase in site visitation which could increase the impacts of vandalism on prehistoric and historic sites, and lead to an increase in the unauthorized collection of cultural resources and artifacts in the area. Impacts would likely increase in the future as the area draws new visitors in general for motorized or non-motorized activities.

Nickens et.al (1981) in a *Survey of Vandalism to Archaeological Resources in Southwestern Colorado* found that the principal factors affecting vandalism to archaeological sites were the density, distribution, and visibility of archaeological resources in the project area and the relative ease by which access may be gained to sites. Nickens categorizes vandalism as either intentional or incidental. Incidental damage results from surface disturbance for activities other than collection of cultural resources. Intentional vandalism includes such activities as hobby collecting, wanton destruction, and commercial collection of cultural materials for resale.

With approval, construction, and use of the proposed ATV trail, known cultural resource sites in and along the designated routes would be subject mainly to incidental or unintentional damage from persons visiting sites out of curiosity, as well as intentional vandalism, mainly by hobby collecting of surface artifacts. More frequent visitation along the designated routes would tend to discourage larger scale commercial looting that would require digging by increasing the potential for discovery and reporting of unauthorized digging, collecting, and transportation of cultural materials on ATVs and UTVs.

A potential beneficial impact would be that a greater number of visitors would be informed on the historical and scientific value of cultural resources through information provided at the proposed ATV parking areas (see Section 2.2.1).

#### **4.3.1.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas**

- How would the floodplains on Indian Creek at the proposed mitigation route be affected?
- What methods would be used to keep riders of ATVs from driving in Indian Creek?

- How much of the Riparian Area would be affected?
- Would an ATV trail across Indian Creek be in conformance with the Monticello RMP? Specifically, will it meet Riparian Resources, Riparian Action RIP-5?

Under Alternative A, the proposed ATV route does not cross any floodplains or riparian areas. Segment 4 crosses two ephemeral washes which do not have any defined floodplains or riparian areas associated with them. Therefore there would be no impacts to floodplains or riparian areas.

#### **4.3.1.3 Lands and Realty**

- What are the effects of issuing a ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

Under the MFO RMP, 1,388,191 acres are managed as "limited to designated routes," and 393,895 acres are managed as closed to OHV use. No cross country use of vehicles is allowed within the MFO. With the Proposed Action the 2007 closure order on 1,871 acres would be lifted. The presently closed area would be managed under the MFO RMP as limited to designated routes and 5.2 miles of trail would be designated as open to motorized use. The 5.2 miles of proposed trail would increase the miles of designated motorized roads and trails in the MFO from 2,822 miles to 2,827.2 miles, about 0.18 percent. The miles of designated ATV trails in the MFO would increase from 16.8 miles (11.4 on BLM) to 22 miles, a 31 percent increase.

The proposed trail would be part of the diversity of trails desired by San Juan County. It would provide new loop opportunities that would help address motorized recreationists desire for a more extensive trail system. The new trail opportunity would meet primary management priorities of ATV users of protecting natural resources, providing new trails, and emphasizing information and education on natural resources for OHV recreationists (Reiter and Blahna 1998).

Under Alternative A, the ROW would be 10 feet wide and 5.2 miles (27,456 feet) long. The ROW acreage would be 6.3 acres. The design features described in Alternative A would be attached as stipulations to the ROW. All design feature activities would be conducted in coordination with the BLM.

If the route as described in Alternative A is designated as a motorized trail in the Travel Plan without the issuance of a ROW, the design features described in Alternative A would be the responsibility of the BLM. Maintenance would be conducted as described in Appendix O of the Monticello RMP. Though the trail itself would be 60-inches wide, the designation would be for 10 feet to accommodate a maintenance corridor.

The BLM can revoke a ROW or "un-designate" a travel route if the route cannot be managed as proposed.

If an ATV trail is authorized under Alternative A, the direct and indirect effects of that authorization would be the same whether a ROW is issued to San Juan County, or the route is

designated under the Travel Plan without the issuance of a ROW. Authorization of Alternative A would add 5.2 miles to the Travel Plan.

#### **4.3.1.4 Noise**

A majority of the recreational user groups in the Indian Creek SMRA come there for a more backcountry experience. Part of the backcountry experience is a relatively quiet landscape. Even ATV users appreciate a quiet setting once they have reached their destination to picnic or hike, just as a climber does once they have reached their destination to climb. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4, several factors affect the propagation of noise from a given source. These factors are distance from the source, atmospheric conditions, ground type and topography. An ATV is omnidirectional point source of sound that moves across the landscape; sound waves radiate in all directions away from the ATV. The sound waves radiating out from the point source will do so in an uneven manner, because of the ATV's proximity to a rock outcrop, or one side of the vehicle is shielded by vegetation, or as the ATV drops down into a valley or behind a ridge, the sound waves will travel differently and the ATV would sound louder or quieter depending on the sound receptor's position relative to the moving vehicle.

To assess what the noise level of an ATV would be at points along the proposed ATV trail and on designated travel routes that access Davis and Lavender Canyons a GIS map was made showing the GIS routes and random points were mapped on the ATV trail by alternative and along designated routes as ATV noise source points. The ATV noise source points are described below:

- Point 1 is located on the proposed ATV trail and its junction with road D1453, northeast of Hamburger Rock Campground.
- Point 2 is located at about the mid-point of the proposed trail as described in Alternative A in the EA.
- Point 3 is located at about the mid-point of the proposed trail as described in Alternative B in the EA.
- Point 4 is located at the junction of the proposed trail with road D0570. This road accesses Creek Pasture Campground.
- Point 5 is located at about the mid-point of the proposed trail as described in Alternative C in the EA.
- Point 6 is located at the junction of road D1443 and D1297.
- Point 7 is located about 1.0 mile from the Davis Canyon Trailhead at the boundary for Canyonlands National Park.
- Point 8 is located about 1.58 miles from the Lavender Canyon entrance into Canyonlands National Park.
- Point 9 is located on road D0459 about 1.8 miles from the North Cottonwood Road.
- Point 10 is located at the junction of roads D0459 and D0498.

Noise receptor points were placed at random points along the boundary of Canyonlands National Park, and climbing walls close to the proposed trail and the designated routes that the trail would

connect to. The climbing walls selected are 75 Cairns, Back Wall, Cliffs of Insanity, North and South Sixshooter Peaks, and Bridger Jack Mesa Wall. The analysis for The Wall is included in the analysis for the 75 Cairns wall because the two walls are right next to each other, and the difference in sound levels heard from one wall compared to the other, would likely not be perceptible to the human ear. All other climbing walls are located far enough away, with enough topographical barriers, from the proposed trail and designated roads in question, to not be included in the analysis. A receptor point was placed on the map at the Dugout Ranch buildings, Hamburger Rock, Creek Pasture and Superbowl Campgrounds and the Bridger Jack Mesa dispersed camping area. See Map 11 in Appendix A to see the locations of the climbing walls, source and receiver points.

Next, using GIS, a straight line was drawn and measured between a point source and a receptor. This measurement in feet was placed into the calculation in the Engineering Page website ([http://www.engineeringpage.com/calculators/noise/distance\\_dB\(A\).html](http://www.engineeringpage.com/calculators/noise/distance_dB(A).html)) and the calculation was run, generating a decibel measurement for the receptor. Table 4-1 shows the distance between a point to the receptor and the decibel measurement the receptor would hear if they were standing in direct line of sight of the ATV. Changes in ground type, vegetation, and topographical barriers were not taken into account. Also, the variability, among engine types was not accounted for. Some engines are louder at 100 dBA and some are quieter at 91 dBA. If all factors were taken into account, the sound levels generated by an ATV would be much lower than those in the direct line attenuation calculation, presented below.

Table 4-1: Sound levels at Receptor Points from Points along the Proposed ATV Trail and Designated Routes

Point Location Number (Sound Level 100 dB(A))	Distance Between Point of Sound Generation and Observer (miles)	Receptor Point	Sound Level at Receptor Point* (dB(A))
Point 1	0.24	Hamburger Rock Campground	40.3
Point 1	2.88	Park Boundary 1	18.7
Point 1	3.87	75 Cairns Wall	16.1
Point 1	4.91	Back Wall	14.1
Point 1	4.57	Cliffs of Insanity	14.7
Point 1	2.44	Creek Pasture Campground	20.1
Point 1	4.00	Superbowl Campground	15.8
Point 2	1.90	Hamburger Rock Campground	22.3
Point 2	3.77	Park Boundary 1	16.4
Point 2	2.24	75 Cairns Wall	20.9
Point 2	3.33	Back Wall	17.4
Point 2	2.85	Cliffs of Insanity	18.8
Point 2	0.75	Creek Pasture	30.4

Point Location Number (Sound Level 100 dB(A))	Distance Between Point of Sound Generation and Observer (miles)	Receptor Point	Sound Level at Receptor Point* (dB(A))
		Campground	
Point 2	4.01	South Six Shooter peak	15.8
Point 2	3.17	North Six Shooter Peak	17.9
Point 2	2.51	Superbowl Camping Area	17.6
Point 3	1.37	Hamburger Rock Campground	25.2
Point 3	2.65	Park Boundary 1	19.4
Point 3	1.41	Creek Pasture Campground	24.9
Point 3	3.18	75 Cairns Wall	17.8
Point 3	4.15	Back Wall	15.5
Point 3	3.54	Cliffs of Insanity	16.9
Point 3	3.60	South Six Shooter peak	16.8
Point 3	2.46	North Six Shooter Peak	20.1
Point 3	2.80	Superbowl Camping Area	18.9
Point 4	2.77	Hamburger Rock Campground	19.0
Point 4	3.99	Park Boundary 1	15.9
Point 4	0.28	Creek Pasture Campground	38.9
Point 4	1.96	75 Cairns Wall	22.0
Point 4	2.76	Back Wall	19.1
Point 4	2.00	Cliffs of Insanity	21.9
Point 4	2.93	South Six Shooter peak	18.5
Point 4	2.40	North Six Shooter Peak	20.3
Point 4	1.42	Superbowl Camping Area	24.8
Point 5	3.49	Hamburger Rock Campground	17.0
Point 5	4.64	Park Boundary 1	14.6
Point 5	0.83	Creek Pasture Campground	29.5
Point 5	1.67	75 Cairns Wall	23.4
Point 5	2.39	Back Wall	20.3
Point 5	1.30	Cliffs of Insanity	25.6
Point 5	2.77	South Six Shooter peak	19.0
Point 5	2.69	North Six Shooter Peak	19.3
Point 5	0.84	Superbowl Camping Area	29.4
Point 6	5.60	Hamburger Rock	13.4
Point 6	5.33	Park Boundary 1	13.4
Point 6	3.68	Creek Pasture Campground	16.6
Point 6	4.36	75 Cairns Wall	15.1
Point 6	4.37	Back Wall	15.1
Point 6	2.13	Cliffs of Insanity	21.3

Point Location Number (Sound Level 100 dB(A))	Distance Between Point of Sound Generation and Observer (miles)	Receptor Point	Sound Level at Receptor Point* (dB(A))
Point 6	2.41	Park Boundary 2	20.2
Point 6	0.79	South Six Shooter peak	29.9
Point 6	2.25	North Six Shooter Peak	20.8
Point 6	3.41	Park Boundary 3	17.2
Point 6	4.07	Davis Canyon Park Entrance	15.7
Point 6	5.01	Dugout Ranch Buildings	13.9
Point 6	2.57	Bridger Jack Mesa Wall	19.7
Point 6	2.59	Bridger Jack Camping Area	19.6
Point 7	7.51	75 Cairns Wall	10.4
Point 7	7.59	Back Wall	10.3
Point 7	6.42	Cliffs of Insanity	11.7
Point 7	5.34	Superbowl Camping Area	13.3
Point 7	3.20	South Six Shooter Peak	17.8
Point 7	2.62	Park Boundary 2	19.5
Point 7	2.61	Park Boundary 3	19.6
Point 7	0.92	Davis Canyon Park Entrance	28.6
Point 7	5.89	Dugout Ranch Buildings	12.5
Point 8	1.09	Lavender Canyon Park Entrance	27.1
Point 8	5.09	Bridger Jack Mesa Wall	13.8
Point 8	5.39	Bridger Jack Camping Area	13.2
Point 9	0.21	Bridger Jack Mesa Wall	41.4
Point 9	0.18	Bridger Jack Camping Area	42.8
Point 10	1.84	Bridger Jack Mesa Wall	22.6

\*Note: These decibel measurements are a general calculation of a point source emitting 100 decibels of sound as a hemisphere and the attenuation of that sound measurement a given distance from a receptor point. This is a line of site, point to point calculation. Topography, ground type, and atmospheric conditions are not included. Also elevation above the point source is not included in the calculation.

Decibels do not directly add together. For example, an ATV that produces 91 decibels and an ATV that produces 100 decibels when added together does not equal 191 decibels. The difference between the two decibels would be 9, therefore, from Table 4-2 below the total calculated level is 1 decibel higher, so the decibels would be 101. The sound level at the receptor points would be slightly louder if more than one ATV were travelling together along any given route.

Table 4-2: Difference Between Two Sound Levels and the Addition to a Higher Level (dBA)

Difference Between Two Sound Levels (dBA)	Addition Factor to a Higher Level (dBA)
0	3
1	3
2	2
3	2
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	1
8	1
9	1
10 and Over	0

Based on this general analysis, the closer the receptor would be to the proposed ATV trail or a designated route, the more noise could be heard from the ATV. Most of the measurements are below the day/night average of 35 dBA measured for wilderness (see Table 3-6 Average Ambient Noise Levels for Various Land Uses Source). The sound from an ATV at this level may be perceived by the listener, but it would get lost among other sounds in the environment.

The decibel measurement estimated for Hamburger Rock Campground from Point 1 of 40.3 would likely be heard by campers at Hamburger Rock. This noise would generally be close to the ambient sound levels of a rural residential area (see Table 3-6 Average Ambient Noise Levels for Various Land Uses Source). The design features in Chapter 2.0 would help reduce ATV sound levels in the Hamburger Rock Campground.

The decibels received at Creek Pasture Campground range from 16.6 to 38.9. Creek Pasture is situated at the bottom of a shallow draw. It is bounded on the south, east and north by low ridges that are situated between the campground and all proposed alternatives. These low ridges act as barriers, so it is unlikely that ATVs on the proposed trail described in Alternatives A, B and C would be heard by those within the campground. The design features in Chapter 2.0 would further help reduce ATV sound levels in the Creek Pasture Campground.

ATVs sound may be heard by rock climbers on the North and South Six Shooter Peaks. As with other areas, the sound level of an ATV travelling along the designated routes would be intermittent as the ATVs travel across the landscape. Also, depending on where the ATV is on the designated road relative to the peak, a climber may not hear the ATV at all because of natural sound barriers such as ridges, vegetation and a sandy travel route. The sound would also be at levels that a climber focused on climbing would not notice the sound. However, a climber

standing on top of the peaks or belaying their climbing partner may hear a little intermittent background noise from an ATV, but it would only be a little above the sound level generated by rustling leaves (See Table 3-5 Typical Sound levels).

Sound heard along the boundary of Canyonlands National Park, again would vary. The highest sound level at the Park Boundary would be at the trailheads for Davis and Lavender Canyons. For the most part, the sound levels detected along the Park Boundary would not be overly intrusive to the visitor.

The Dugout Ranch buildings were used as the receptor. It is not likely that anyone at the Dugout Ranch buildings would hear an ATV travelling to Lavender Canyon or the road along the southwest side of Bridger Jack Mesa, because the mesa is tall enough to be a barrier for sound. It is more likely that the Dugout Ranch building would receive sound from the highway, or the North Cottonwood Road, than hear any ATV-generated sound related to the proposed ATV trail.

#### **4.3.1.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?

##### **4.3.1.5.1 Camping**

The authorization of Alternative A would have a minimum impact on camping in the area. Hamburger Rock, Creek Pasture, Superbowl and Bridger Jack are available for everyone to camp and currently there are no ATV restrictions at these campgrounds and camping areas. The proposed ATV route avoids all campgrounds and camping areas. Hamburger Rock Campground is used the most by ATV riders. Only a few ATV users camp in Creek Pasture. Superbowl and Bridger Jack camping areas see little use by ATV riders, mainly because the campsites are small and do not have the room to accommodate vehicles with trailers. The design features common to all alternatives regarding posting a 5 mile per hour speed limits in Hamburger Rock and Creek Pasture Campgrounds should limit the dust that is raised by ATVs moving in and out of the campgrounds. ATV use would be limited to travel from the campground to designated routes in the area and back to the campsite in the campground. Joy riding within the campground would be discouraged and if problems are identified, the BLM would consider closing the campground to ATV use.

As described in Chapter 3, dispersed designated campsites are generally used by climbers on the southeast end of Indian Creek and ATV riders on the northwest end of Indian Creek. There may be some mixing of user groups on occasion, but because of the natural dispersion of use, conflicts between ATV riders and other user groups are not expected to increase due to the proposed ATV trail, but would remain at present levels.



#### **4.3.1.5.2 Rock Climbing**

Construction of the ATV trail as proposed under Alternative A would have little impact on climbers. Because the climbers would generally be on or at the base of the cliffs, while the ATVs would be on the trail and designated routes. The most popular climbing walls are located toward the southeast end of Indian Creek (Donnelly Canyon is 8 miles southeast of the proposed trail) and in North Cottonwood Canyon (Bridger Jack Mesa climbing walls are about 5 miles south of the proposed trail) where the approaches to climbing routes are short. The climbing walls closest to the proposed ATV trail under Alternative A are The Wall, 75 Cairns, Back Wall and Cliffs of Insanity. The proposed ATV trail is about 2.3 miles west of the base of 75 Cairns Wall, 2.7 miles from Back Wall and about 1.75 miles west of Cliffs of Insanity. Designated route D0575 is located about halfway between the proposed ATV trail and these climbing walls. It is possible that climbers on these walls will hear some ATV generated noise, just as on some days they may hear vehicles on the highway and on road D0575. See Section 4.3.1.3 regarding noise.

#### **4.3.1.5.3 Mechanized Use**

All of the designated routes are open for mechanized use. Mountain bike use is mixed with the other users of the designated routes. The BLM has not received complaints from any user groups about this mixed use and assumes that not enough Mountain bikers visit the area, and that the use by motorized vehicles is not to the degree of conflict.

#### **4.3.1.5.4 Motorized Use**

All designated routes in the Indian Creek SRMA allow use by all classes of OHVs, with the exception of an approximate 1.8 mile of the Falls Missile trail west of Road B122. By precluding use of OHVs which are wider than 65 inches, the proposed ATV trail would provide a somewhat unique opportunity for ATV enthusiasts to ride on an ATV trail between the Lockhart/Hamburger Rock area and Davis/Lavender Canyon and Bridger Jack Mesa areas. For the 2014 Utah State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan a resident survey was completed by telephone and online to obtain a representative sample both statewide and within each of the seven planning districts. ATV/4-wheeling was the 6th highest out of 26 activities mentioned by survey respondents when they were asked to state the three most common recreational activities they had participated in over the past 12 months (Utah SCORP 2014). Motorized trail areas for ATVs and snowmobiles, and improved camping areas are the most needed facilities or facility improvements throughout the state of Utah. The State was divided into seven Planning Areas. ATV/OHV trails and areas are the top recreational facility needs out of the 12 categories identified in the Southeastern area. This proposal would enhance the recreational experience of this particular recreational user group.

The proposed ATV trail begins about 0.5 mile north of Hamburger Rock Campground on the east side of County Road B122. From here the proposed ATV runs east and then turns southeast to intersect designated route D1453 about 0.4 miles east of the Hamburger Rock Campground.

Designated road D1453 runs immediately adjacent to the north side of the Hamburger Rock Campground and ends about 1.4 miles northeast of the campground. This proposed ATV route would also intersect designated route D0570 about 0.3 miles southwest of Creek Pasture Campground. The proposed ATV route would avoid both campgrounds; however, intersections with the designated routes would allow campers camping in these campgrounds access to the proposed trail.

The proposed ATV trail could potentially result in more cross country travel by users not adhering to the trail. However, the proposal specifies that signs would be placed to clearly mark the route and ensure off trail use does not occur. Signs would also be replaced and maintained as necessary. In addition, the trail would be monitored during the peak season of use to identify off trail use and to take corrective actions. Maintenance work on the ATV route if approved, would occur in the late fall or winter season when visitation is relatively low. The work would be short term (estimated one day) and would occur during day-time hours which would minimize visitor conflict.

If constructed, the proposed ATV trail could slightly increase the number of riders using the area. BLM acknowledges that availability and use of a new ATV trail could be very popular in the first few years and with the popularity tapering off in successive years. The objective of the County in applying for a right-of-way for this trail was to provide a safe connector route between other roads and trails. This alternative would meet that objective. In making that connection, between Lockhart Basin area and the Lavender-Davis area, there would be potential for a slight long term increase in use. Motorized route users can already park just off the highway 211/B1291 and drive south on the Lavender and Davis roads. Based on recent experience with other new routes on public lands managed by BLM in San Juan County, including the Cedar Mesa ATV trail, we do not anticipate a large increase in visitation over the long term. Based on conversations with BLM field staff, construction and designation of the Cedar Mesa ATV Trail connected popular riding areas, but did not appreciably increase ATV use in the area.

Despite this, some conflicts could occur between motorized and non-motorized recreational users along the proposed ATV trail or other roads. Hikers and horseback riders using the proposed ATV trail may encounter ATV activity trail. However, these encounters would be brief as ATVs pass by on the trail or as hikers and horseback riders cross the trail.

Motorized use in the Davis/Lavender Canyon and Bridger Jack areas is on designated roads only. Use is heaviest in the spring and fall. As with motorized use in other parts of Indian Creek, travelling these roads generates dust and engine noise. Indirect effects to the recreational

experience or other types of recreationists, especially climbers and hikers, could come from the noise of ATVs using this trail.

None of the designated routes in the Davis/Lavender Canyon areas directly parallel the Park boundary. These two roads approach the Park at an oblique angle from the northeast and do not approach the boundary until the Park access points. The noise generated from ATVs would occur at the two designated access points into the Park and at the terminus of two other roads that end near the Park boundary. Because of the angle of approach, distance and topography between the roads in the Davis/Lavender area, and the Park boundary, it is assumed that any sound generated by ATVs would be attenuated and be within acceptable rural day-night average levels of 40 dBA (EPA, 1974). See Section 4.3.1 for an analysis on noise.

The BLM has been made aware of only one incursion into the Park and this occurred during the Government shutdown in October 2013. No other cases have been reported to the BLM. Incursions into the Park are not expected to increase beyond what has occurred in the past if the proposed ATV trail is approved. Some off road use does occur in the Davis/Lavender Canyon areas especially in sandy stream bottoms. While the BLM currently maintains signage, the design features would require that the BLM cooperate with the Park Service and work to more effectively sign and manage against off route travel and to more completely mark NPS boundaries. If necessary the BLM would help to increase enforcement and install effective barriers in areas that see repeated use. Areas would be re-seeded as necessary to help reclaim disturbance.

Two parking areas with kiosks are proposed. One parking area would be located on the northwestern end of the trail along County B Road B122 and the other parking area would be located on County Road D0571. These parking areas will provide places for ATV riders to stage. The parking areas would be delineated by fencing or another form of effective barrier to prevent user-created expansion. Some information planned to be posted on the kiosks would include a map of designated routes, information on ATV rider ethics, and the importance of floodplains and riparian areas. The kiosk on County Road D0571 would include information on the closure of the national Park to off-highway vehicle use except for road D0494. The signs would provide information on how to obtain permits from Canyonlands National Park.

#### **4.3.1.6 Visual Resources**

- Will the proposed trail and associated site developments create visually contrasting impacts that alter the landscape character, including potential impacts to views of Indian Creek from the highway?
- Will the proposed trail and site developments meet the VRM objectives for the project area?

During construction, temporary visual impacts would result from the visibility of construction equipment and site work. By keeping the duration of the construction to 4 days or less, or alternatively by scheduling construction for low-use summer or winter seasons, visual impacts caused by construction will be negligible.

Post-construction, the contrast created by the new parking areas and associated infrastructure would be negligible in regards to the changes in vegetation, but the structures might cause weak contrast due to adding blocky, randomly-spaced elements with vertical lines, and weak landform contrast would be created in line and form by the delineation of the parking area. Additionally, the vehicles that park to use the area would be visible, though their visual impact would be transitory. In order to minimize the visibility of the structures, kiosks and other features would be constructed of materials that blend with the natural environment minimizing the color and textural contrast they would create.

The contrast created by the 60-inch wide, native surface trail would be negligible in regards to changes in vegetation, line, color and form from all but the closest observation points. In order to minimize the apparent contrast from those closest perspectives, trail construction techniques will include using on-site materials for construction of drainage structures. Vehicles traveling on the route may be visible, but the duration of their visibility from major travel routes and observation points would cause minimal impact to the casual observer.

If Alternative A is implemented according to the outlined design criteria, the change to the existing character of the landscape would conform to Visual Resource Management Class II objectives.

#### **4.3.1.7 Wilderness Character**

- How would the trail impact the lands determined to have wilderness characteristics values in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

The area inventoried and identified as having wilderness characteristics is 6,350 acres in size. Under Alternative A, the north and eastern edge of the ROW, or if designated under the Travel Plan, five feet from center line of the trail, would form a wilderness characteristics inventory boundary. This boundary would divide the proposed wilderness characteristics unit on lands managed by the BLM into two sections, leaving an area consisting of about 4,777.24 acres on the northeast side. This does not meet the size criterion of a roadless area greater than 5,000 acres. The area on the southwest side of the proposed ATV trail would be 1,572.76 acres in size. These lands would no longer possess wilderness characteristics because they would not satisfy the 5000 acre size criterion for a stand-alone unit.

### **4.3.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action**

Under Alternative B two options are being considered. The first option is to issue a ROW to the County, the second option, based on public comment is to not issue a ROW and instead designate the proposal as trail in the Monticello Travel Plan.

#### **4.3.2.1 Cultural Resources**

- What are the potential impacts to cultural resources along the proposed ATV route and along the designated routes the trail would connect to?

The impacts to prehistoric and historic sites as result of Alternative B would be the same as those described for Alternative A.

#### **4.3.2.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas**

- How would the floodplains on Indian Creek at the proposed mitigation route be affected?
- What methods would be used to keep riders of ATVs from driving in Indian Creek?
- How much of the Riparian Area would be affected?
- Would an ATV trail across Indian Creek be in conformance with the Monticello RMP? Specifically, will it meet Riparian Resources, Riparian Action RIP-5?

Under Alternative B, the proposed ATV route does not cross any floodplains or riparian areas, and therefore not include lands with no surface occupancy. Segment 4 crosses one ephemeral wash which does not have any defined floodplains or riparian areas associated with it. Therefore there would be no impacts to floodplains or riparian areas.

#### **4.3.2.3 Lands and Realty**

- What are the effects of issuing a ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

Under the MFO RMP, 1,388,191 acres are managed as "limited to designated routes," and 393,895 acres are managed as closed to OHV use. No cross country use of vehicles is allowed within the MFO. With the Proposed Action the 2007 closure order on 1,871 acres would be lifted. The presently closed area would be managed under the MFO RMP as limited to designated routes and 5.2 miles of trail would be designated as open to motorized use. The 5.66 miles of proposed trail would increase the miles of designated motorized roads and trails in the MFO from 2,822 miles to 2,827.2 miles, about 0.18 percent. The miles of designated ATV trails in the MFO would increase from 16.8 miles (11.4 on BLM) to 22 miles, a 31 percent increase.

The proposed trail would be part of the diversity of trails desired by San Juan County. It would provide new loop opportunities that would help address motorized recreationists desire for a more extensive trail system. The new trail opportunity would meet primary management priorities of ATV users of protecting natural resources, providing new trails, and emphasizing information and education on natural resources for OHV recreationists (Reiter and Blahna 1998).

Under Alternative B, the ROW would be 12 feet wide and 5.66 miles long (about 29,885 feet). The ROW acreage would be 8.3 acres. The design features described in Alternative B, except for the parking areas, would be attached as stipulations to the ROW. All design feature activities would be conducted in coordination with the BLM.

If the route as described in Alternative B is designated as a motorized trail in the Travel Plan without the issuance of a ROW, the design features described in Alternative B would be the responsibility of the BLM. Maintenance would be conducted as described in Appendix O of the Monticello RMP. Though the trail itself would be 65-inches wide, the designation would be for 12 feet to accommodate a maintenance corridor.

As with Alternative A, under Alternative B, the BLM can revoke a ROW or un-designate a travel route if the route cannot be managed according to the design features. As described under the design features if the trail tread width exceeds 130 inches along 30 percent of the trail or new user-defined routes are established BLM will pursue a variety of options from enforcement to closing the route in the most extreme situation.

If an ATV trail is authorized under Alternative B, the direct and indirect effects of that authorization would be the same whether ROW is issued to San Juan County, or the route is designated under the Travel Plan without the issuance of a ROW. The authorization of Alternative B would add 5.66 miles to the Travel Plan.

#### **4.3.2.4 Noise**

- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?
- How will noise impact other recreationists in the vicinity of the ATV Trail?

The effects of the sound levels generated and received under Alternative B are essentially the same as those generated for Alternative A.

#### **4.3.2.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?

##### **4.3.2.5.1 Camping**

The impacts to campgrounds and campers would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

##### **4.3.2.5.2 Rock Climbing**

The impacts to rock climbing would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

#### **4.3.2.5.3 Mechanized Use**

The impacts to recreationists related to mechanized use would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

#### **4.3.2.5.4 Motorized Use**

The impacts to recreationists related to mechanized use would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

To help prevent incursions into Canyonlands National Park and Dugout Ranch, the BLM would maintain signage and maintain closures of user-created trails and non-designated routes on lands managed by the BLM. Closures would include signs, boulders and possibly fencing and other effective barrier material, and could also include reclamation in the form of raking out tracks and seeding the area with a native seed mix.

#### **4.3.2.6 Visual Resources**

- Will the proposed trail and associated site developments create visually contrasting impacts that alter the landscape character, including potential impacts to views of Indian Creek from the highway?
- Will the proposed trail and site developments meet the VRM objectives for the project area?

During construction, temporary visual impacts would result from the visibility of construction equipment and site work. By keeping the duration of the construction to 4 days or less, or alternatively by scheduling construction for low-use summer or winter seasons, visual impacts caused by construction will be negligible.

Post-construction, the contrast created by the new parking areas and associated infrastructure would be negligible in regards to the changes in vegetation, but the structures might cause weak contrast due to adding blocky, randomly-spaced elements with vertical lines, and weak landform contrast would be created in line and form by the delineation of the parking area. Additionally, the vehicles that park to use the area would be visible, though their visual impact would be transitory. In order to minimize the visibility of the structures, kiosks and other features would be constructed of materials that blend with the natural environment minimizing the color and textural contrast they would create.

The contrast created by the 65-inch wide, native surface trail would be negligible in regards to changes in vegetation, line, color and form from all but the closest observation points. In order to minimize the apparent contrast from those closest perspectives, trail construction techniques will include using on-site materials for construction of drainage structures. Vehicles traveling on the route may be visible, but the duration of their visibility from major travel routes and observation points would cause minimal impact to the casual observer.

If the Alternative B is implemented according to the outlined design criteria, the change to the existing character of the landscape would conform to Visual Resource Management Class II objectives.

#### **4.3.2.7 Wilderness Character**

- How would the trail impact the lands determined to have wilderness characteristics values in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

The area inventoried and identified as having wilderness characteristics is 6,350 acres in size. Under Alternative B, the north and eastern edge of the ROW, or if designated under the Travel Plan, six feet from center line of the trail, would form a wilderness characteristics inventory boundary. This boundary would divide the proposed wilderness characteristics unit on lands managed by the BLM into two sections, leaving an area consisting of about 5,520.24, acres on the northeast side which would retain lands determined to have wilderness characteristics, as it meets the roadless criterion of 5,000 acres or greater. There would still be opportunities for solitude and/or primitive and unconfined recreation in this 5,000 plus acre area (see Appendix G Wilderness Character Inventory). The lands to the southwest side of the ATV trail would not meet the roadless area criterion at 829.76 acres. These lands would no longer possess wilderness characteristics because they would not satisfy the 5000 acre size criterion for a stand-alone unit.

#### **4.3.3 Alternative C – Mitigation Segment**

Under Alternative C two options are being considered. The first option is to issue a ROW to the County, the second option, based on public comment is to not issue a ROW and instead designate the proposal as trail in the Monticello Travel Plan.

##### **4.3.3.1 Cultural Resources**

- What are the potential impacts to cultural resources along the proposed ATV route and along the designated routes the trail would connect to?

The impacts to prehistoric and historic sites as result of Alternative C would be the same as those described for Alternative A.

##### **4.3.3.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas**

- How would the floodplains on Indian Creek at the proposed mitigation route be affected?
- What methods would be used to keep riders of ATVs from driving in Indian Creek?
- How much of the Riparian Area would be affected?
- Would an ATV trail across Indian Creek be in conformance with the Monticello RMP? Specifically, will it meet Riparian Resources, Riparian Action RIP-5?



Under Alternative C, the proposed mitigation segment would cross 1,611 feet of floodplain and riparian area, impacting 0.44 acres. The stream segment where the proposed ATV route would cross is classified as intermittent and not perennial however the No Surface Occupancy designation would apply because the floodplains are considered active. The crossing of Indian Creek is an option that would potentially divert ATV riders away from the access points to Davis and Lavender Canyons as they travel on to Bridger Jack Mesa, by allowing them the option to circle back to the proposed trailhead north of Hamburger Rock.

The trail construction, use and maintenance would directly impact 0.44 acres near Indian Creek. The trail tread width would be 65 inches (5.4 feet) wide and the additional width, 12-feet total, would be a maintenance corridor and allow for the placement of signs.

The proposed crossing would be constructed at a right angle to the floodplain and riparian area to minimize erosion and stream capture during periods of high run-off. Construction of this segment may include the use of a trail cat (i.e. small dozer). Mature cottonwood trees would be avoided during construction activities. Although located to minimize effects on other vegetation, construction would uproot and remove vegetative material to establish the route. This equipment may also be used to cut the wash banks to enable crossing of the drainage. ATV trail use would suppress future plant regrowth within the trail tread through compaction of the soils and the crushing of new vegetation.

These direct effects of trail construction, use and maintenance would likely allow for proper functioning conditions of riparian communities to be maintained, because they are within a narrow linear corridor that would not alter the stream channel morphology and change the functions of the channel appropriate for the climate and landform. However, with the mitigation described in 2.5.2 Floodplain/Riparian Area Mitigation would ensure that any loss of riparian vegetation from trail construction would be compensated with riparian vegetation improvement within the channel.

The potential for ATV users to drive up or down the channel of Indian Creek, or use the banks for “high marking” or hill climbing, or accessing the creek terraces exists, but is considered to be small, as these activities have not been observed at other designated route crossings of Indian Creek, except near the crossing east of Indian Creek Falls. This area is managed by SITLA. For surrounding BLM lands, signage and effective barriers have substantially reduced this high marking or hill climbing activity.

Indirect negative impacts to the floodplains and riparian area near the proposed mitigation segment could be caused by a small percentage of ATV riders driving up and down the Indian Creek channel. Unauthorized use could lead to disturbance to the banks, terraces, and benches of Indian Creek’s floodplains and riparian areas upstream and downstream from the proposed trail. Most of the stream banks along Indian Creek, up and downstream of the proposed mitigation segment are heavily vegetated and the banks are steep. These two factors would tend to constrict

ATV use to the creek channel proper, which is already bare of vegetation because of intermittent stream flow events and limit any potential for riding out of the stream. If off-trail use along the proposed mitigation segment shows impairment of the proper functioning condition of the riparian area, changes stream channel morphology, and destabilizes banks outside of the trail alignment, BLM will pursue a variety of options from enforcement to closing the route in the most extreme situation.

Under Alternative C, a third parking area is proposed. This parking area would be located on the County D Road D0575, in a disturbed area adjacent the road. This parking area would provide ATV users an option to stage at this end of the trail, and drive County D Road D0575 to the north and then loop back on B122. Though road D0575 is open to motorized vehicle use wider than 65 inches, this route is almost impassable to many of these vehicles, due to incised wash crossings and sharp curves. This route would provide ATV users with a pleasant riding experience. The parking area would be delineated by fencing or another form of effective barrier to prevent user-created expansion. Some information planned to be posted on the kiosk here would include a map of designated routes, information on ATV rider ethics, the importance of staying on the designated route, protecting floodplains and riparian areas, and respecting other landowners (including NPS) closures to motorized vehicles.

To answer the question, “Will the action meet the criteria for RMP direction RIP-5”, BLM looked at the RMP Goals and Objectives for Riparian Resources:

- *Manage riparian resources for desired future conditions, ensuring ecological diversity, stability, and sustainability, including the desired mix of vegetation types, structural stages, and landscape/riparian/watershed function and provide for native and special status plant, fish, and wildlife habitats.* - - Construction of this short section of trail will allow BLM to manage for the desired future conditions listed, with no long term effects.
- *Manage riparian areas for properly functioning condition (PFC) and ensure stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate to the local soil type, climate, and landform.* - - The crossing is designed so there will be no long term effects on channel morphology and PFC.
- *Avoid or minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of riparian, wetland and associated floodplains, and preserve and enhance natural and beneficial values.* - - The overall effects to riparian, wetlands and floodplains are minimized and natural and beneficial values would be preserved with implementation of the 3 acres of mitigation described in 2.5.2 Floodplain/Riparian Area Mitigation.

#### **4.3.3.3 Lands and Realty**

- What are the effects of issuing a ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

Under Alternative C, the ROW would be 12 feet wide and 0.72 miles long (3,825 feet) and the

ROW acreage would be 1.05 acres. The design features described in Alternative C, except for the parking area, would be attached as stipulations to the ROW. All design feature activities would be conducted in coordination with the BLM.

If the route as described in Alternative C is designated as a motorized trail in the Travel Plan without the issuance of a ROW, the design features, described in Alternative C would be the responsibility of the BLM, possibly in cooperation with local clubs/user groups. Maintenance would be conducted as described in Appendix O of the Monticello RMP. Though the trail itself would be 65-inches wide, the designation would be for 12 feet to accommodate a maintenance corridor.

As with Alternatives A and B, under Alternative C, the BLM can revoke a ROW or un-designate a travel route if the route cannot be managed according to the design features. As described under the design features if the trail tread width exceeds 130 inches along 30 percent of the trail or if off-trail use occurs three times per mile of trail and this use creates an obvious route (more than one pass at each location), or if off-trail use shows impairment of the proper functioning condition of the riparian area, changes stream channel morphology, and destabilizes banks outside of the trail alignment, BLM will pursue a variety of options from enforcement to closing the route in the most extreme situation. If the trail route was closed the ROW would be revoked.

If an ATV trail is authorized under Alternative C, the direct and indirect effects of that authorization would be the same whether a ROW is issued to San Juan County, or the route is designated under the Travel Plan without the issuance of a ROW. Authorization of Alternative C would add 0.72 miles to the Travel Plan.

#### **4.3.3.4 Noise**

- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?
- How will noise impact other recreationists in the vicinity of the ATV Trail?

This alternative would not be developed as a stand-alone alternative and would be selected with Alternative A or Alternative B. As with Alternatives A and B, the sound level received at receptor points would vary, and depend on several factors as explained in Section 4.3.1.4 Alternative A-Noise.

Table 4-1 lists in Section 4.3.2.4 Noise under Alternative A shows the sound level received at various receptor points. The analysis shows that there may be some areas where an ATV could be heard, however, the ATV sounds would generally be lost among other ambient sounds within the environment.

Designated route D0575 that passes about 1.0 to 1.5 miles away from 75 Cairns Wall and Back Wall. Receptors at 75 Cairns Wall and Back Wall would detect sound levels from an ATV travelling designated road D0575 ranging from about 20 to 27 decibels. The sound levels that

would be received at Cliffs of Insanity would be less than the sound levels received at 75 Cairns Wall and Back Wall. These sounds could possibly be heard by climbers at these walls, if they were purposefully listening for the ATVs, otherwise, the sound level generated by an ATV would be lost among the other ambient sounds within the environment, or could go unnoticed by those involved with other activities besides sitting quietly and listening.

#### **4.3.3.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?

Under Alternative C, all impacts to recreation would be the same as Alternative A.

##### ***4.3.3.5.1 Camping***

The impacts to campgrounds and campers would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

##### ***4.3.3.5.2 Rock Climbing***

The impacts to rock climbing would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

##### ***4.3.3.5.3 Mechanized Use***

The impacts to recreationists related to mechanized use would be the same as those described under Alternative A.

##### ***4.3.3.5.4 Motorized Use***

The benefit of this alternative is that it would lessen the possible increase in numbers in Davis and Lavender Canyon, Bridger Jack Mesa and Dugout Ranch areas and decrease the possibility that users would encroach on the Park boundary. It may also result in being a preferred route for many ATV users because it would provide an alternative route to turn north, away from the highway and give them an opportunity for a loop experience. This loop recreational opportunity is not found with either Alternatives A or B. Trail designs that provide loops are frequently deemed preferable to the “out-and-back” design of the other alternatives because it gives the chance to see or experience different land features throughout the ride. This design also tends to help reduce increased speeds on the return trip as the user has “already seen everything” and just wants to get back to the trailhead. Though Alternative C is a short trail segment, most of the rest of potential impacts to other recreation users and campers would be about the same as those described under Alternatives A or B as this trail segment could be authorized as a component of one of these alternatives.

#### **4.3.3.6 Visual Resources**

- Will the proposed trail and associated site developments create visually contrasting impacts that alter the landscape character, including potential impacts to views of Indian Creek from the highway?
- Will the proposed trail and site developments meet the VRM objectives for the project area?

The impacts to visual resources under Alternative C would be substantially similar to those under Alternative A and B. All measures suggested in Section 2.2.3-Visual Resources should be implemented for Parking Area 3, and the fence crossing should be sourced from similarly unobtrusive materials.

#### **4.3.3.7 Wilderness Character**

- How would the trail impact the lands determined to have wilderness characteristics values in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

This alternative would not be developed as a stand-alone alternative and thus individually would have no impacts on lands with wilderness characteristics. The area inventoried and identified as having wilderness characteristics is 6,350 acres in size. If Alternative C is selected in addition to Alternative A, the north and eastern edge of the ROW, or if designated under the Travel Plan, 5 feet from center line of the trail, would form a wilderness characteristics inventory boundary. This boundary would divide the proposed wilderness characteristics unit on lands managed by the BLM into two sections. Under Alternative A it would reduce the lands to the northeast side of the boundary by about 109.75 acres for a total of 4,667.49 acres. This would leave about 1,682.51 acres to the southwest side of the boundary. Both areas do not meet the 5,000 acre roadless criterion and would be removed from wilderness character inventory.

If Alternative C is selected with Alternative B, the north and eastern edge of the ROW, or if designated under the Travel Plan, 6 feet from center line of the trail, would form a wilderness characteristics inventory boundary. This boundary would divide the proposed wilderness characteristics unit on lands managed by the BLM into two sections. This would leave about 939.51 acres to the southwest side of the boundary. These lands would no longer possess wilderness characteristics because they would not satisfy the 5000 acre size criterion for a stand-alone unit. In addition to Alternative B it would reduce the lands to the northeast side of the boundary by about 109.75 acres leaving a total of 5,410.49 acres. This area to the northeast side of the boundary would be retained in the wilderness character inventory.

#### **4.3.4. Alternative D – No Action**

##### **4.3.4.1 Cultural Resources**

- What are the potential impacts to cultural resources along the proposed ATV route and along the designated routes the trail would connect to?

Under Alternative D the direct and indirect effects associated with the construction of the ATV trail would not occur. However, the cultural sites along the designated routes may still receive effects as general visitation to the area increases from other users.

#### **4.3.4.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas**

- How would the floodplains on Indian Creek at the proposed mitigation route be affected?
- What methods would be used to keep riders of ATVs from driving in Indian Creek?
- How much of the Riparian Area would be affected?

Under Alternative D, a ROW would not be granted to San Juan County, and the ATV route would not be designated under the Monticello Travel Plan. Therefore, the trail would not be constructed including the mitigation segment that crosses the floodplains and riparian area along Indian Creek would not be necessary. No impacts to floodplains and riparian areas would occur. The natural processes acting within the floodplain and riparian area would continue.

#### **4.3.4.3 Lands and Realty**

- What are the effects of issuing a ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

Under Alternative D, a ROW would not be granted to the San Juan County, and the ATV route would not be designated under the Travel Plan. Therefore, the trail would not be constructed and add to the travel routes located in San Juan County, or the Indian Creek SRMA.

#### **4.3.4.4 Noise**

- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?
- How will noise impact other recreationists in the vicinity of the ATV Trail?

Under Alternative D there would be no noise-related impacts from the ATV trail, because it would not be authorized. General noise levels would continue to occur and increase over time with the uses in the area.

#### **4.3.4.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?

Under Alternative D, a ROW would not be granted to San Juan County, or the ATV route would not be designated under the Monticello Travel Plan. Therefore, the trail would not be constructed. Motorized activity near the campgrounds would continue to occur, because these areas are open for motorized access and use. ATV use and other mechanized use would continue to occur on other designated routes within the Indian Creek Special Recreation Management

Area (SRMA). Therefore, recreational user conflicts would continue to be generated along designated routes and within camping areas within the SRMA. Noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park would remain at the current level of potential.

#### **4.3.4.6 Visual Resources**

- Will the proposed trail and associated site developments create visually contrasting impacts that alter the landscape character, including potential impacts to views of Indian Creek from the highway?
- Will the proposed trail and site developments meet the VRM objectives for the project area?

Under Alternative D, the trail would not be constructed, and there would be no impact to visual resources

#### **4.3.4.7 Wilderness Character**

- How would the trail impact the lands determined to have wilderness characteristics values in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

Under Alternative C, a ROW would not be granted to San Juan County, and the ATV route would not be designated under the Monticello Travel Plan. Therefore, the trail would not be constructed. No impacts to the inventoried wilderness characteristics area would occur.

### **4.3.5 Monitoring**

Under all Alternatives monitoring of the trail route would be conducted as follows:

#### ***Cultural Resources***

- Known cultural resource sites would be monitored by BLM personnel and BLM volunteers.
- Designated routes between Canyonlands National Park and Highway 211/B1291 would continue to be a priority for Class III cultural resource inventories. These inventories would be completed as funding becomes available and eligible sites would be added to the monitoring program.

#### ***Floodplains/Riparian Areas***

- Implement frequent checks of the Indian Creek crossing for any evidence of violations of off trail use; it is only about ¼ mile from the intersection with road D0575.
- Work with ATV user groups including sending notifications and making contact at their periodic club meetings stressing the importance of protecting resources, and perhaps entering into an agreement to get their assistance with monitoring the trail.

## ***Trails***

- The BLM would work with the County and partnered user groups to monitor the trails during peak seasons of use, to assess the condition of the trail and identify problem areas which would require more than routine maintenance. These areas would include any off trail use or locations of more substantial washouts, rutting, and soil erosion. As a result of this monitoring, it may be necessary to take corrective actions to prevent off trail use and excessive soil erosion. These actions would include placement of closure signs, barriers, and water control structures. Although unlikely, should it become necessary to correct or repair locations on the trail where substantial wash-outs or rutting occurs, a trail cat (small steel tracked vehicle with a 4 foot blade) to fill in wash-outs and install water control structures such as diversion berms or water bars. The BLM would approve work before taking any corrective actions other than routine maintenance.
- The trail route would be monitored by BLM and San Juan County for noxious and invasive weeds, which would be controlled by the County's licensed applicator.

### **4.4 Cumulative Impacts Analysis**

“Cumulative impacts” are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

“Cumulative impacts” are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

The analysis of cumulative impacts was based on the following assumptions:

- Stock ponds, troughs, and fence lines constructed in support of grazing operations were considered incidental disturbance and not quantified. Livestock grazing and use of the above range improvements are assumed to continue at current levels.
- No active oil and gas wells occur within the Indian Creek SRMA and the pads are old enough to have adequately reclaimed. No seismic work or hardrock mineral exploration is currently proposed in the project area. No oil, gas or potash exploration and development is proposed within the project area at this time.
- Dispersed recreation use occurs, but is not quantified because of the variety of uses (Climbing, hiking, mountain biking, and camping) and the impacts of that dispersed use are considered minimal. Those uses are expected to continue at their current trend levels.
- The Indian Creek is located within the Moab Master Leasing Planning (MLP) area which is currently undergoing an Environmental Impact Statement process. The MLP is evaluating future oil, gas and potash leasing, though currently, no notices of intent to lease for oil and gas occur in the area. There are pending potash prospecting permits, however, how those will be handled are being evaluated in the MLP.



## **4.4.1 Cultural Resources**

### **4.4.1.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for cultural resources consists of the 106,976-acre Indian Creek SRMA because it is the management area for recreational activities that contains the proposed ATV trail. The time frame for the cumulative impact analysis for the cultural resources is 20 years. This covers the time period for a ROW and for the life of the Travel Management Plan.

### **4.4.1.2 Past and Present Actions**

Past and present actions within the Indian Creek SRMA include geophysical projects, oil, gas and uranium exploration, the Falls Missile Trail, three designated campgrounds, two dispersed camping areas, the Donnelly Canyon parking area and various other parking areas for climbing and the parking area for Newspaper Rock.

### **4.4.1.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario**

The only reasonable foreseeable action within the Indian Creek SRMA is the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

### **4.4.1.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, 5.2 miles of ATV trail would be established in an area that has seen little motorized access in the past. This would increase visitation to the area along the trail which could lead to an increase in the number people stopping to hike and look for sites. This would lead to an increase in the potential for vandalism if sites are found. A slight increase in the potential for vandalism could occur along the designated routes with the slight increase in use of the designated routes.

**Alternative B:** Under Alternative B, 5.66 miles of ATV trail would be established in an area that has seen little motorized access in the past. The impacts would be the same as described under Alternative A.

**Alternative C:** Under Alternative C an additional miles 0.72 miles of ATV trail would be added to either Alternative A or Alternative B and would be in an area that has received little motorized access in the past. The impacts would be the same as described under Alternative A.

**Alternative D:** The potential for visitation and vandalism at cultural resource sites will continue under Alternative D, because many visitors already use the designated routes that go toward the Lavender and Davis Canyon Areas, Bridger Jack Mesa Area, or the access to Harts Draw and Indian Creek Falls. Not authorizing the ATV trail would not decrease or eliminate the potential for site visitation or vandalism.

## **4.4.2 Floodplains/Riparian Areas**

### **4.4.2.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for floodplains and riparian consists of the Indian Creek drainage downstream of the United States Forest Service Boundary, which encompasses 64 miles and

1,747 acres because this serves as the basis of watershed functions (RMP, 2008). The time frame for the cumulative impact analysis for floodplains and riparian areas is 30 years. This covers the time period for a ROW and for the likely life of the Travel Management Plan.

#### **4.4.2.2 Past and Present Actions**

There are nine designated routes within the cumulative impact area that have low water crossings across Indian Creek. Two of these crossings are maintained Class B roads. Six are designated routes Class D roads that cross Indian Creek, or parallel the creek within the floodplain and riparian area. One is the Falls Missile ATV/Motorcycle route that also parallels the floodplain and riparian area and crosses Indian Creek five times. In addition, the paved highway (B1291) to Canyonlands National Park crosses Indian Creek, but has a bridge that spans the crossing and associated floodplain and riparian. For the details of each low water crossing refer to Table 3-2 in Section 3.3.1 of this EA. These low water crossings encompass about 4.54 acres of disturbance within the drainage of Indian Creek, which is approximately 0.3 percent of the 1,747 total acres along Indian Creek. Other existing uses such as livestock grazing and recreational activities such as driving, camping, technical rock climbing, bicycling and ATV use are expected to continue at their current trends.

#### **4.4.2.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario**

The only reasonably foreseeable action located within the Indian Creek drainage is Alternative C. Alternative C would add 0.44 acres of disturbance to the drainage of Indian Creek.

#### **4.4.2.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions would result in the disturbance of 4.98 acres to the drainage of Indian Creek.

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A no known additional disturbance would occur within the drainage of Indian Creek. The past and present disturbance of the existing water crossings would not change. Therefore under Alternative A, there would be 4.54 acres of existing disturbance within the drainage of Indian Creek, which is approximately 0.3 percent of the 1,747 cumulative impact area of the Indian Creek drainage.

**Alternative B:** Under Alternative B no known additional disturbance would occur within the drainage of Indian Creek. The past and present disturbance of the existing water crossings would not change. Therefore under Alternative B, there would be 4.54 acres of existing disturbance within the drainage of Indian Creek, which is approximately 0.3 percent of the 1,747 cumulative impact area of the Indian Creek drainage.

**Alternative C:** Alternative C would contribute 0.44 acres to long-term (20 years) cumulative disturbance in the cumulative impact area. Alternative C, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities projected for the cumulative impact area, would be 4.98

acres. This corresponds with 0.3 percent of disturbance within the 1,747-acre cumulative impact area. For the new crossing of Indian Creek, when considered with all other existing crossings would not cause long term impacts to riparian resources or the proper functioning condition, thus the criteria for RMP direction RIP-5, “all long-term impacts can be fully mitigated” would be met.

**Alternative D:** Under Alternative D no additional disturbance would occur within the drainage of Indian Creek. The past and present disturbance of the existing water crossings would not change. Therefore under Alternative D, there would be 4.54 acres of disturbance within the drainage of Indian Creek which is approximately 0.3 percent of the 1,747 cumulative impact area of the Indian Creek drainage.

#### **4.4.3 Lands and Realty**

- What are the effects of issuing a ROW to San Juan County versus the designation of the route under the Travel Plan?

##### **4.4.3.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for Lands and Realty is the entire Monticello Field Office specific to ATV trails. Although not directly connected to this action, some people think that any ATV trail is a similar action that should be analyzed as a Cumulative Effect. Typically the cumulative impact area for Recreation has been determined to be the area of the proposed action. In this case public comment has also identified potential cumulative effects from other similar, but physically unassociated, actions. Therefore, the analysis area for this proposal would include the area of all past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions Field Office wide which involved changes to motorized routes in the Travel Plan implemented or proposed since the 2008 adoption of the RMP and the establishment of the Travel Plan.

Agencies are not required to list or analyze the effects of individual past actions unless such information is necessary to describe the cumulative effect of all past actions combined. Generally, agencies can conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions. In this case, it appears that identification of past actions may be beneficial to illustrate the overall changes to designated motorized routes that have occurred since signing of the 2008 RMP. The time frame for the cumulative impact analysis for recreation is 20 years. This covers the time period for a ROW and for the life of the Travel Management Plan.

##### **4.4.2.2 Past and Present Actions**

Past and Present actions related to Field Office wide ATV trails and changes to the Travel Plan are listed in the following Table 4-3:

Table 4-3. Past Changes to Motorized Routes in the Travel Plan

<b>Route or Area Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Miles Added*</b>	<b>Miles Deleted*</b>
Cedar Mesa ATV Connector Trail ROW	UT-090-06-06	2.71	0.28
Fable Valley Hiking Trail and Trailhead Parking	UT-090-09-09	0.03	0.78
Indian Creek Falls Group Campsite	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2010-0031	0.02	0.51
San Juan Trading Post Stabilization	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2010-021	0.08	0.31
Monticello Field Office Travel Plan Maintenance	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2011-001	0	0.82
Chocolate Drop Road	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2011-041	1.62	0
Hole-in-the-Rock Trail Segment Interpretive Trail	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2012-006	0	2.09
Route Designations for San Juan ATV Safari 2012	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2012-0037	2.34	0
Arch Canyon Road Realignment	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2013-007	0.30	0.25
Five New Designated Routes	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2013-021	10.06	0
Indian Creek ATV Trails (Alt B & C to display the largest possible miles)	UT-090-06-05	6.38**	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>23.54 miles</b>	<b>5.04 miles</b>

\* Documentation of past actions is cited in Chapter 6, References. Mileages were recalculated using GIS Travel Plan data which corrects any length discrepancies between maps and other documents.

\*\* The mileage for Alternatives B and C are included to display the largest possible mileage for cumulative effects.

Table 4-3 shows that since the establishment of the Travel Plan, 23.54 miles of designated routes have been added and 5.04 miles have been deleted through 11 separate NEPA actions. Without this proposal the added trails increased the size of the Travel Plan from 2,820 miles to 2838 or a 1.0 % increase. The additional 6.38 miles for this proposal increases mileage to 2,844 miles or an additional 0.2% increase. The Field Office has undertaken a road and trail use monitoring program to try to establish use trends over time. Results are not substantive enough to date, but input from BLM's field personnel don't indicate that individually, any of the past and actions identified in Table 4-3 have increased OHV use in the immediate area of development.

### 4.7.3.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario

No specific reasonably foreseeable actions within the cumulative impact area have been identified. Since the proposal was first submitted, planning for a hut-to-hut system or a yurt campground has been proposed. The specifics of the proposal are not yet known and thus the cumulative impacts cannot be analyzed at this time. As noted in Section 4.7.2.3 above, each alternative in the EA would add miles and acres to the existing roads and motorized trails in the Indian Creek SRMA. Refer to Table 4-3 in section 4.7.2.2 for mileage and acres.

In the case of ATV routes and possible additions to the Travel Plan, Table 4-4 lists “Reasonably Foreseeable” future actions because BLM has received applications for these routes.

Table 4-4. Future Changes to Motorized Routes in the Travel Plan

Name	Number	Miles Added*	Miles Deleted*
Recapture Canyon ROW	UT-090-06-25	14.32	0
Routes Southwest of Blanding	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2011-034	2.0	0
Red Canyon, Comb Wash and Peters Point Ridge	DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2013-026	4.02	0.06
Totals	---	20.34 miles	0.06 miles

\* Summaries of future actions are posted on the ENBB which may be accessed at <https://www.blm.gov/ut/enbb/index.php>. Mileages are subject to change as these proposals are still under analysis.

### 4.7.3.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Table 4-5 shows that 20.34 miles of designated routes are proposed with 0.6 miles to be deleted. Therefore, the cumulative impact of this action and the past, present actions added to the reasonably foreseeable actions would increase the overall Travel Plan mileage from 2,844 miles to 2,864, or an additional 1.0% increase.

According to the RMP, the San Juan Public Entry and Access Rights organization (SPEAR) submitted a proposal during the scoping period for the RMP for a loop system of roads and trails throughout San Juan County. The submission by SPEAR predates the RMP, but comments made for this current action prompt a discussion of this submission here. While there is not an actual map of the original proposal submitted during RMP scoping, Monticello Field Office does have a later map (dated 2008) which would appear to contain similar information. This map is titled “San Juan County ATV Trail System” with indication that it was produced by SPEAR. A single loop trail system is hand drawn on this map that loops around much of the Monticello Field Office and a portion of the Moab Field Office. SPEAR’s submitted proposal seems to have

included both existing routes and recommendations for new construction (RMP Appendix O.8.2.3). This section of the RMP indicates that the proposal would not be considered as a whole at that time but would be compared with the Travel Plan then under development. For portions not coincident with the Travel Plan BLM would “consider on a site-specific basis NEPA process which routes, connectors, and staging areas are consistent with the goals and objectives of the [RMP].”

This 2008 map indicates use of existing routes and displays recommendations of new construction to make what would amount to an approximate 400 mile “master trail” or motorized loop around San Juan County. Portions of this Indian Creek ATV trail are generally consistent with some portions of this loop. Other routes which are coincident with the map include the Cedar Mesa ATV Connector Trail, portions of the Chocolate Drop Road, the Route Designations for San Juan ATV Safari 2012, portions of the Red Canyon Comb Wash and Peters Point Ridge, and possibly a portion of the Routes Southwest of Blanding.

Cumulatively, all these actions would increase the motorized recreation opportunities, enhance the rider’s experience, and would serve to make it possible to travel on safer routes between various trail networks as they currently exist across the Field Office. These past, present and potential future designations could be considered to implement major portions of the SPEAR proposal. This could be seen as a positive impact to ATV recreational users although there could be indirect impacts on other uses and adjacent land ownerships if not properly managed. Making the assumption that all proposals were approved, it is likely that much of San Juan County could be ridden in a loop fashion on a multi-day, sag-supported trip. However, discussions with users indicate their preference for completing day or weekend trips focused in individual areas throughout the Field Office. Because of this, it is unlikely that designation and subsequent use of any one route individually, or all routes cumulatively, will increase overall use on the Monticello Field Office very much.

The No Action Alternative would not result in an accumulation of Recreation impacts, other than the connecting of ATV trail networks would not be realized.

#### **4.4.4 Noise**

##### **4.4.4.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for noise consists of the 106,976-acre Indian Creek SRMA because it is the management area for recreational activities that contains the proposed ATV trail. The time frame for the cumulative impact analysis for the cultural resources is 20 years. This covers the time period for a ROW and for the life of the Travel Management Plan.

#### **4.4.4.2 Past and Present Actions**

Past and present actions within the Indian Creek SRMA include all designated roads, campgrounds and interpretive areas. Dispersed recreation use occurs, but is not quantified because of the variety of uses (climbing, hiking, mountain biking, and camping) and the impacts of that dispersed use are considered minimal. Noise generated on designated roads and trails, at campgrounds and at interpretive areas within the SRMA is expected to continue at current levels.

#### **4.4.4.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario**

The only reasonably foreseeable action within the Indian Creek SRMA is the proposed ATV Trail.

#### **4.4.4.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, noise would be generated by ATVs along the proposed ATV trail. The noise levels would be higher during the spring and fall months relative to the season of use. Most of the ATV use occurs near Hamburger Rock Campground, and the level of use is expected to change only slightly under this Alternative. ATVs travelling along the designated routes, may increase slightly with the slight increase in use, however, the noise levels generated are not expected to be noticeable beyond the noise levels generated now within the SRMA.

**Alternative B:** With regards to noise, Alternative B is the same as Alternative A.

**Alternative C:** With regards to noise, Alternatives A and B, however, the noise levels may become more dispersed as less ATV riders travel towards Bridger Jack Mesa, Davis and Lavender Canyon to loop back to the Hamburger Rock area. The sound levels overall are not expected to be noticeable beyond the current levels.

**Alternative D:** No direct or indirect impacts would occur under Alternative D because the ATV trail ROW or trail designation would not be authorized, so an accumulation of impacts would not occur. Use of existing roads and trails would continue to occur at current levels.

#### **4.4.5 Recreation**

- How would the ATV trail conflict with other recreation users?
- To what extent would campers be disrupted in the vicinity of the BLM improved campgrounds?
- Will noise and intrusion into Canyonlands National Park result from the ATV trail?

##### **4.4.5.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for recreation is analyzed at two levels; 1) the 106,976-acre Indian Creek SRMA because it is a management area for recreational activities that contains the proposed ATV trail. The time frame for the cumulative impact analysis for recreation is 20 years. This covers the time period for a ROW and for the life of the Travel Management Plan.

#### 4.4.5.2 Past and Present Actions

Past and present actions within the Indian Creek SRMA include all designated roads, campgrounds and interpretive areas, and resulted in 1,202 acres of surface disturbance. This surface disturbance is 1.12 percent of the 106,976- acre cumulative impact area. Table 4-5 lists the past and present surface disturbance in the Indian Creek SRMA. Other dispersed recreation use occurs, but is not quantified because of the variety of uses (climbing, hiking, mountain biking, and camping) and the impacts of that dispersed use are considered minimal. All uses are expected to continue at their current trend levels.

Table 4-5: Past and Present Surface Disturbance in the Indian Creek SRMA.

Type of Activity	Surface Disturbance (acres)
Designated Roads and Trails (Highway, Class B, Class D and Falls Missile Trail)	1,173.0
Recreation Actions: (Newspaper Rock Interpretive Site, Donnelly Canyon Parking, Hamburger Rock, Creek Pasture, Super Bowl and Bridger Jack Campgrounds)	29.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,202.0</b>

#### 4.4.5.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario

The only reasonably foreseeable action within the Indian Creek SRMA is the proposed ATV Trail.

#### 4.4.5.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

**Alternative A:** Recreational use of the cumulative impact area would continue and likely increase in the future due to the increasing number of visitors to southeastern Utah. Alternative A would contribute 7.3 acres to long-term (20 year) cumulative disturbance in the cumulative impact area. Alternative A, in combination with other past, current, and reasonably foreseeable activities projected for the cumulative impact area, would require the long term use of 1,209.3 acres (1.13 percent) within the 106,976-acre cumulative impact area. The ATV use in the SRMA is not expected to noticeably increase if this alternative is implemented. The cumulative impacts on conflicts among recreation uses would be negligible and is not expected to noticeably increase if Alternative A is implemented.

**Alternative B:** The impacts to recreational use in the cumulative impact area would be the same as that described under Alternative A however, Alternative B would contribute 9.3 acres to long-term (20-year) cumulative disturbance in the cumulative impact area. Alternative B, in combination with other past, current, and reasonably foreseeable activities projected for the cumulative impact area, would require the long term use of 1,211.3 acres (1.13 percent) within the 106,976-acre cumulative impact area. The ATV use in the SRMA is not expected to noticeably increase if this alternative is implemented. The cumulative impacts on conflicts among recreation users would be negligible and is not expected to noticeably increase if Alternative B is implemented.



**Alternative C:** The past, present and reasonably foreseeable impact to recreation use in the cumulative impact area would add 1.45 acres to the to the long term use of 1,202 acres (1203.45 acres, 1.12 percent) within the 106,976-acre cumulative impact area if added to Alternative A it would add 1.45 acres of disturbance to the 12,093 acres (12,094.45 acres, 1.13 percent) within the 106,976-acre cumulative impact area. The cumulative impacts on recreation users would be negligible and is not expected to noticeably increase if Alternative B is implemented.

If Alternative C is added to Alternative B it would add 1.45 acres of disturbance to 1,211.3 acres (1,212.75 acres, 1.13 percent) within the 106,976-acre cumulative impact area. The cumulative impacts on recreation users regarding noise and dust would be negligible and is not expected to noticeably increase if Alternative B is implemented.

**Alternative D:** No direct or indirect impacts would occur under Alternative D because the ATV trail ROW or trail designation would not be authorized, so an accumulation of impacts would not occur.

## **4.4.5 Visual Resources**

### **4.4.5.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for visual resources consists 56,956 acres of land classified as VRM II within the Indian Creek SRMA. This includes the scenic highway corridor. The timeframe for the impacts is 20-years.

### **4.4.5.2 Past and Present Actions**

Past and present actions within these VRM class II areas within the Indian Creek SRMA occur only as patches of surface disturbance. Old oil and gas exploration drill holes have been reclaimed and occur as flat areas with a steel drill hole marker in the middle. Some range improvements also occur within these areas, but do not detract from the visual character of the area. Two designated campgrounds, two dispersed camping areas, the Donnelly Canyon parking area and various other parking areas for climbing and the parking area for Newspaper Rock. These areas generally do not detract from the visual character of the area.

### **4.4.5.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario**

The proposed ATV route is the only reasonable foreseeable action within the within the scenic corridor and VRM II areas in the Indian Creek SRMA.

### **4.4.5.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A,

**Alternative B:** The cumulative impacts would be the same as those identified for Alternative A.

**Alternative C:** The cumulative impacts associated with Alternative C would be additive, to either Alternative A or B.

**Alternative D:** No direct or indirect impacts would occur under Alternative D because the ATV trail ROW or trail designation would not be authorized, so an accumulation of impacts would not occur.

#### **4.4.6 Wilderness Character**

- How would the trail impact the lands determined to have wilderness characteristics values in the Indian Creek wilderness characteristics inventory area?

##### **4.4.6.1 Cumulative Impact Area**

The cumulative impact area for wilderness characteristics consists of the 6,350 acres of lands determined to have wilderness characteristics in the Hamburger Rock/Creek Pasture Campground area. The time frame for the cumulative impacts analysis is six months, which is the time frame for project operations. The time frame for the cumulative impact analysis for recreation is 20 years. This covers the time period for a ROW and for the life of the Travel Management Plan.

##### **4.4.6.2 Past and Present Actions**

No surface disturbance has resulted from past and present actions within the cumulative impact area for wilderness characteristics. See Appendix G Wilderness Character Inventory for discussion about intrusions noted during the wilderness inventory. There are numerous roads and recreation facilities that were excluded or “cherry stemmed” so as to extract them from the calculation of acreage of lands with wilderness characteristics.

##### **4.4.6.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario**

No reasonably foreseeable actions were identified with the cumulative impact area for wilderness characteristics.

##### **4.4.6.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions result in the disturbance to no acres of disturbance, corresponding to 0 percent of the 6,350 - acre cumulative impact area of the lands determined to have wilderness characteristics.

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, the north and eastern edge of the ROW, or if designated under the Travel Plan, five feet from center line of the trail, would form a wilderness characteristics inventory boundary. This boundary would divide the proposed wilderness characteristics unit on lands managed by the BLM into two sections, leaving an area consisting of 4,778 acres on the northeast side. This does not meet the roadless size criterion of 5,000 acres or greater. The area on the southwest side of the proposed ATV trail would be 1,583 acres in size and would not meet the roadless size criteria. Both areas would be removed from the wilderness character inventory.

**Alternative B:** The area inventoried and identified as having wilderness characteristics is 6,350 acres in size. Under Alternative B, the north and eastern edge of the ROW, or if designated under the Travel Plan, six feet from center line of the trail, would form a wilderness characteristics inventory boundary. This boundary would divide the proposed wilderness characteristics unit on lands managed by the BLM into two sections, leaving an area consisting of 5,520.24 acres on the northeast side. This would retain lands with inventoried for wilderness character.

**Alternative C:** If Alternative C is selected with Alternative A, it would reduce the lands to the northeast side of the boundary by about 109.75 acres for a total of 4,667.49 acres. This would leave about 1,682.51 acres to the southwest side of the boundary. Both areas would not meet the 5,000 acre roadless criterion and would be removed from wilderness character inventory.

If Alternative C is selected with Alternative B, it would reduce the lands to the northeast side of the boundary by about 109.75 acres for a total of 5,410.49 acres. This would leave about 939.51 acres to the southwest side of the boundary. The area to the northeast side of the boundary would be retained in the wilderness character inventory. The area to the southwest would not meet the 5,000 acre roadless criterion and would be removed from the wilderness character inventory.

**Alternative D:** No direct or indirect impacts would occur under Alternative D because the ATV trail ROW or trail designation would not be authorized, so an accumulation of impacts would not occur.

## 5.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

### 5.1 Introduction

The issue identification section of Chapter 1 identifies those issues analyzed in detail in the EA. The Interdisciplinary Team Checklist provides the rationale for issues that were considered but not analyzed further. The issues were identified through the public and agency involvement process which is described in Chapter 1 described in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

### 5.2 Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

In 2012 the BLM developed an alternative ATV trail route that was presented as the preferred alternative in the 2012 EA (this route is presented as Alternative A in this EA). A Class III cultural resource survey was completed for the route. This survey included a revisit of all sites located near the trail that were identified in previous surveys and the recording of one new site. All except one of these sites were more than fifty feet from the trail, and therefore outside of the Area of Potential Effect (APE). This one site which was mapped closer than previously recorded would not be affected by the trail. The BLM determined that the APE for the preferred alternative would be an area 100 feet wide and centered on the preferred route. The BLM determined that the identification effort of cultural resources was adequate, and that the undertaking under the preferred alternative would result in No Historic Properties Affected. SHPO concurred with this determination on May 3, 2012.

A Class III survey was conducted in 2013 for the alternative ATV route described as Alternative B in this EA. No cultural resources were identified within the APE which was 100 feet wide centered along the proposed trail route. The BLM determined the undertaking under the Alternative B would result in No Historic Properties Affected. SHPO concurred with this determination on June 17, 2013. Table 5-1 lists the persons, groups and agencies consulted during the drafting this EA.

Table 5-1: Persons, Groups and Agencies Consulted

Name	Purpose and Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Finding and Conclusions
Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	Consultation for undertakings as required by National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 USC 470)	Three letters were sent to the SHPO with BLM's determination that the undertaking would have no effect on historic properties on: 1) November 20, 2007 and the SHPO concurred with these determinations on December 12, 2007, 2) December 19, 2011 and the SHPO concurred with these determinations on December 28, 2011, and 3) April 26, 2012 and the SHPO concurred with these determinations on May 3, 2012.

Name	Purpose and Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Finding and Conclusions
<p>Native American Tribal Entities that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navajo Mountain Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Pueblo of Laguna</li> <li>• Pueblo of Acoma</li> <li>• White Mesa Ute Council</li> <li>• Ute Mountain Ute Tribe</li> <li>• Teecnospos Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Red Mesa Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Oljato Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department</li> <li>• Mexican Water Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Dennehosto Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Pueblo of Zuni</li> <li>• Pueblo of Santa Clara</li> <li>• Aneth Navajo Chapter</li> <li>• Pueblo of Zia</li> <li>• Hopi Tribe</li> </ul>	<p>Consultation as required by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 USC 1531) and NHPA (16 USC 1531)</p>	<p>Consultations were conducted with 16 tribal entities. The BLM sent letters requesting comments on the proposed action. None of the tribal entities responded to the letters. Since no Traditional Cultural Places have been identified within the proposed project area and since there would be No Adverse Effect to the one cultural or historic property identified in the Class III surveys of the project area, there would be no concerns.</p>
<p>Kate Cannon, Superintendent, National Park Service</p>	<p>Canyonlands National Park</p>	<p>Impacts to Canyonlands National Park are included in the analysis as a component of the resource issue "Recreation". BLM scheduled conference calls and held field trips with the NPS to discuss concerns and to review mitigation proposals. BLM has committed to work with NPS on providing acceptable wording for signs, monitoring use and maintaining closures.</p>

### 5.3 Summary of Public Participation

The proposed project has been posted on the Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENBB) since November 3, 2005 and has a long history as described in Section 1.7 of this EA. The response to comments on previous EAs is attached as Appendix C. The issues identified in these comments were addressed in the EA or through the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist in Appendix B.

The 2014 EA was made available for a 30-day public comment period on November 18, 2014 by its posting on the ENBB. The public was notified of the availability of the EA through a press release that appeared in the San Juan Record dated November 19, 2014.

The Monticello Field Office received a total of 34 comment letters during the EA comment period that was initiated on November 18, 2014 and ended on December 18, 2014. The comments received were from the following individuals, groups or agencies:

- Ken Dunn
- Mel Downs
- Ashely Bailey
- Paula Kopp
- Tom Messenger
- Marv Paulson
- John Brewer
- Mason Earle
- Ann Weschsler
- Ian Wade
- Jane Jackson
- Nathan Gilbert
- Susan Stewart
- Brenden Hurst
- Mark Meloy
- Sara Michl
- Genessa Goodman Campbell
- Jim Lunbeck
- Julianne Baker
- Kathy Flaccus
- Kathy Glatz
- Laurie Parkinson
- Lisa Tremaine
- George Alderson
- Matt Berrett
- Richard Green
- Bob Turri
- Chris Lish
- San Juan County
- National Parks Conservation Association
- Glen Canyon Group – Sierra Club
- San Juan Public Entry and Access Rights
- Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance et al
- 1,867 copies of one form letter from the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance website.

These comments are summarized in Appendix H. As a result of public comments a few changes were made to the EA in the form of minor edits in the form of spelling and punctuation. Some additional information was added to the effects analysis for soils and cumulative effects of similar actions. This change is highlighted in gray within the text of this EA and is summarized below in Section 5.3.1- Response to Public Comments.

### **5.3.1 Response to Public Comments**

The purpose for scoping and for making the EA available for public review is to involve the public in the NEPA process. To help identify issues, analysis requirements, and frame the Alternatives, the BLM has responded to scoping comments in Appendix C. Brief descriptions of the scoping process and comments on previous EAs found in Section 1.7; comments from these letters have been summarized in Appendix C.

During the 30-day comment period on the EA, the BLM received over 1,000 letters that included similar comments. A few of these “form” letters including unique information, but none included substantive comments or new information that required changes in the analysis in the EA.

In addition to the above-mentioned form letters, three unique comment letters were received that did provide substantive comments. Each comment was carefully reviewed. The responses to public comments are summarized in Appendix H.

As a result of the IBLA remand, changes were made to the EA. These changes are:

- Cultural Resources was moved from Section 1.8 Issues Identified but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis and added as an issue to analyze in the EA. A map showing the designated routes assessed in the Class I cultural analysis was added to Appendix A.
- Noise was originally analyzed as a component of Recreation in the 2014 EA. This was analyzed as its own issue in the current EA. A map showing climbing walls, campgrounds and dispersed –designated camping sites was added to Appendix A.
- Visual Resources was added as an issue analyzed in the EA, and a VRM Management Class map was added to Appendix A. The VRM Contrast analysis was added as an appendix to the EA.
- The information on the riparian assessment was supplemented and riparian habitat mitigation was more clearly described in Chapter 2.0 Alternative C.
- Information was added to Chapter 2.0 regarding actions common to all alternatives.
- The Recreation section in Chapters 3.0 and 4.0 were re-organized to improve readability.

An ATV trail in the Indian Creek area has been posted on the ENBB from November 2005 to August 2016, when it was transferred to BLM’s ePlanning website, therefore, some variation of the proposal has been in the public view for almost 11 years and many comments have been received throughout the life of project. The changes made between the 2014 and the 2016 EA are not substantial and do not change the overall analysis or the outcome of the decision. For these reasons, the 2016 EA was not made available for formal public comment. No comments were received as result of the ENBB notification that the EA was being revised.

## 5.4 List of Preparers

Table 5-2: BLM Preparers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of the Document
Rebecca Doolittle	District Planner and Environmental Coordinator	Document preparation and review; Lands and Realty, Floodplains\Riparian Areas,

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Responsible for the Following Section(s) of the Document</b>
		Noise
Misti Haines	Outdoor Recreation Technician	Visual Resources
Casey Worth	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Cameron Cox	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources
Donald Simonis	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources
Bill Stevens	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Impact analysis on wilderness characteristics



## 6.0 REFERENCES, GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

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