

CENTRAL REGION USGS BLM SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP FUNDS
FY 02 Project/Activity Status Report
Due: November 29, 2002

Date: November 19, 2002
Project/Activity Title: Gunnison Gorge vegetation characterization and invasive plants inventory
Account Number: FORT 3302-34337
Principal Investigator: Geneva Chong (invasive plants)
Karl Brown (vegetation characterization)
Partners/Collaborators and Affiliation: Karen Tucker/ BLM Project Officer
Total Funding Approved: \$36,100 (vegetation sampling)
\$16,300 (requested for mapping)
Total Expenditures: \$2,055 (FORT science support)
Request for Expanded Work: \$36,000 (veg. sampling: Mancos Shale)
\$ (technician for veg. Map)

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

Proposed in the January 2002 proposal (dates are now off by one year):

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS: Managers need a baseline characterization of the ecology of the BLM Gunnison Gorge NCA, which must include information on invasive plants for the development of weed management alternatives and recommendations. Protocols for characterizing both plant associations (vegetation ecology) and invasive plant status, including accuracy assessments, can yield a scientifically valid baseline of ecological information (spatial databases, maps, data for predictive spatial models) for resource management.

OBJECTIVES: Combine the BLM staffing and efforts with the neighboring NPS staff and efforts to produce a common and interrelated vegetation characterization product. Utilize invasive plant survey techniques to evaluate their status in a portion of the Gunnison Gorge NCA.

PRODUCTS AND SCHEDULE: MSAccess database with built-in analysis forms for the Modified-Whittaker data: March 2003. Preliminary weed maps (point maps, developed from the MSAccess database): March 2003. Methods training for local staff: as requested and with presentation of final products (informal workshops or briefings). Modified-Whittaker data dovetail to vegetation mapping data protocol: March 2002. Vegetation characterization facilitated 1-day meeting in March 2002 in Montrose, CO. Characterization field training of 1.5 days in April 2002 at Black Canyon and Gunnison Gorge field sites. Vegetation data analysis and preliminary mapping March 2003. In order to develop a vegetation map, funding for a winter-time seasonal and access to

software and hardware would be required for automation of GIS polygons, accuracy assessment of maps and database.

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

Funding was received June 17, 2002 in the amount of \$36,100 for the FY02 vegetation sampling portion of the project. Because the funding was received too late to hire and deploy a vegetation sampling crew, all partners on the proposal agreed to postpone the field sampling until the 2003 field season. Current benefits include ongoing communication between all partners to ensure that the highest priority areas are sampled in the 2003 season.

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

Currently, we are maintaining communication with Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area management/partners and we have expanded communication with the Mancos Shale research group to explore the leveraging potential of coordinating vegetation sampling with the Mancos Shale research. We are on schedule for initial vegetation sampling in 2003, but please note that the initial funding only allows sampling of a relatively small portion of the NCA, and any additional funding (and increased duration of funding) would greatly improve the quality of this research. Please see the attached proposal for more details on the initial project (note that the dates are off by one year).

Leveraging Potential:

The Mancos Shale and Upper Colorado River initiatives (Richard Grauch, Paul von Guerard et al.) will both directly benefit from vegetation information from the Gunnison Gorge NCA because vegetation directly affects water and soil movement in a system. Funding of an additional vegetation crew (\$36,000) for the 2003 field season would allow vegetation sampling as originally conceived and vegetation sampling specifically directed towards the Mancos Shale and recreational use issues/areas. Any increase in vegetation sampling would also improve a subsequent vegetation map, and additional funding for creation of a vegetation map would greatly improve the usefulness of the sampling results overall (salary for a technician; discuss funding amount with Karl Brown).