

ROCC PLC July 2023 Report

Issues We're Studying:

A. Ouray County Master Plan

(The points below were submitted by Rein)

1. Given that the Ouray county planning commission has found no fault with a 1999 county master plan and agreeing that there are still many policy recommendations from that plan that remain incomplete, it is advocated that the unfinished goal policies be completed as a part of the new master plan.
2. Understanding that one of the primary reasons why many old policies of the 1999 county master plan were not completed due to a shortage of resources, both human and technical, it is recommended that the necessary resources be committed by the county to complete this task.
3. Acknowledging that an incomplete 1999 County master plan leads to negative consequences for wildlife and plant habitats, it is recommended that the county land use decision have annotations/references to whatever county master plan is current and in force.
4. Agreeing that neither wildlife nor plants observe political boundaries, it is recommended that there be at least two new goals or categories for a revised master plan: 1. Public lands and 2. Water sustainability.

B. Imperiled And Vulnerable To Extinction Vegetation

(Thanks to Mary Menz who forwarded this info to us)

The COLORADO NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM has listed the Imperiled and vulnerable to extinction plants in the Upper San Juan and Uncompaghre River Basin. We are in the process of cross referencing with Ouray County Forest Service lands.

Ranking system:

1. critically imperiled
2. imperiled
3. vulnerable to extirpation
4. apparently secure
5. demonstrably, widespread, abundant, insecure

(Common Name)

San Juan Draba – S3
Clay-loving wild buckwheat – S1S2
Cliff Palace Milkvetch – S1S2
Clawless Draba – S2S3
Sleeping Ute Milkvetch – S1
Montrose Bladderpod – S2S3
Smooth Easter Daisy – S2
Mesa Verde Stickseed – S1S2
Adobe Hills Thistle – S3
Chapin Mesa Milkvetch – S1S2
Rossrock Townsend Daisy-S3
Colorado desert parsley – S2S3

Hell's Tansy mustard – S2
Malpighiaceae Draba – S1?
West Silver Bladderpod – S1
Pagosa Skyrocket – S1S2

C. Elk Low Survival Rate Last Winter

(Kate, Roze, Al, Rein & Arleen are studying this)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has made the decision to reduce big-game hunting licenses and shorten season dates after one of the most severe winter seasons Colorado has seen in recent history. According to CPW, the unprecedented license reductions and shortening of the season follows what they're calling the most severe snow conditions of the past 70 years in Colorado's northwest region. Severe winter weather and increased snowpack can be a major stressor for Colorado's wildlife, making it more difficult to find sustenance with most plant life buried under feet of powder. CPW has called the survival rates of elk the lowest ever documented and below what was previously thought to be possible.

As a result of the severe winter weather and the population impacts it brought with it, a 12 percent big-game license reduction is taking place statewide – the equivalent of 32,000 licenses. A number of state game management units in northwest Colorado have also had season length shortened to just five days for over-the-counter elk licenses.

At our last PLC meeting we conferenced with Tony Gaby, CDOT regional director in Durango, who is sending us data on the roadkill on Hwy 550 just north of Ridgway and Hwy 62 just west of Ridgway. He just received word that this section of the road does qualify for signage. We also want to advocate getting the speed limit lowered with a flashing lit sign. Another step is requesting Sheriff Justin Perry to put a patrol car there at dusk during full moons.

D. Green Trees In National Forest Being Logged (All Plc)

What started out as logging our national forests to get rid of dead and diseased trees has turned into cutting down green trees. "The shift came at the behest of the timber industry -- specifically Montrose Forest Products-- because their milling operations could not make the dead trees profitable." (Our Forests Deserve Better -The View -Telluride Daily Planet, June 21, 2023) The Forest Service has logged 36,000 acres on the Western Slope, without any new environmental analysis or public comment. The Sheep Mountain Alliance is already involved with this issue and we're trying to gather more information from them.

E. Discover Magazine reaches 18,000 people. ROCC has an expanded the original "Save the Blues" ad to "Save the San Juans" with Leave No Trace Info.

F. Blue Lakes Ambassadors Via San Juan Mt Assoc Support

We're continuing promoting people to sign up.