



**GARFIELD COUNTY GENERAL  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
Resource Management Section**

Executive Summary of Goals, Objectives,  
and Policy for the Grand Staircase  
Escalante National Monument Resource  
Management Plan

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## Introduction

The purpose and scope of this document is to summarize the goals, objectives, and policy found within the Resource Management Section (RMS) of the Garfield County General Management Plan. As a summary document, the intent is to provide the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM) with a brief document highlighting what we consider to be key resources within the GSENM and our official position in relation to those resources. This document may not cover all resources found within the Monument and we recommend the use of the full RMS for further information. The Resource Management Section is intended, to the maximum extent allowed by law, to establish criteria, policies, and requirements to be met in the various federal land planning processes and to provide consistency across agency boundaries while preserving and enhancing the County's custom, culture, resources, and socioeconomic base.

Garfield County consists of various units of federal, state, local government and private lands. The federal, state, and local government entities have various planning requirements conducted within the laws, regulations and procedures for each agency. No two entities' requirements are exactly identical. However, they all rely, to a greater or lesser extent, on the local government plan as a basis for a) consistency, b) preserving the health, safety, welfare, custom, culture, and heritage of an area and c) meeting the needs of local communities and the public at large. Some agencies are required – to the maximum extent allowed by law – to be consistent with local plans, and other agencies are required to give deference to such plans; but all agencies are required to coordinate their plans with local government.

In the past, federal agencies have been reluctant to include Garfield County as a full partner in the public lands planning process. Recently, Garfield County has taken a more active role in establishing baseline policies and communicating County needs in public land planning. That involvement has led the County to conclude that the Garfield County General Management Plan needs to be amended/augmented with a Resource Management Section to provide clear direction, objectives, goals, and criteria that can be applied consistently across agency boundaries and that can protect the custom, culture, and welfare of Garfield County's visitors and residents while providing for the conservation, development, use and / or enjoyment of its resources.

As the only governmental entity with some level of jurisdiction and planning responsibility for all lands within the planning boundaries, Garfield County needs all agencies, to the maximum extent allowed by law, to adopt the direction, objectives, goals, policies, and criteria identified herein. Findings documented in the General Management Plan and the Resource Management Section are baseline conditions for all analysis. Where existing law is silent on a particular issue or where an agency is given discretion, Garfield County's position must be given deference. If land managers feel alternate management scenarios are justified, detailed documentation needs to be provided and the County's concurrence needs to be sought. Absent such

concurrence, and barring established law to the contrary, direction, objectives, goals, policies, and criteria identified in the County plans must be adopted.

## 1. Vegetation

### 1.1.1 Background

Vegetation and water are two of the most important renewable resources in Garfield County. Vegetation is perhaps the only single resource that allows land managers the greatest opportunity for impacting land health, improving species habitat, protecting water resources, restoring streams, stabilizing riparian areas and watercourses, and counteracting effects of wildland fire and potential climate change.

Vegetation plays an important role in many key ecological processes and social values. Vegetation impacts water cycling (precipitation capture, storage, and redistribution), energy capture and cycling (conversion of sunlight to plant matter), and nutrient cycling (the cycle of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus through the physical and biotic components of the environment). Vegetation also provides root systems that help maintain soil integrity and reduce erosion (particularly on steep slopes and areas adjacent to waterways) and provides soil-site stability by limiting redistribution and loss of soil resources (including nutrients and organic matter) by wind and water. Vegetation also allows a site to capture, store, and release water from rainfall, run-on, and snowmelt.

Garfield County's plans, policies, and programs for maintenance of soil and water resources, special status species conservation, protection of water quality, fish and wildlife health, forest management, livestock grazing, recreation, and scenery incorporate a strong vegetative component. Conversely, ecological processes and resources that are not currently in a properly functioning condition are largely attributable to a substandard vegetative component.

### 1.1.2 Findings

Eco-region, landscape level, or remote sensing such as SWReGAP data is insufficient for land use planning in Garfield County unless it is field verified and refined before it is incorporated into management actions, planning prescriptions, or site-specific projects.

### 1.1.3 Desired Future Conditions

a) All management decisions are based on reliable, objective, site-specific data analyzed in accordance with the Data Quality Act.

b) Eco-region, landscape level, or remote sensing such as SWReGAP data is field verified and refined before it is incorporated into management actions, planning prescriptions, or site-specific projects.

c) Land managers implement actions that are consistent with desired future conditions, findings, policies, goals and objectives outlined in the Garfield County Resource Management Plan to restore, improve and maintain Garfield County's vegetative resources.

d) Land managers optimize vegetative resources in Garfield County by using the native and/or non-native vegetation that best meets the desired objectives.

e) Native only prescriptions are limited to actions a) required by law, or b) where greater optimization and conservation of targeted resources will result.

#### **1.1.4 Policy**

a) Land managers shall aggressively implement actions that are consistent with desired future conditions, findings, policies, goals and objectives outlined in the Garfield County Resource Management Plan to restore, improve and maintain Garfield County's vegetative resources.

b) Land managers shall optimize vegetative resources in Garfield County by using the native and/or non-native vegetation that best meets desired objectives.

c) Native-only prescriptions shall be limited to actions a) required by law, or b) where greater optimization and conservation of targeted resources occurs.

### **1.2 Sagebrush – Steppe/Semi Desert**

#### **1.2.1 Background**

Garfield County's RMS contains a specific section on Sagebrush-Steppe/Semi Desert which addresses much of the Monuments existing vegetation.

#### **1.2.2 Findings**

a) Sagebrush ecosystems have been degraded in the past several decades, largely as a result of invading pinyon/juniper and suppression of fire.

b) Invading conifers, especially pinyon/juniper associations, are recognized as the greatest threat to a desired and healthy sagebrush ecosystem in Garfield County. Treatments to arrest conifer invasion and restore sagebrush communities shall be given high priority.

c) Loss of sagebrush ecosystems to invading conifers is recognized for its impact on water quality, wildlife, erosion, potential climate change, and other ecological resources.

#### **1.2.3 Desired Future Conditions**

a) Sagebrush dominant vegetation communities are to be restored to the historical range of variability, including but not limited to composition, age, size, and density in accordance with ecologic site descriptions.

b) Managers increase vegetative treatments in sagebrush ecosystems to restore the historic and natural range of variability.

c) Invading conifers, especially pinyon/juniper associations, are recognized as the greatest threat to a desired and healthy sagebrush ecosystem in Garfield County; and treatments are implemented to restore sagebrush ecosystems to their historic range.

d) Loss of sagebrush ecosystems to invading conifers needs be recognized for its impact on water quality, wildlife, erosion and other ecological resources.

e) Water gain from restoration of invading conifers to sagebrush communities needs to be optimized for rangeland health and multiple uses.

f) Additional water needs to be developed in current and restored sagebrush ecosystems to optimize multiple use/sustained yield benefits.

g) Prescribed fire is used judiciously after thinning, mechanical mastication, and other treatment projects are completed.

h) Additional forage resulting from improved rangeland health is allocated, first, to livestock to restore suspended or un-used AUMs, second, to wildlife to meet objectives and third, equally between livestock and wildlife.

i) As sagebrush communities are restored, sage grouse related prescriptions need to be removed.

### 1.2.3 Policy

a) Managers shall utilize vegetative treatments in decadent sagebrush ecosystems to restore the historic and natural range of variability.

b) Suspended AUMs for livestock will be restored commensurate with restoration of invading conifers to desirable sagebrush communities.

c) Water gain from restoration of invading conifers to sagebrush communities will be optimized for rangeland health and multiple uses.

d) Additional water needs to be developed in current and restored sagebrush ecosystems to optimize multiple use/sustained yield benefits.

e) Prescribed fire is used only after thinning, mechanical mastication, and other treatment projects are completed.

f) Managers shall make use of the full range of upland vegetation treatment methods and tools (i.e., prescribed fire, chaining, plowing, bull hog, pipe harrow, hand cutting, herbicide, aerial seeding, drill seeding, and broadcast seeding) to make progress toward achieving desired future conditions in sagebrush ecosystems.

g) Managers shall treat areas that contain cheatgrass and other invasive or noxious species in sagebrush habitats and shall reduce invasive species and noxious weeds by 10% annually.

## 2. Invasive Plants and Noxious Weeds

### 2.1 Background

Invasive species are plants that have adaptive characteristics such as high seed production; are aggressive and difficult to manage; are capable of invading native habitats; and can often substantially change vegetation communities and affect ecological relationships. Noxious weeds are a subset of invasive plant species. They are legally designated by state or federal law to have these characteristics and require prevention and control measures to help contain or eradicate them.

Management of invasive plants and noxious weeds in Garfield County is aimed at reducing the spread of undesirable species and protecting the integrity of native and desirable non-native/naturalized plant communities. Each year, the County allocates a considerable budget to fund weed management activities on private lands and support cooperative and coordinated weed management on federal and state lands. The County practices and supports an integrated management approach to controlling invasive plants and noxious weeds through close coordination and cooperation with other federal, state, and local entities, and private landowners through a cooperative weed management association.

### 2.2 Findings

- a) Noxious weeds, cheatgrass, invasive conifers, and rabbitbrush are invasive species that can have severe detrimental impacts on land health and productivity
- b) Federal lands occupy a significantly larger acreage than private lands in the County and are considerably less observable, so undetected propagation of noxious weeds is a significant threat on federal lands.
- c) Rabbitbrush, although native, is generally an unproductive plant that degrades land health.
- d) Pinyon pine and juniper, although native, are generally an unproductive plant that degrades land health when located in areas where these species have not been established for at least 200 years.
- e) Noxious weeds and invasive species, including rabbitbrush, cheatgrass and conifers that are inconsistent with historic vegetative communities are a visible impact of man; and lands occupied by such species are not a) natural, b) possessing wilderness characteristics, or c) suitable for management as wilderness, wilderness study areas or non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

## 2.3 Desired Future Condition

- a) Land managers significantly increase efforts to eradicate noxious weeds and replace invasive species with desirable historic plant communities.
- b) Native and non-native invasives replaced with desirable plant communities, consistent with ecologic site descriptions. Class II and Class III pinyon/juniper woodlands are reduced by 25% based on a 10-year rolling average.
- c) Conditions which promote infestation by noxious weeds and invasive species, such as bare ground, be minimized through active and adaptive management.
- d) Federal agencies spend an amount on noxious weed control on their lands in proportion to the acres under their control as Garfield County does for private lands under County control.
- e) Reduce the percentage of invasive or noxious weeds in relation to desired plant populations.

## 2.4 Policy

- a) To the maximum extent allowed by law, Integrated Weed Management using the full complement of treatment methods shall be used for invasive species and noxious weed control. Treatment methods shall be compatible with maintaining special status plant species where applicable.
- b) Class II and Class III pinyon/juniper woodlands shall be reduced by 25% based on a 10-year rolling average.
- c) Land managers shall employ the most efficient techniques legally available to control cheatgrass, invasive conifers, rabbitbrush and noxious weeds.
- d) Conditions that promote infestation by noxious weeds and invasive species, such as bare ground and post fire vegetative loss shall be minimized through active restoration and seeding with native and non-native vegetation communities consistent with ecologic site descriptions.
- e) Federal agencies shall cooperate with Garfield County to develop preventative fire breaks along roads, powerlines and other human and natural disturbances in areas infested by cheatgrass and other fire susceptible fuels.

# 3. Livestock Grazing

## 3.1 Background

In managing livestock grazing on public and private lands, Garfield County's overall objective is to promote health, safety and welfare by ensuring the long-term health and productivity of a) public and private lands, b) the County's watersheds, c) the livestock industry, d) multiple social and environmental benefits that result from the custom, culture and heritage associated with the livestock industry, and e) cultural resources, ethnographic resources, and traditional uses

associated with the livestock industry. Grazing is administered on public lands in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, and in so doing provides livestock-based economic opportunities in rural communities while contributing to the West's and America's social fabric and identity. Together, the County's public lands and private ranches maintain open spaces, provide habitat for wildlife, offer a myriad of recreational opportunities for public land users, and help preserve the custom, culture, heritage and character of the rural West. Livestock Grazing in Garfield County has been designated a resource of cultural and historic significance. Livestock Grazing is protected by Garfield County's Protection of Cultural Resources Ordinance and is on the County Register of Cultural Resources. In some instances, Livestock Grazing may also be suitable for protection as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Today federal agencies and permittees manage livestock grazing in a manner aimed at achieving and maintaining health of the land and sustaining resources. To achieve desired conditions, the agencies use forest and rangeland health standards and guidelines, which were generally developed in the 1990s with input from citizen-based Resource Advisory Councils across the West. Standards describe specific conditions needed for long term sustainability, such as the presence of stream bank vegetation and adequate canopy and ground cover. Guidelines are the management techniques designed to achieve or maintain healthy public lands, as defined by the standards. These techniques include such methods as seed dissemination, periodic rest or deferment from grazing in specific allotments during critical growth periods, water development, and land treatments aimed at making the land more productive.

Currently, grazing on public lands is relatively stable. Except for a few isolated locations, problems from the early 1900s have been largely corrected as designed by the Taylor Grazing Act. Forest and rangeland health has improved over the past few decades, and there is continual effort on the part of federal agencies and permittees to maintain healthy conditions.

Modern, well-managed grazing provides numerous environmental benefits. For example, well-managed grazing can be used to control undesirable vegetation. Intensively managed "targeted" grazing can control some invasive plant species or reduce the fuels that contribute to severe wildfires. Besides providing such traditional products as meat and fiber, well-managed rangelands support healthy watersheds, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat. Livestock grazing on public lands helps maintain the private ranches that, in turn, preserve the open spaces that have helped write Garfield County's history and will continue to shape this region's character in the years to come.

### 3.2 Findings

a) Livestock grazing is a cultural resource, an ethnographic resource, part of the County's heritage, and a traditional activity of significance. It is protected under Garfield County's Protection of Cultural Resources Ordinance, the Grand Staircase – Escalante National Monument Proclamation, FLPMA, NFMA, and other applicable law.

b) Livestock grazing on state and federal lands in Garfield County is a nationally significant historical, cultural and natural heritage legacy recognized by Congress in 2005.

c) Failure to control Tamarisk, Russian Olive, Pinyon/Juniper, and noxious weeds beyond desired levels is a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of Garfield County, is inconsistent with the County's plan, program and policy, and is a violation of local law.

d) Grazing commodity zones are necessary for the health, safety, welfare, custom, culture and heritage of Garfield County and the following Grazing Commodity Zones have been established:

Panguitch Lake	Panguitch Valley
East Fork	Kingston Canyon
Boulder Mountain	Escalante Historic/Cultural Grazing Region
Henry Mountains	Glen Canyon
Tusher Mountains	

e) For more than 100 years the areas designated as the Grazing Commodity Zones listed above have provided and continue to provide a significant contribution to the history, custom, culture, heritage, economy, welfare, and other values of Garfield County. Properly managed, abundant natural and vegetative resources exist within the commodity zones to support and expand current livestock grazing activities and wildlife habitat.

f) The highest management priority for lands within the above-mentioned commodity zones is a preservation, restoration, and enhancement of watershed, forest and rangeland health conditions to sustain and expand forage production for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat. Other multiple uses (mining, timber harvest, oil & gas extraction, recreation, commodity development, etc.) are compatible with rangeland health when properly managed.

g) Managing Garfield County Grazing Commodity Zones for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat does not preclude or restrict other multiple use / sustained yield activities including but not limited to mining, timber harvest, oil & gas extraction, and recreation.

h) Permitted AUMs at the time of Monument designation were approximately 106,000.

### 3.3 Desired Future Condition

a) Land management agencies recognize state and local designation of the significant historic role of livestock grazing and its value as a cultural resource

b) Land managers recognize Garfield County's Register of Cultural Resources and the County's Resource Management Plan and comply, to the maximum extent allowed by law, with Garfield County's stated goals, plans, desires, and needs.

c) Federal agencies manage lands to maximize sustained yield, including optimization of available forage for livestock grazing.

d) Federal agencies restore forests and rangelands to a condition that supports the full number of permitted livestock (active and suspended) and increases forage available for livestock grazing over time.

e) Prior to FY 2050 federal agencies enhance forests and rangelands to a condition that supports an additional 30% of forage over what is necessary to accommodate the full number of livestock and wildlife permitted at present.

f) Federal agencies restore Pinyon/Juniper stands to desired conditions as identified in this RMP, eliminate Tamarisk and Russian Olive, eradicate noxious weeds, and replace rabbit brush and other unproductive species with vegetation that will optimize sustained yield and benefit to wildlife, livestock, recreation, and other multiple uses.

g) Water generated from Pinyon/Juniper, Tamarisk and Russian Olive removal be conserved, developed and enhanced to be used: 1) for livestock on lands that are not designated as the focal point for visitors or that have water rights allocated to livestock; 2) for recreation on lands designated as the focal point for visitors and that have water rights allocated to culinary/domestic uses; 3) for livestock on lands designated by Garfield County or the State of Utah where grazing is the highest and best use; and 4) for multiple use/sustained yield purposes in compliance with Utah State Water Law on lands that are undesignated.

h) New water be developed: 1) for livestock and wildlife on lands that are not designated as the focal point for visitors or that have water rights allocated to livestock and wildlife; 2) for recreation on lands designated as the focal point for visitors and that have water rights allocated to culinary/domestic uses; 3) for livestock on lands designated by Garfield County or the State of Utah where grazing is the highest and best use; and 4) for multiple use/sustained yield purposes in compliance with Utah State Water Law on lands that are undesignated.

i) The full number of permitted livestock be restored and expanded at the earliest possible time in a phased approach as the conditions of paragraph d) are achieved.

j) Desired ecological site conditions identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service be achieved.

### 3.4 Policy

a) On SITLA, Forest Service, and BLM lands, manage vegetative resources to become as productive as feasible for livestock grazing, with a goal of restoring suspended and under-utilized AUMs, while maintaining a thriving, ecological balance and multiple-use relationships.

b) Livestock grazing activities in the commodity zones constitute historic resources, ongoing human history, places where nature shapes human endeavors in the American West, a variety of cultural resources, landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are worthy of recognition, preservation, protection, and expansion.

c) Within Grazing Commodity Zones, minimal, site-specific infrastructure may be installed on a case-by-case basis to enhance resources significantly impacted by livestock and wildlife grazing. However, livestock grazing shall not be diminished to reduce conflicts created by recreationists that choose to visit Grazing Commodity Zones when and where livestock grazing is allowed.

d) Prior to any reduction in AUMs in Garfield County Grazing Commodity Zones, federal land managers shall coordinate with Garfield County and shall implement all reasonable actions to provide necessary forage to accommodate permitted levels of livestock grazing.

e) Federal land managers shall refrain from implementing utilization standards less than 50%, unless: a) implementing a standard of less than 50% utilization on a temporary basis is necessary to resolve site-specific concerns; and b) the federal agency consults, coordinates, and cooperates fully with Garfield County and affected local governments.

f) All allotments are open and available for livestock use to the maximum extent allowed by law and consistent with land health. Where allotments are unavailable for livestock grazing or otherwise restricted, management shall be consistent with Garfield County's resource plan or approved by the Garfield County Commission.

g) Garfield County requires forage enhancement on all allotments that are suitable for livestock grazing to the maximum extent practical.

h) In areas available for livestock grazing, livestock water shall be available at distances of not more than 3 miles. Where livestock water is not available within the 3-mile distance, land managers shall, to the maximum extent practical, take appropriate action to develop additional water resources to meet the 3-mile requirement.

i) Land managers shall maintain rangelands in stable or improving conditions by increasing forage and water resources. Active and aggressive management shall be implemented to comply with this policy.

j) Wildlife populations in excess of population objectives must be corrected within one year. If livestock grazing is being restricted due to lack of forage or drought, restrictions shall occur as follows: First, wildlife that is over objective; Second proportional decreases in wildlife meeting objectives and livestock.

k) For state and federal lands located in agricultural grazing commodity zones in Garfield County, Garfield County adopts a no net loss of AUM's, unless otherwise approved by the Garfield County Commission after public hearing.

l) State and federal agencies shall manage livestock grazing in Garfield County's agricultural grazing commodity zones as historical, cultural and natural resources that are vital to the County's custom, culture and heritage.

m) Taking a plain reading of the Monument Proclamation, the minimum annual AUMs in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument are 106,000.

## 4. Recreation and Tourism

### 4.1 Background

Recreation/tourism has become one of the major resource uses within the region. Recreation includes a variety of activities that affect and are affected by resources and other resource uses. Garfield and its adjoining counties offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities, especially for dispersed use, which rely on developed and undeveloped open space. These activities include wildlife viewing, hunting, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, OHV use, fishing, bicycling, photography, camping, orienteering, river running, rock climbing, mountain biking, and sightseeing, among others.

Recreation resources include infrastructure, developed recreation sites, dispersed public lands, wildlife resources, visual resources, waterways, lakes, historic resources - each of which provides different recreational opportunities. In areas where recreation resources receive heavy use, developed recreation sites or facilities are often constructed to aid in managing impacts. Consequently, developed recreation sites are primarily located near high-use recreation attractions. Developed recreation areas may include such permanent features as picnic tables, drinking water, vault toilets/shower facilities, campsites, signage, and interpretive areas.

Regardless of the level of development, all tourism and recreation (dispersed and developed) rely to some degree on access. Even the most remote site begins at some point with motorized transportation; and loss of transportation infrastructure negatively impacts all aspects of recreation and tourism.

### 4.2 Findings

a) Recreation is a discretionary function and is compatible with other appropriately managed multiple use activities.

b) Motorized roads, paths, ways, and trails provide access and are vital, in some degree, to every recreation and tourism activity.

c) All motorized and non-motorized roads, paths ways, and trails on non-private lands in existence prior to January 1, 2015 were created as a result of some human need and constitute a recreation, transportation, and cultural resource.

d) Economic resources derived from recreation and tourism on federal lands in Garfield County are insufficient to be the primary source for encouraging a productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.

### 4.3 Desired Future Conditions

- a) Land managers Coordinate and are consistent with Garfield County's Resource Management Plan and the Recreation and Tourism section of that plan, ROS, and OHV Plan to the maximum extent allowed by law.
- b) Traditional natural resource industries (timber harvest, mining, energy production, livestock grazing, etc.) are prioritized over discretionary recreation activities for people who live outside the County.
- c) Consistent with land health, traditional natural resource industries (timber harvest, mining, energy production, livestock grazing, etc.) are maximized while optimizing recreational activities.
- d) Motorized access is maximized and is consistent with Garfield County's Transportation and OHV Plans.
- e) Appropriate public services (law enforcement, access, emergency medical, solid waste, human waste, etc.) are provided for all recreational activities.
- f) Agencies increase the use of Recreation and Public Purpose grants, especially to develop open/cross country OHV play areas.
- g) Lands are managed for primitive recreation only when a) consistent with Garfield County's RMP and b) when formally approved by the Garfield County Commission.
- h) Not less than 3% of the land in Garfield County is designated for open / cross country OHV use.

### 4.4 Policy

- a) Where recreation interests perceive conflicts with other multiple use activities, recreation shall be subordinate to other multiple uses unless otherwise a) mandated by law or b) approved by the Garfield County Commission.
- b) Closure of any road, path, way, or trail used by motor vehicles is a negative impact on recreation and tourism and shall be fully disclosed in any NEPA analysis. It is Garfield County's policy to oppose road, path, and trail closures unless specifically approved by the County Commission
- c) Managers shall optimize and maximize use of existing resources including motorized and non-motorized roads, paths ways and trails. All motorized and non-motorized roads, paths ways and trails in existence prior to January 1, 2015 are cultural resources created because of some human need. They are part of the Garfield County transportation and recreation system and shall continue in use until formally discontinued/abandoned by action of the Garfield County Commission.

d) Consistent with land health, managers shall encourage a productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment by a) maximizing re-vitalization of traditional timber harvest, mining, energy production, and livestock grazing industries and b) optimizing recreation and tourism while avoiding conflicts with timber harvest, mining, energy production, and livestock grazing.

e) Dispersed primitive camping shall be allowed within 300 feet of roads and in ERMA's, unless otherwise restricted by the County Commission.

f) At least 3% of each agency's land in ERMA's shall be available for open/cross country OHV use. Lands transferred to Garfield County for open OHV designation shall count toward the 3% minimum.

g) Establishment of fee sites shall be avoided whenever possible. Fee sites shall only be established when a) necessary to maintain developed sites and amenities and b) approved by the County Commission.

h) In addition to the County's OHV designations, agencies are encouraged to develop and implement OHV trail systems that provide a wide range of motorized opportunities

## 5. Transportation and Access

### 5.1 Background

One of Garfield's greatest management challenges is providing reasonable transportation and access to federal, state, local and private lands and providing areas for a wide variety of both motorized and non-motorized travel related activities. Transportation and access are integral parts of every activity on public and private lands, including recreation, timber harvest, grazing, wildlife management, vegetation management, conventional and renewable energy development, mineral exploration and development, commodity resources management, rights-of-way to private inholdings, communications site maintenance, and overall public and private lands management and monitoring. In sum, transportation and access are critical to health and safety, economic development, education, and quality of life.

Prominent among the travel management issues in Garfield County is the challenge of managing motorized activities on public lands. The combined effect of increased interest in public land recreation, rapid growth in outdoor recreation and tourism, the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and federal resistance to use of historic roads and RS 2477 rights of way have, collectively, generated increased social conflicts and uncertainty regarding transportation resources on public lands. Access to public lands has a direct and essential connection to the County's health, safety, welfare, custom, culture and heritage, and these values are at stake when traditional access is cut off.

Garfield County's five major collector roads (Johns Valley, Kodachrome, Hole-in-the-Rock, Burr Trail, and Notom) distribute traffic from major highways to local roads which in turn distribute traffic to numerous smaller routes and resource roads that connect more remote locations to the larger roads. These collector routes are used for recreational purposes and access to range improvements, mineral development, and state and private inholdings. Most of the lower-level routes are not paved and many are unimproved or have dirt or gravel surfaces. Each route provides access to some distinct location that serves the interests of County residents and visitors. Many of the smaller routes access range facilities, as they have for more than a century.

Public roads under state or local jurisdiction in the State of Utah are classified in a variety of ways with the most common system being funding categories. Funded roads include State highways (Class A), county roads (Class B), and city streets (Class C). In addition to the funded roads, Utah State Code recognizes Class D roads as important County transportation routes that are not given state funding but provide vital access to many less developed areas. The original Class D legislation was adopted at the time when the Federal Land Policy and Management Act repealed longstanding federal law authorizing the construction of highways across federal lands not reserved for other public uses. The repealed law, known as Revised Statute 2477 or RS 2477, had been used for 110 years, since its inception in 1866, to authorize the construction of the majority of the network of public roads in the western United States.

RS 2477 did not require any formal recognition or documentation process, so roads are vested as soon as they were created either by public construction or consistent use. During the last three decades (from 1986 to the present), well-funded special interest groups have taken advantage of the documentation gap and have opposed continued use of the County's historic RS 2477 rights of ways – often in an effort to create roadless/wilderness areas where none exist. Special interest groups have initiated numerous lawsuits and invoked delay tactics resulting in expensive conflicts over almost all roads in Utah's public land counties. For its part, the federal government, and, in particular, the BLM, has vacillated between support of and opposition to the Counties' rights of way with each changing administration. In the late 1990s, BLM abandoned all claims to maintenance of any open public roads on its lands; since that time the BLM has reported under 23 CFR 460 that it has jurisdiction over zero (0) public road miles in the State of Utah.

In order to preserve public access, the State of Utah and its counties have been forced to file more than 12,000 lawsuits in federal court to have RS 2477 rights recognized on the most easily documented roads throughout the State. Some estimates indicate there are likely more than 25,000 additional roads eligible for RS 2477 recognition, but costs for documentation and litigation are far in excess of available funding. Most of the County's road network was developed under provisions of RS 2477 or prescriptive easement law identified in Utah Code.

In addition to motorized use, Garfield County's transportation network is the primary component in the County's non-motorized travel. Biking, hiking, and equestrian use are

authorized on County rights of way unless otherwise prohibited. Generally, Garfield County's roads, paths, ways, and trails are designated for multimodal use unless resource concerns or safety require restrictions on some uses.

## 5.2 Findings

a) Transportation facilities are vital to the preservation of the County's custom, culture and heritage and constitute cultural resources. Well maintained transportation facilities benefit all public land resources, uses and users.

b) Closure of any transportation facility without County concurrence is a negative impact on the County's health, safety, welfare, custom, culture and heritage and is inconsistent with the Garfield County General Management Plan.

c) Transportation facilities in Garfield County not claimed by state or federal agencies under 23 CFR 460 as of January 1, 2015 are under the jurisdiction of Garfield County.

d) Garfield County finds and declares the existing on the ground and/or mapped network of roads, paths, ways, trails, highways, airports, airstrips, and other transportation facilities is the minimum necessary to provide for the health and welfare, custom, culture, and socioeconomic viability of Garfield County.

e) All highways in existence prior to October 21, 1976 are valid, existing rights of way.

f) Garfield County finds that its transportation network has not been fully developed and is largely underutilized. Closure of more than 5% or expansion of more than 10% of the existing facilities in any project area or agency boundary without County concurrence constitutes a significant negative impact to the health and welfare, custom, culture, and socioeconomic viability of Garfield County.

g) Garfield County finds that its transportation network is the system that best meets the needs of the traveling public and best achieves a productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.

f) Transportation facilities identified in the Garfield County Transportation Management Plan are existing historic disturbances and are cultural resources with a bona fide purpose and need. No transportation facilities identified in the Garfield County Transportation Management Plan are deemed to be duplicative, parallel, or redundant.

## 5.3 Desired Future Conditions

a) Transportation issues be resolved in a manner that preserves access to public and private lands while protecting resources.

- b) Federal and State land managers recognize Garfield County's Transportation Network and comply, to the maximum extent allowed by law, with Garfield County's stated goals, plans, desires, and needs.
- c) RS 2477 issues are resolved and the County's needs for access to public lands be recognized and accommodated.
- d) If NEPA authorized rights-of-way are used to resolve RS 2477 transportation issues, at a minimum, the rights of way need to include: 1) rights enjoyed under the non NEPA rights-of-way; 2) sufficient width and scope to allow ultimate development of the transportation facilities without additional analysis; and 3) provisions to allow a blanket resolution of transportation issues rather than case-by-case decisions.
- e) Unauthorized use of cross-country travel on public and private lands is eliminated.
- f) To Coordinate and work cooperatively with State and Federal agencies in educating the public and preventing unauthorized travel on public and private lands.
- g) The County's Transportation Network be recognized and authorized by State and Federal agencies.
- h) That as historical transportation facilities are identified through expanding technology, they are appropriately documented evaluated and authorized.
- i) Roads, paths, ways, trails, airports, airstrips and other transportation facilities are preserved and enhanced consistent with the Garfield County Resource Management Plan.
- j) RS 2477 rights of way are identified, analyzed, acknowledged, and recognized by federal agencies.

#### 5.4 Policy

- a) Garfield County will coordinate with state officials, federal agencies and other stakeholders to enhance the County's transportation network while maximizing harmony between man and his environment.
- b) Garfield County asserts claim and jurisdiction over all RS 2477 rights of way located inside Garfield County and outside municipal boundaries.
- c) Transportation facilities identified in the Garfield County Resource Management Plan shall continue until formally abandoned by the County in accordance with Utah State Law. When transportation facilities are no longer of beneficial use, as determined by the County Commission, the provisions of UCA 72-3-108 will be followed.
- d) Agencies shall identify and disclose all highways constructed prior to October 21, 1976 on federal lands not reserved for other public uses through NEPA analysis. Transportation facilities

shall be deemed to pre-date October 21, 1976 unless documented evidence (NEPA analysis, contracts, trespass notices, etc.) prove otherwise.

e) Garfield County asserts jurisdiction over all highways, roads, paths, ways, trails, airports, airstrips, landing strips, and other transportation facilities, unless they have been determined to be invalid and/or under the jurisdiction of another agency by a court of competent jurisdiction.

f) Garfield County will coordinate with state and federal agencies to resolve valid existing rights, transportation needs, maintenance requirements, improvement projects, and other right-of-way and/or scope issues.

g) For all transportation facilities, Garfield County will, over the course of time, improve the facility to meet AASHTO, national or other applicable standards.

h) Prior to closure of any transportation facility on federal lands, the following information shall be identified, analyzed, and disclosed in an appropriate NEPA document:

1. Date of the original construction and use
2. Method of original construction and use
3. Detailed GPS centerline
4. Purpose for which the facility was developed
5. Length of time the facility was used
6. Users of the facility
7. Map, plan, GLO plats, and study data citing the facility
8. Jurisdictions asserting ownership of the facility
9. Jurisdictions asserting construction of the facility
10. County position regarding proposed status
11. Level 3 cultural resource survey
12. Potential socio-economic impacts of the closure

Closure of any transportation facility without identification of the information listed above is inconsistent with the Garfield County General Management Plan and a violation of local law.

i) Some transportation facilities that were originally developed for motorized use may, at present, be more suitable for non-motorized use. Garfield County's concurrence for non-motorized restrictions is required, and such non-motorized use at the present time does not abandon opportunities for future motorized use.

j) Motorized and non-motorized cross-country travel shall be allowed for administrative uses, including permitted resource uses, search and rescue, medical, law enforcement, and emergency access.

k) In accordance with U.C.A. 72-7-102, any person or agency that digs, excavates, places, constructs, or maintains any approach road, driveway, pole, pipeline, conduit, sewer, ditch, culvert, billboard, advertising sign, or any other structure or object of any kind or character

within a County designated transportation facility without County approval is in violation of law and may be prosecuted for a class B misdemeanor.

## 6. Socio-Economic Considerations

### 6.1 Background

Since passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, environmental impact assessments have become a key component of environmental planning and decision making in the United States. During the last 20 years, Garfield County has recognized a need for better understanding the social and economic consequences of projects, programs and policies through better social and economic outcomes of the various policy and management alternatives.

In response to the need for better social and economic analysis, this section establishes a set of guidelines and principles that will assist agencies in fulfilling their social-economic obligations under NEPA, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, related authorities, and agency mandates. Social-economics under NEPA mean the consequences to human populations of federal actions that impact the custom, culture, heritage, community stability, lifestyle, employment, income, age distribution, school enrollment, and economics or alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society. The term also includes cultural impacts involving changes to the norms, values, and beliefs that guide and rationalize their cognition of individuals and their society.

### 6.2 Findings

- a) A recitation of demographic and economic county or regional data and trends is not sufficient social-economic analysis. No business manager, city manager nor county manager would ever use these as the sole means of evaluating alternative options or past performance.
- b) Federal agencies have failed to fully identify, analyze and disclose socio-economic impacts of their actions.
- c) Federal agencies have failed to fully comply with the socio-economic requirements of NEPA, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, and other federal laws.
- d) Garfield County meets the threshold for a low-income population and environmental justice community.

### 6.3 Desired Future Condition

- a) Socio-economic analyses be expanded well beyond a simple recitation of demographics.

b) Socio- economic analyses include identification, analysis, and disclosure of anticipated socio-economic impacts for each alternative being considered.

c) As part of coordination, cooperation and consistency requirements of federal actions, federal agencies recognize and conform to Garfield County's identification of the appropriate level of socio-economic analysis to be included in the environmental documentation.

d) As directed by Garfield County, federal agencies include the consequences to human populations of federal actions that impact the custom, culture, heritage, community stability, lifestyle, employment, income, age distribution, school enrollment, and economics or alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society. The County desires agencies also include cultural impacts involving changes to the norms, values, and beliefs that guide communities and rationalize their cognition of themselves and their society, as directed by Garfield County.

e) Federal analyses meet the requirements of NEPA, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, and other applicable laws.

f) Federal actions simultaneously manage resources for multiple use / sustained yield while enhancing and improving local socio-economic health and community stability.

#### 6.4 Policy

a) Federal agencies will simultaneously manage resources for multiple use / sustained yield while enhancing and improving local socio-economic health and community stability.

b) Socio- economic analyses shall include identification, analysis and disclosure of anticipated socio-economic impacts for each alternative being considered.

c) As part of coordination, cooperation and consistency requirements, federal agencies shall recognize and conform to Garfield County's identification of the appropriate level of socio-economic analysis to be included in the environmental documentation.

d) As directed by Garfield County, federal agencies shall include the consequences to human populations of federal actions that impact the custom, culture, heritage, community stability, lifestyle, employment, income, age distribution, school enrollment, and economics or alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society. Agencies shall also include cultural impacts involving changes to the norms, values, and beliefs that guide communities and rationalize their cognition of themselves and their society, as directed by Garfield County.

e) Garfield County adopts the following standards:

1. Conservation and management shall prevent overuse and depletion of resources while achieving, on a continual basis, optimum use of the resources and optimum socio-economic benefit to local communities.

2. Socio-economic considerations shall be based on the best scientific information and processes available.
3. Management actions shall not discriminate against local communities. If it becomes necessary to allocate resources, such allocation shall be: a) fair and equitable to local individuals and communities; b) reasonably calculated to promote the health, safety and economic welfare of local communities; and c) carried out in a manner that provides the greatest benefit to local individuals and communities.
4. Management actions, where practicable, shall consider efficiency of resource use and shall have positive impacts on the stability of local communities.
5. Management actions shall avoid negative impacts on local communities and where avoidance is impossible shall minimize and mitigate negative impacts.
6. Management actions shall be consistent with the plans, policies and programs of Garfield County.
7. Management actions, to the extent possible, shall promote and enhance the health, safety, welfare, economies, prosperity, and stability of local communities.
8. Unintended consequences shall be minimized and socio-economic analysis shall consider adaptive mitigation techniques should management actions result in negative impacts to local economies.
9. Managers shall disclose uncertainties in socio-economic analysis.
10. Socio-economic impact assessments shall be proportionate to likely impacts from the proposed action.
11. Socio-economic assessments shall identify methods to reduce burdens placed by the various alternatives of proposed actions.
12. Socio-economic assessments shall support and integrate social and economic goals and objectives of impacted communities as identified by duly elected officials.
13. Whenever possible, socio-economic assessments shall prioritize incorporation of quantifiable data and expected impacts over demographics.

## 7. Lands and Realty

### 7.1 Background

Underlying the County's implementation of its lands and realty program is the realization that Garfield County is among the three counties nation-wide with the greatest percentage of its land base under federal control. With 93% of the County administered by the federal government, few opportunities are available to expand economic enterprises or serve essential public purposes. This issue was exacerbated when the State of Utah agreed to sell or trade State Institutional Trust Lands within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and other federal reservations. This action deprived County residents (and others) of access to major blocks of land and halted economic use of those lands, depriving County residents of economic opportunities. To add insult to injury, the County received little financial or other benefits from the transfer of these lands. Fortunately,

some other counties did benefit from additional SITLA lands in their county when federal lands in those counties transferred to the State.

The goals of Garfield County's lands and realty program are to a) acquire federal and state lands to support the goals and objectives of other resource programs, b) provide for uses of public lands in accordance with applicable laws and regulations while protecting sensitive resources, and c) improve use of federal and state lands through land tenure adjustments.

## 7.2 Findings

a) The location of communication sites is critical to attaining an optimum functioning telecommunication network and to the well-being of Garfield County residents. Land managers play an important role in meeting consumer demands for broadband coverage by permitting telecommunication companies to locate their communication sites on mountaintops, ridges, and in and on other locations on public lands.

b) Garfield County has insufficient roadside parks and rest areas adjacent to its road network.

c) Garfield County finds federal lands prioritized by the County Commission for exchange or sale enhance public resource values, improve land ownership patterns, improve management capabilities for public and private lands, reduce conflicts, and provide the greatest opportunity for harmony between man and his environment.

d) The County also finds the Commission's prioritization is necessary to protect and promote the health, safety, welfare, and well-being of the County, its residents, its visitors, its lands, and its resources.

e) Withdrawals are deemed to have a negative impact on the County's health, safety, welfare and economic stability.

f) Known land uses including but not limited to roads, airstrips, water developments, utilities, communication sites, and range improvements that have not been subject to a trespass claim prior to January 1, 2015 are deemed valid existing rights and will continue under current use until determined otherwise by the County Commission or a court of competent jurisdiction.

g) Unless specific resources dictate otherwise, BLM lands within 1 mile of municipal boundaries are identified as needed for community expansion and development. Community expansion and development constitutes a beneficial public use.

## 7.3 Desired Future Condition

a) Managers identify criteria, exceptions, and other stipulations associated with transmission reliability in designated corridors.

b) Additional communication sites be authorized as technology and needs advance.

c) BLM managers cooperate with Garfield County to maximize acquisitions under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP).

- d) Garfield County's No Net Loss of Private Land policy is recognized and followed.
- e) New and existing withdrawals are administered in accordance with federal law and on a case-by-case and site-specific basis
- f) When withdrawals are revoked, lands are managed in accordance with Garfield County's land use management plan.
- g) Withdrawals are used a) only as a last resort, b) consistent with Garfield County's Resource Management Plan, and c) with concurrence of the Garfield County Commission.
- h) Managers implement and coordinate use of other management tools prior to considering withdrawals.
- i) Adequate communications sites are located to provide cellular telephone coverage on all County Class B roads.
- j) Rights of way are sufficient to provide high speed internet to at least 90% of the homes and businesses in Garfield County.

#### 7.4 Policy

- a) Garfield County encourages the placement of new rights of ways (ROWs) within designated transportation and utility corridors, to the extent practicable.
- b) When existing rights of ways or utility corridors are insufficient to meet infrastructure needs, additional rights of way or utility corridors shall be developed.
- c) Managers shall cooperate in locating telecommunication facilities at elevations that attain the most coverage for the consumers of digital products.
- d) Land managers shall authorize additional communications sites to the greatest flexibility allowed by law and as technology and needs advance.
- e) Garfield County will substantially and systematically increase efforts to acquire BLM lands under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. BLM land managers shall cooperate with Garfield County to implement these R&PP Act transactions. Garfield County will restrict its use of the R&PP Act to parcels where there is a direct public benefit, either to an adjacent community or to the County as a whole. To accomplish this the County will coordinate with each organized municipality within the County to identify eligible parcels.
- f) Garfield County adopts a strict no net loss of private land policy. Unless required by law, land managers shall not implement any action that decreases the acreage of private lands in Garfield County. The County Commission may waive this policy on a case-by-case basis after determining loss of private land acreage is a benefit to the County and after public hearing.
- g) Land managers and land use plans shall recognize and the County's No Net Loss of Private Land policy to the maximum extent allowed by law.

h) Consistent with the No Net Loss policy the County will encourage land exchanges with federal land management agencies, particularly but not exclusively along boundaries, when these exchanges are mutually beneficial.

i) Land managers shall minimize areas that have potential to be managed as Right of Way avoidance and exclusion areas.

j) Land managers shall ensure sufficient land is available to locate communication sites that are capable of providing cellular telephone coverage along all County Class B and Class D roads.