AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Discussion; BOCC Comments Re: GMUG Draft

Action Requested: Discussion

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

Discussion regarding BOCC comments for the GMUG Draft Wild & Scenic Rivers Eligibility Report

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Liz Mense for CAO **Submitter's Email Address:** EMense@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ◉ Required ○ Not Required

Comments:

By separate email, Laura has provided the GMUG draft report to each BOCC member and Matthew for review.

This item is placed on the agenda for the BOCC to discuss and give instructions to CAO re comments. db

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\dBaumgarten Discharge Date: 3/1/2019 Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ◉

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\emense Discharge Date: 3/1/2019

○ Consent Agenda ◉ Regular Agenda ○ Worksession Time Allotted: 15

Agenda Date: 3/5/2019

Revised April 2015

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

Draft Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Evaluation

Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray, Saguache, San Juan, and San Miguel Counties, Colorado

February 2019

Views of the Collegiate Peaks from the Taylor River on the Gunnison Ranger District.

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests Draft Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Evaluation

Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray, Saguache, San Juan, San Miguel Counties, Colorado

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Planning documents are posted at: Forest Plan Revision Webpage

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Contents

Contents ..... **iii**
Introduction **1**
Past Eligibility Evaluations **2**
Current Eligibility Evaluation **2**
Free-Flowing Determination *4*
Outstandingly Remarkable Value Determination *4*
Categories for Outstandingly Remarkable Values 5
Classification of Eligible Rivers *9*
Eligibility Evaluation Results **9**
References Cited **18**

Tables

Table 1. Ecological region of comparison for scenery, geology, fish, and wildlife values of the GMUG 4
Table 2. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Gunnison District 11
Table 3. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Ouray District 13
Table 4. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Norwood District 14
Table 5. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Grand Valley District 15

Figures

Figure 1. Eligible wild and scenic river segments for the GMUG National Forests 17

Introduction

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (PL 90-542:16USC 1271-1287, as amended) is designed to preserve certain rivers and streams with outstanding scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. To be designated under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (the Act), a river segment must meet two fundamental requirements: the river segment must be "free-flowing" as defined by Section 16(b) of the Act, and the river segment must have one or more outstandingly remarkable values (Section 1(b)). A wild and scenic river study process is composed of three main phases: eligibility, classification, and suitability. Only eligibility and classification are being carried out as part of the current plan revision process.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Section 5(d)(1) requires that, "consideration shall be given by all Federal agencies involved to potential national wild, scenic and recreational river areas" during land management planning. To meet this requirement, Forest Service units conduct a systematic evaluation of river segments to determine if they are eligible for designation under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. If a river is found eligible, it will be managed under the appropriate wild, scenic, or recreational river management area direction to protect those values that made it eligible and the characteristics that established its potential classification.

Prior to being recommended to Congress as potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSR), eligible rivers must also be found to be suitable for designation. A suitability study is not required as part of the 2012 Planning Rule and would only be undertaken in certain circumstances. The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) will initiate a suitability evaluation when:

- Strong local interest or support is demonstrated for wild and scenic river designation,
- Congress expresses interest in a specific river for wild and scenic river designation, and/or
- A proposed project would alter the free-flowing character of a stream, such as by impoundment, or would affect the resources that made the stream eligible.

Any future suitability evaluation will follow procedures outlined in FSH 1909.12 Chapter 80. This process will consider possible alternatives to inclusion of the river in the National Wild and Scenic River System in terms of social and economic values, effects on other resources, and effects on private lands and other uses of the area. If a river segment is found suitable, the agency recommends it to the administration, which may recommend suitable rivers to Congress for inclusion in the system. If a river is determined to not be suitable, then it is no longer considered eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

The Forest Service cannot administratively designate a river via a planning decision or other agency decision into the NWSRS, and no segment studied is or will be automatically designated as part of the NWSRS. Only Congress can designate a wild and scenic river.

Both eligible and suitable segments are managed to maintain their free-flowing nature and outstanding remarkable values until such time as they are designated under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or released from consideration.

Past Eligibility Evaluations

The GMUG conducted eligibility evaluations for several rivers as part of the forest planning effort for the 1983 Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 1983). The East River was evaluated from its headwaters at Emerald Lake to its confluence with the Taylor River in four segments (33.5 miles). Portions of the Taylor River from its headwaters in Eyer Basin to its confluence with Illinois Creek were evaluated in three segments (18.3 miles). The upper segments of the East River were recognized as being very scenic; however, neither the East River nor the Taylor River were evaluated as having outstandingly remarkable values and therefore were not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System in 1983.

No additional wild and scenic river evaluations were completed for the 1991 Amended Land and Resource Management Plan.

A comprehensive wild and scenic river eligibility evaluation was conducted as part of the plan revision efforts undertaken between 2001 and 2007. This evaluation is documented in the 2006 Comprehensive Assessments (Chapter 6 of the Human Dimensions volume, USDA Forest Service 2006a) and summarized in the 2006 Comprehensive Evaluation Report (USDA Forest Service 2006b). Eighteen river segments, 76.6 miles, were identified as eligible for further study and were carried forward in the 2007 Proposed Land Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 2007). Forest planning was suspended in 2007 following a court injunction of the 2005 Planning Rule, and no decision was made to revise the 1991 Amended Land and Resource Management Plan.

Current Eligibility Evaluation

Wild and scenic river eligibility evaluation for the GMUG is again being conducted as part of the current forest plan revision efforts, consistent with the final directives of the 2012 Planning Rule (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 80). It has been 12 years since the previous eligibility evaluation, and some changed circumstances exist that warrant review of all potentially eligible stream segments. Changed circumstances include:

1. Species presence information and classification has changed. Conservation populations of green lineage Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus*), a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, are now known to occur on the GMUG. (Additional information is available in the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout Assessment (Young 2008)). Additional populations of boreal toad (*Anaxyrus boreas boreas*), considered an endangered species by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, have been identified on the GMUG. (Additional information is available in the Boreal Toad Assessment (Keinath and McGee 2005)). Global and state plant species rankings have changed for water-dependent plant species and community types that could potentially be considered outstandingly remarkable values. This new species information was considered in the current evaluation and is referenced where pertinent in evaluation results described later in this document.
2. Wild and scenic river eligibility and suitability evaluations have been completed for federally managed areas adjacent to the GMUG that involve river and stream segments contiguous with segments on the GMUG. The Grand Junction Field Office of the Bureau

of Land Management (BLM) completed wild and scenic river eligibility (2009) and suitability (2015) studies, as part of their 2015 Resource Management Plan. The Uncompahgre Field Office completed the wild and scenic river eligibility study (2010), and suitability study (2013) as part of the resource management planning process. The Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, designated in 2009, includes parts of both the Grand Junction Field Office and Uncompahgre Field Office. The Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area completed a suitability study for eligible river segments identified by both the Grand Junction Field Office and Uncompahgre Field Office in 2017. Eligibility and suitability determinations from these BLM analyses were considered when evaluating contiguous river segments on the GMUG.

3. The Nationwide Rivers Inventory is maintained by the National Park Service as a list of potential candidates for the National Wild and Scenic River System (USDI NPS 2017). Information contained in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory appears to be outdated or incorrect. The East River and Taylor River segments were evaluated for the 1983 GMUG Land and Resource Management Plan as not eligible. A short portion of Coal Creek located on the GMUG, but also within Curecanti National Recreation Area managed by the National Park Service, is listed as potentially eligible in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory. Follow-up with Curecanti National Recreation Area personnel determined that the section in question is very short (800 feet), above the high-water line of the reservoir and therefore still free-flowing, but does not contain outstandingly remarkable values (ORV) for aquatic life or riparian vegetation (Personal communication with Michael Dale, NPS Hydrologist, 2018). A portion of Lake Fork (of the Gunnison) from Sloan Lake to Wager Gulch, southwest of Lake City, is also included in the Nationwide Rivers Inventory. This segment is mostly on public land managed by the BLM and private land upstream of the GMUG. Numerous ditch diversions to feed fish ponds on the private land impact the streamflow below these diversions. Because the Lake Fork is not free-flowing from this point, the portion of this segment on the GMUG is not eligible. All the segments on the GMUG identified by the Nationwide Rivers Inventory were reevaluated in this study and results are documented below.

4. Improved and new data are now available for use in determining whether stream segments meet eligibility criteria.

The directives (FSH 1909.12, Sec. 82.2) specify that “rivers to be studied for eligibility include all rivers named on a standard U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle map.” For this evaluation, all named perennial and intermittent river and stream segments and unnamed stream segments identified as perennial streams within the USGS National Hydrography Dataset have been reviewed.

The evaluation of potentially eligible river segments was conducted by resource managers from each ranger district and a subgroup of individuals participating as member of the forest plan revision interdisciplinary team. The process applied to each river segment included:

1. Determination of the free-flowing condition for each river segment (FSH 1909.12-2015-1, Section 82.71).
2. Evaluation of outstandingly remarkable values (FSH 1909.12-2015-1, 82.73).

3. Preliminary classification of eligible river segments as wild, scenic, or recreational (FSH 1909.12-2015-1, Section 82.8).

Free-Flowing Determination

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Section 16(b) defines free flowing as:

"'Free flowing' as applied to any river or section of a river means existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, riprapping, or other modification of the waterway. The existence, however, of low dams, diversion works, or other minor structure at the time any river is proposed for inclusion in the [National System] shall not automatically bar its consideration for such inclusion."

To be considered free-flowing for this evaluation, a river needed to maintain its natural stream functions, including a natural flood regime, natural sinuosity and channel shifting, natural bank erosion, and natural bed load and debris movement. There is no requirement for a minimum flow or temporal or spatial continuity of flow. Flow must only be sufficient to sustain or compliment the ORVs for which the river would be recommended.

Data reviewed included Colorado Division of Water Resources information for diversions and impoundments; USGS data for ditches and reservoirs, and Forest Service knowledge and data for ditches, headgates, diversions, and water developments.

Outstandingly Remarkable Value Determination

Outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) are defined as unique, rare, or exemplary features that are significant within the associated regions of comparison. They are conspicuous examples of these values and among the best representatives of these features. Only one such value is needed for eligibility.

To be assessed as outstandingly remarkable, a river-related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant within a defined region of comparison. Regions of comparison identified in the early 2000s evaluation were used for this eligibility evaluation. The ecological section within which any given eligible river segment is located was used. The ecological section that applies to different portions of the Forest is listed in Table 1. Where different regions of comparison were used, they are described below under the various value categories.

Table 1. Ecological region of comparison for scenery, geology, fish, and wildlife values of the GMUG

[Ecological sections of the conterminous United States from Cleland et al. 2007]

Geographic Area	Section	Ecological Section Name
Grand Mesa	M331H	Northern Central Highlands and Rocky Mountains
Gunnison Basin (West Elks)	M331H	Northern Central Highlands and Rocky Mountains
North Fork Valley	M331H	Northern Central Highlands and Rocky Mountains
Gunnison Basin (Taylor River Basin)	M331I	Northern Parks and Ranges
Gunnison Basin (Cochetopa)	M331G	South Central Highlands
San Juan	M331G	South Central Highlands

Geographic Area	Section	Ecological Section Name
Uncompahgre Plateau	341B	Northern Canyon Lands

All ORVs should be directly river-related and meet at least one of the following (FSH 1909.12-2015-1, Section 82.73):

1. Be located in the river or its corridor (generally within 1/4 mile on either side of the river);
2. Contribute substantially to the functioning of the river ecosystem, or
3. Be river-dependent and owe their location or existence to the presence of the river.

The determination that a river corridor does or does not contain one or more ORVs is a professional judgement on the part of the responsible official, as informed by the interdisciplinary team, best available scientific information, and public participation (FSH 1909.12-2015-1, Section 82.73).

Categories for Outstandingly Remarkable Values

Categories for ORVs, the region of comparison they were evaluated within for the GMUG, and any other specific criteria used to determine eligibility for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System are described below:

1. **Scenery:** The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions as compared to similar scenic values within the appropriate ecological section (see Table 1). When analyzing scenic values, additional factors—such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed—may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment.

   Additionally, the GMUG considered areas identified as having distinctive scenic attractiveness in the scenery management system developed as part of the plan revision effort in this category.

2. **Recreation:** Recreational opportunities are, or have the potential to be, popular enough to attract visitors from throughout or beyond the State of Colorado or are unique or rare within the Western Slope region of Colorado. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes.

   River-related opportunities could include, but are not limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating. Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and attract, or have the potential to attract, visitors from outside the region of comparison. The river may provide, or have the potential to provide, settings for national or regional usage or competitive events.

   The GMUG considered information about permitted recreation activities, recreation manager knowledge, and public recreation information received during the plan revision process from stakeholders.

3. **Geology:** The river, or the area within the river corridor, contains one or more examples of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is unique or rare within the appropriate ecological section (see Table 1). The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a "textbook" example, and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, or other geologic structures).

4. **Fish:** Fish values will be evaluated within the appropriate ecological section (see Table 1). Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of fish populations, habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions.

   a. **Populations:** The river is nationally or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered, or species of conservation concern. Consideration should be given to the number of listed or sensitive species present (diversity) and/or the uniqueness of the populations (e.g., genetic purity, presence of rare life history stages—adfluvial forms that migrate from streams to lakes or reservoirs for part of their life cycle, etc.) when determining "outstanding remarkable." The GMUG threshold for this ORV was conservation populations of green lineage Colorado River cutthroat trout that are brood stock source for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

   b. **Habitat:** The river provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region of comparison. Of particular significance is exemplary habitat for wild stocks and/or federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered, or species of conservation concern. Consideration is given to aquatic ecosystems that are largely "intact" with minimal anthropogenic influences or rare/unique habitats within the region. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."

5. **Wildlife:** Wildlife values will be evaluated within the appropriate ecological section (see Table 1). Wildlife values will be judged on the relative merits of either terrestrial or aquatic wildlife populations or habitat or a combination of these conditions.

   a. **Populations:** The river, or area within the river corridor, contains nationally or regionally important (economically or rare) populations of indigenous wildlife species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique, and/or populations of federal or state listed or proposed threatened and endangered species and may include species of conservation concern whose population may be essential for the viability of that species (e.g., boreal toad). Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."

   b. **Habitat:** The river, or area within the river corridor, provides exceptionally high-quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, and/or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions (such as an essential migration route) for federal or state listed or proposed threatened and endangered species. Consideration should be given to those species whose habitat is essential for the eventual recovery of the species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such

that the biological needs of the species are met. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of "outstandingly remarkable."

6. **Historic and Cultural Values**

   a. **Prehistory:** The river, or area within the river corridor, contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must have unique or rare characteristics or exceptional human-interest value(s). Sites may have importance for interpreting prehistory within the region defined in A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin or A Context for the Southern Colorado River Basin; may be rare and represent an area where a culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; and/or may have been used by cultural groups for rare sacred purposes. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the National Park Service.

      Forest archeologists identified river segments with known cultural resources that meet these criteria and the criteria for historical values, below; however, for most locations there is not enough information on each cultural resource to say they are of "outstandingly remarkable value" mainly because the sites have not been thoroughly researched or excavated to recover their scientific information.

   b. **History:** The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) or feature(s) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or unique within the State of Colorado. Consideration should be given to the historic importance to attract visitors and historians from throughout or beyond the State of Colorado. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A historic site(s) and/or features(s) is 50 years old or older in most cases.

7. **Other Values:** Vegetation, scientific, and paleontological values have been considered as other values for the GMUG evaluation.

   a. **Vegetation:** The river, or area within the river corridor, provides exceptionally unique vegetation of regional significance. For this GMUG eligibility study, consideration was given to community types and rare plants identified by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program ranked as G1 or S1 (globally or subnationally ranged critically imperiled), G2 or S2 (globally or subnationally ranked imperiled), Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas with biodiversity significance rankings of B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Significance and B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance, and species of conservation concern that are river-dependent.

   b. **Scientific:** This "other value" is considered by the GMUG where concentrations of scientific studies and/or presence of scientific research facilities is located within river corridors and studies are river-related.

   c. **Paleontology:** Large concentrations of fossils can be found in exposed Morrison Formation. Personnel from the Uncompahgre Field Office recognized such an

area along the San Miguel River Segment 1, which they determined was eligible in their 2013 Draft Resource Management Plan Revision and Environmental Impact Statement. The GMUG contains a contiguous portion of the San Miguel River, which also contains exposed Morrison Formation, and this “other value” has been considered as an ORV.

Classification of Eligible Rivers

Under Section 2(b) of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, eligible river segments are required to be classified as wild, scenic, or recreational. The preliminary classification is based on the existing level of development in the river and surrounding corridor. River segments may have differing classifications when levels of human use and activity create different degrees of development given that each segment is of sufficient length to warrant unique management. The three classification categories for eligible rivers include:

1. **Wild:** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.
2. **Scenic:** Those rivers or sections of rivers free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
3. **Recreational:** Those rivers or sections of rivers readily accessible by road or railroad, which may have some development along their shoreline and that may have undergone some impoundments or diversion in the past.

In the case of scenic and recreational river classifications, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act does not specify water quality standards, however the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 made it a national goal that all waters of the United States are made fishable and swimmable. Therefore, rivers will not be precluded from scenic or recreational classification because of poor water quality at the time of their study, provided a water quality improvement plan exists, or is being developed in compliance with applicable Federal and State laws. (FSH 1909.12-2015-1, Section 82.8 Exhibit 01)

Eligibility Evaluation Results

Meetings were held with staff from each ranger district and with members of the plan revision interdisciplinary team to solicit local expertise on river segments in question. The purpose of these meetings was to review the stream inventory, revisit eligibility evaluations conducted during previous forest planning efforts for the GMUG, and to evaluate any stream segments that were not previously studied to determine which, if any, segments should be carried forward as eligible in the current forest plan revision effort. Discussions were documented in meeting notes and summarized in spreadsheets in the project record. Segments brought forward by the districts were reviewed by the planning interdisciplinary team. Segments agreed to by all as eligible were carried forward to the forest supervisor, the responsible official for the plan revision. The responsible official has discretion over whether or not a river segment is eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The resulting river segments recommended as eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are listed in the following tables: Gunnison District, Table 2; Ouray District, Table 3; Norwood District, Table 4; and Grand Valley District, Table 5. The location of these river segments on the GMUG is shown in Figure 1. The combined length of all eligible river segments is approximately 112 miles, and the total number of eligible Forest Service river corridor (1/4 mile each side of the river center) acres is approximately 32,700.

Table 2. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Gunnison District

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
Oh-be-joyful Creek and tributaries	Oh-be-joyful Creek, Blue Lake tributary, and Dippold Basin tributary (1A)	6.56	Scenery	1,937.87	Wild	The first group of segments, including Oh-be-joyful Creek, along with Blue Lake and Dippold Basin tributaries (together 1A), features hanging gardens as well as outstanding views of the Ruby Range from within the river corridor. These segments have a number of waterfalls, lakes, and tarns associated with the creek, wild high-alpine flower-filled basins, and steep canyons, each shaped by the wild nature of the roaring creek. Approximately 8 miles of foot and horse trails, including Daisy Pass and Oh-be-joyful Pass, lie within the river corridor.
	Oh-be-joyful Creek (1B)	1.66	Recreation	389.11	Recreation	Flowing from the Raggeds Wilderness boundary to the confluence with the Slate River, the second segment of Oh-be-joyful Creek (1B) provides excellent opportunities for extreme kayaking, with a series of 18- to 25-foot waterfalls that are unique features on the Western Slope, drawing in kayakers from across the region, if not the state during the spring runoff. When considering management, it is noted that in accordance with Section 303D of the Clean Water Act, this segment and all of the Oh-Be-Joyful tributaries are currently listed as impaired, with elevated levels of cadmium and zinc.
	Peeler Basin tributary to Oh-be-joyful Creek (1C)	2.26	Scenery	808.48	Wild	The Peeler Basin tributary (1C) features outstanding scenery influenced by the wild and roaring creek; a wildflower-filled setting that includes the three Peeler Lakes, a large waterfall and steep canyon below the lakes, and the high-alpine, cirque-like setting of the tributary itself.
	Redwell Basin tributary (1D)	1.17	Botanical/ Vegetation	444.09	Recreation	The Redwell Basin tributary (1D) features an iron fen as well as a unique plant community, including *Carex aquatilis-sphagnum angustifolium*, a species ranked Subnational Imperiled (S2) by NatureServe that resides within and depends upon the stream corridor.

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
West Elk Creek	West Elk Creek	15.74	Scenery, Geology	4,930.76	Wild	Beginning in West Elk Basin and flowing along the southern flank of West Elk Peak, West Elk Creek flows unrestricted for 15 miles through National Forest System lands, winding in and out of the West Elk Wilderness Area, rushing through lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service before running into Blue Mesa Reservoir. The Creek offers outstanding scenery and geology as the wild water courses through steep canyons characterized by wall outcrops of West Elk Breccia. Due to uneven weathering depending on the hardness of the rock, breccia offers unique formations that astound visitors. The canyon depth averages 1,500-2,000 feet, offering an almost inaccessibly wild experience, with less than 4 miles of trail following West Elk Creek. This segment was brought forward as eligible during the planning effort of the early 2000's.
West Soap Creek	West Soap Creek	2.83	Scenery, Geology	1,023.69	Wild	West Soap Creek offers outstanding scenery and geology as the wild creek cascades down a large cataract and lesser waterfalls, and courses through steep, narrow canyons. The lower half of the creek corridor is characterized by wall outcrops of West Elk Breccia, which, due to uneven weathering depending on the hardness of the rock, offers unique formations that astound visitors. The canyon depth averages 1,400 feet on both sides, and elevation drops down to the creek in less than 1/2 mile, offering a wild and challenging experience almost unmarked by trails. This segment was brought forward as eligible during the planning effort of the early 2000's.
Copper Creek and Tributaries	Copper Creek (9)	3.32	Wildlife	1,131.71	Recreation (for a portion), otherwise Wild	The Triangle Pass tributaries (G9B) contain what may be the last population of chytrid-free boreal toad in the Gunnison Basin, used as a source for brood stock to support reintroduction efforts and population supplementation elsewhere. Toads may use areas within 1.6 miles of a breeding pond. The other segments are within 1.6 miles of the boreal toad breeding areas on the Triangle Pass tributaries of Copper Creek. This provides an outstanding resource value for this important population of a
	Copper Lake Tributary (9A)	0.59	Wildlife	312.42	Wild	
	Triangle Pass Tributaries to Copper Creek (9B)	2.2	Wildlife	701.26	Wild	

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
	Copper Creek Tributaries (9C)	1.44	Wildlife	638.76	Wild	rare and declining species listed by the state as endangered.
	Queen Basin Tributaries to Copper Creek (9D)	2.3	Wildlife	788.55	Wild	

Table 3. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Ouray District

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
Cow Creek and Tributaries	Cow Creek (24)	5.21	Scenery, Geology, Botanical/ Vegetation	1737.79	Wild	Rushing through steep narrow canyons within the Uncompahgre Wilderness Area, Cow Creek and its tributaries offer outstanding scenery and geological features. Steep canyon walls, averaging a depth of 1,400 feet on both sides, form an almost inaccessible barrier to the upper portion of the watershed, and the lower portion remains unmarked by trails, providing a wild and challenging experience for the most intrepid of visitors. Most portions fall within distinctive scenic attractiveness classification, and large waterfalls and unique geological formations astound the few that venture here. The lower section of Cow Creek is a priority conservation area ranked B2 for very high biodiversity significance by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.
	Wetterhorn Creek (24A)	0.98	Scenery, Geology	431.47	Wild	
	Wildhorse Creek (24B)	2.04	Scenery, Geology	762.07	Wild	
	Difficulty Creek (24 C)	1.85	Scenery, Geology	708.91	Wild	
Roubideau Creek and Tributaries	Roubideau Creek	13.29	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	3803.29	Wild	Characterized by outstanding scenery and geology, Roubideau Creek and its tributaries flow within the Roubideau Area, a congressionally designated area managed to preserve its wilderness character. This area was not designated as wilderness because there is a water diversion upstream of the areas boundary. Shaped over millennia by the water, Roubideau
	Moore Creek	3.36	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	1124.13	Wild	

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
	Traver Creek	1.89	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	694.87	Wild	Canyon, through which the creek and tributaries flow, is considered a secret treasure with expansive vistas, diverse ecosystems, and outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and educational and scientific study. Most of these segments fall within the distinctive scenic attractiveness classification, and are also within the Roubideau Creek priority conservation area ranked B2 for very high biodiversity significance by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program for several riparian community types. Approximately 11 miles of Forest Service Trails, including Horseshoe Basin (6107), Ben Low (6109), Old Transfer (6110), Traver Mesa (6111), Coal Bank (6112), and Travel (6119), lie within the river corridor. The adjacent segment of Roubideau Creek was found by the Bureau of Land Management to be a suitable segment for recreation, wildlife, cultural, and vegetation ORVs.
	Al Wright Creek	0.44	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	264.85	Wild	
	Terrible Creek	0.51	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	288.14	Wild	
	Long Creek	2.28	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	821.75	Wild	
	Bull Creek	1.6	Scenery, Geology, Vegetation	631.31	Wild	

Table 4. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Norwood District

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
Tabeguache Creek and North Fork	Tabeguache Creek (N14)	3.56	Scenery, Heritage (Prehistoric)	1,165.37	Wild	Characterized by outstanding scenery, Tabeguache Creek and its North Fork flow within the Tabeguache Area, a congressionally designated area managed to preserve its wilderness character. Beginning in the fertile subalpine bowls atop the Uncompahgre Plateau, Tabeguache Creek plunges quickly into a steep-walled canyon on brilliant red Wingate sandstone, while its North Fork takes a more leisurely route, winding five miles through an unbroken expanse of vibrant aspen before it also drops abruptly into a deep canyon lined with red sandstone cliffs. These cliffs, normally associated with desert terrain, are surrounded by lush greenery in this unique melding of canyon and mountain country. Loosely translated as “place where the snow melts first” or “sunnyside,” the area is named for the Tabeguache band of Utes who roamed the Plateau. These segments are classified
	Tabeguache Creek (N3)	2.9	Scenery	1,004.26	Wild	
	North Fork Tabeguache Creek (N4)	2.05	Scenery	767.81	Wild	

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
						as distinct scenic attractiveness. Given its almost continual use over millennia, Tabeguache Creek (14) harbors a high density of cultural resources; both historic, including Robber's Roost, and prehistoric sites have been identified and evaluated in this area. FST Indian Trail (5500), follows the creek for approximately one mile, otherwise the area is remote and challenging to access. The adjacent segment of Tabeguache Creek was found by the BLM to be a suitable segment for vegetation ORV as flowing within a Colorado Natural Heritage Program-designated Potential Conservation Area for several riparian community types.
San Miguel River	Segment 1 (N5)	0.08	Scenery, Recreation	57.14	Recreation	Segment one is near the BLM's Beaver Creek Campground, while segment two is southeast of the confluence of the San Miguel River with Horsefly Creek. Offering outstanding scenery and recreational opportunities, particularly boating, these segments of the San Miguel River flow along the southwestern portions of the Uncompahgre Plateau. The adjacent segments of the San Miguel River were found by the BLM to be suitable with ORVs for scenery, recreation, wildlife for concentration of over 300 bird species, historic resources for the Galloping Goose railroad, vegetation for different riparian types, and paleontology for the density of fossils.
	Segment 2 (N6)	0.37	Scenery, Recreation	103.06	Wild	

Table 5. Eligible rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the Grand Valley District

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
North Fork Escalante and Kelso	North Fork Escalante Creek (GV1)	12.63	Fish	3,503.27	Wild	Flowing through from their headwaters on the north end of the Uncompahgre Plateau, these segments provide habitat and host important conservation populations of greenback cutthroat trout, with the Points and North Fork Escalante populations demonstrating greater than 90-percent genetic purity. Colorado
	Points Creek (GV2)	3.38	Fish	1,165.83	Wild	

Grouping	WSR Segment	Length (miles)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	FS River Corridor Acres	Classification	Notes
	Kelso Creek (GV3)	13.21	Fish	3,748.27	Wild	Parks and Wildlife uses greenback cutthroat trout from this area as brood stock to support reintroduction efforts elsewhere. Collectively, Points, North Fork, and Kelso Creeks offer several miles of contiguous, high-quality habitat unrivaled across the Forests and critical for its connectivity, genetic integrity, and remoteness. Approximately twelve miles of foot and horse trails, including South Bench (2626) and Short Point (2615), lie within the corridor.

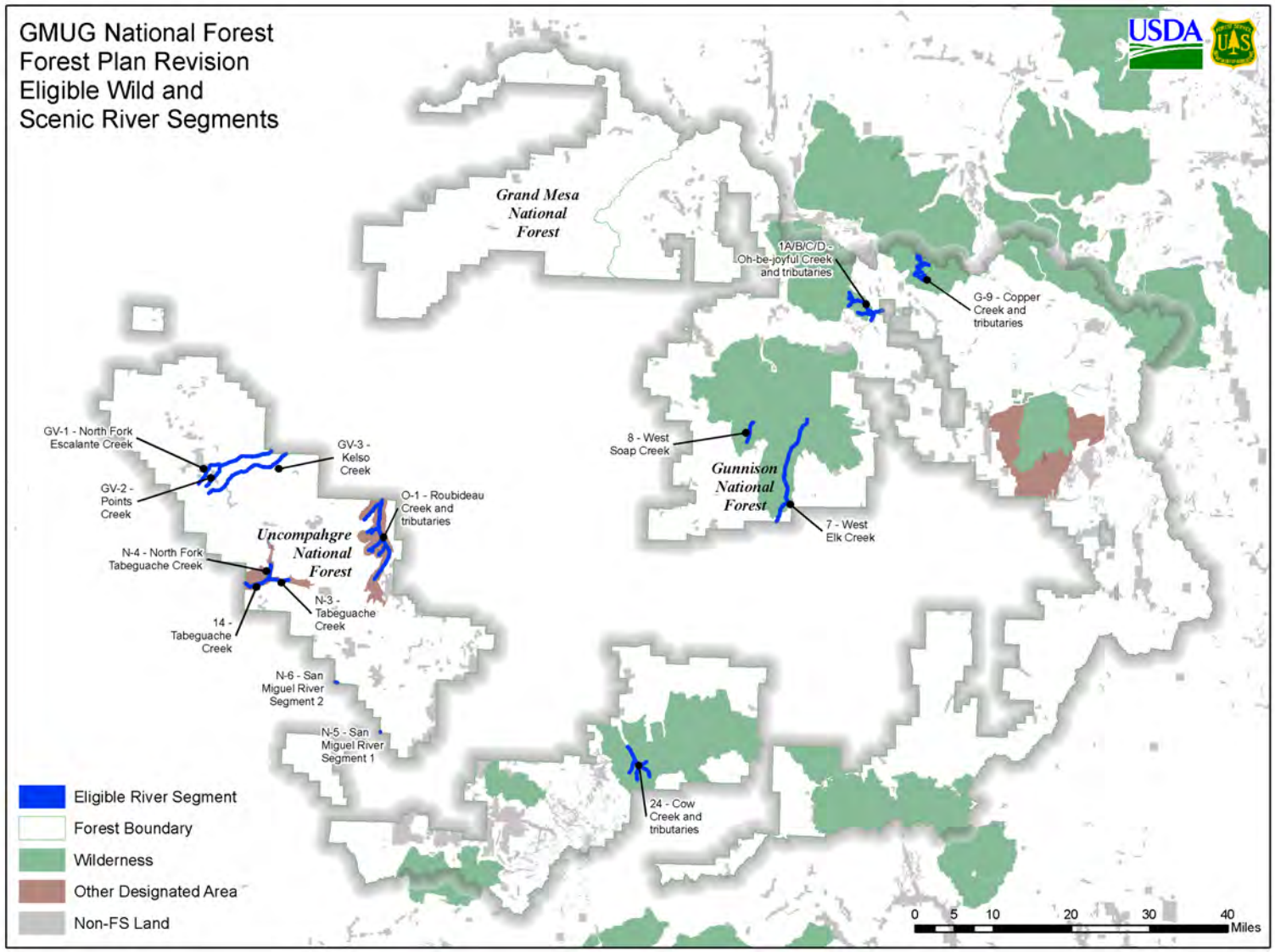

Figure 1. Eligible wild and scenic river segments for the GMUG National Forests

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