

**CENTRAL REGION USGS BLM SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP FUNDS
FY 03 Project/Activity Outcome Report
Due: January 9, 2004**

Date:	
Project/Activity Title	<u>Colorado Canyon NCA Fee Demo Survey</u>
Account Number(s)	<u>8327-PPPF8</u>
Principal Investigator:	<u>Phadrea D. Ponds</u>
Partners and Collaborators and Affiliation:	<u>Grand Junction BLM and Mesa State College</u>
Total Funding Approved	<u>\$20,000</u>
Total Expenditures:	<u>\$14,000</u>

Objective of Project/Activity: (Provide short description of project goals and list outcomes/products.)

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of visitors to public lands in the CCNCA toward the introduction of user fees. To this end, we conducted an intercept survey of recreational users at the CCNCA and a mail survey of the "attentive public" (local residents who are actively involved in decision-making regarding recreation on public lands in Mesa County). The mail survey provided us with input from the "attentive public" and it is intended to help us determine if there are differences in fee attitudes between members of the general public who recreate on public lands and members of the "attentive public" who are actively involved in decision making regarding recreation on public lands.

In the fall of 2002 the Policy Analysis and Science Assistance Program (PASA) of the Fort Collins Science Center (FORT) in the U. S. Geological Survey met with the staff of the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area to discuss the issues related to social, economic and human dimensions of natural resource management as it related to the RMP planning process. As a result of this meeting, a combination of studies were designed to evaluate how humans are affected by environmental management decisions and how human activities interact with natural resource management.

The objective of the survey was to determine: (1) what are visitors' attitudes and preferences regarding recreation at the NCA, (2) what are the important differences between locals and non-local residents regarding their attitudes about the management of the NCA and; (3) what are the important difference between local and non-locals regarding their attitudes about paying a fee to visit the NCA. The answers to these questions are to provide insight for BLM managers about visitor expectation for quality recreational experiences.

Project/Activity Accomplishments: (What outcomes/products were achieved including what benefits were derived and by whom?)

Outcomes/Products: In the spring of 2003 we distributed a questionnaire¹ by mail, to 400 potential respondents who had attended BLM public meetings, within the past two years,

¹ Approval to conduct the survey was obtained through the formal OMB approval process (OMB Control Number 1040-0001).

or were actively involved in decision-making regarding recreation on public lands in Mesa County. A total of 203 respondents completed and returned the survey for a response rate of 66%. According to Dillman (2000) a response rate of 50% or better is very good for a mail out survey. We also handed out surveys at five field sites (Dinosaur Hill, Devils Canyon, Rabbit Valley, Kokopelli's Trail and Loma Boat Launch) in the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area. More than 1,000 visitors to these recreational areas were intercepted and given a survey to complete at home and mail back. The response rate for the intercept survey was better than 50%.

The benefits derived from this process was the cultivation of a firm working relationship with the BLM management staff, several BLM social scientist in the BLM Denver Office and the National Office in Washington, DC. We have increased the visibility of social science in the USGS and other research capabilities of PASA and the FORT by participating in regional BLM meeting and the CCNCA advisory council meetings.

Presentations:

Phadrea Ponds and Shana Gillette 2003. "Visitor Attitudes Toward Charging Fees at Selected Sites within the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area Preliminary data and results: Mail and Intercept Surveys."

Results: (Describe status of the project to date if not complete)

The accomplishments to date:

1. Data collection, entry, and analysis completed September 2003.
2. Draft report of findings submitted to BLM staff on October, 2003
3. Final report due to BLM January 16, 2004.
4. Publication: Phadrea Ponds and Shana Gillette. 2004. "Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area: A Survey of Visitor Experiences – Completion Report." (in progress).