



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Dillon Ranger District Outfitter / Guides Additional Use Environmental Assessment

Dillon Ranger District, White River National Forest, Summit County, Colorado
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Keystone Science School instructor educating youth about the forest (Keystone Science School photo)

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Introduction

The Forest Service is proposing to authorize increased use for four outfitter / guides who currently operate throughout the Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest.

The Forest Service prepared this environmental assessment (EA) to determine whether implementation of increased outfitter guide use may significantly affect the quality of the human environment and thereby require the preparation of an environmental impact statement. By preparing this EA, we are fulfilling agency policy and direction to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Proposed Project Location

The project area is located on national forest lands within Summit County, Colorado. The use is primarily on designated system roads and trails; however, some use occurs off of designated routes.

A competitive interest analysis was conducted to determine the likelihood that other businesses or organizations would be interested in offering the same services. It was determined that because of the specialized nature of these four outfitters that there would be no competitive interest.

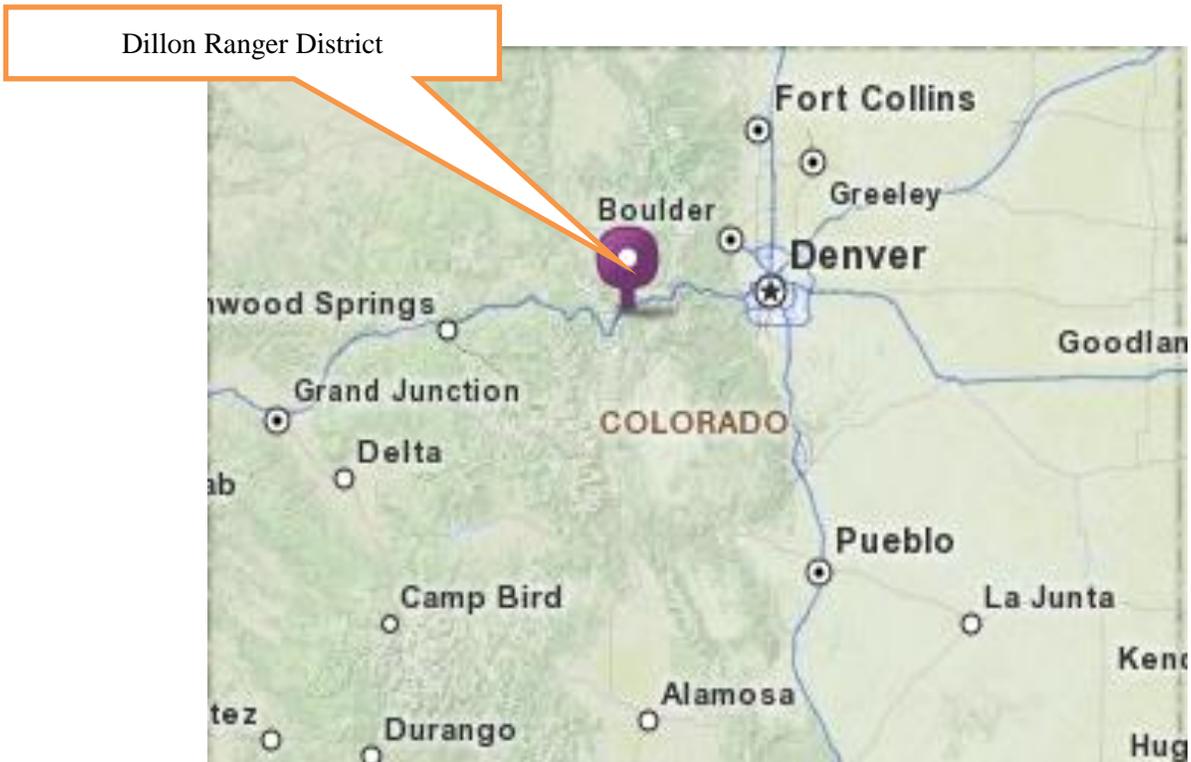


Figure 1. Vicinity map

Need for the Proposal

Purpose

The purpose of the proposal is to allow for currently permitted outfitter / guides to expand their operations to include additional use on permitted routes and areas and to expand into other areas on the District.

Need

There is a need to educate the public (especially young people) about environmental issues and conservation through the efforts of the permitted outfitter/guides. Resources available to the Forest Service are very limited and outfitter / guides are essential in accomplishing this mission.

There is a need for existing outfitter / guides to expand their operations to allow for greater variety in their education and recreation programs.

There is a need to respond to the demand for environmental education opportunities.

There is a need to offer opportunities to the visitors to the Dillon Ranger District who do not have the skills or equipment to participate in particular recreation activities.

There is a need to allow the businesses associated with the permittees to diversify so that they can be economically and financially stable and contribute to the local economy.

Public Involvement and Tribal Consultation

The Forest Service consulted the following Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies during the development of this EA:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, Summit County Government and planning commissions, and the towns of Dillon, Silverthorne, Frisco, and Breckenridge. No issues or concerns were submitted from any organization or individual.

Consultation with Tribes was accomplished by providing the White River National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions each quarter.

No Action – Alternative 1

Under this alternative, the proposed action would not be implemented. The four permittees would only offer the services that are currently authorized under their existing special use authorization.

Proposed Action- Alternative 2

Four outfitter / guides who possess 10-year priority use permits to conduct commercial activities on the Dillon Ranger District have requested permission to offer additional outfitter/guide opportunities on the national forest. The permittees have requested to offer services to more

people on the same routes and areas that are currently identified on their special use authorizations. Additionally, they have requested to offer the same activities on new routes and areas in the District. The additional use is measured in user days. A user day is one person participating in an activity for all or part of one day. A person recreating for 1 hour and a person recreating for 12 hours are both considered one user day. The following is a brief description of the permittees and their proposed additional use.

- 1) **Colorado Mountain College (CMC)** has a local campus which includes field trips on the National Forest. They are requesting an additional 1,624 user days. Permitted activities include hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and ice climbing. All of these activities are associated with course instruction.
- 2) **Keystone Science School (KSS)** operates a youth environmental education facility with field trips on the National Forest. They are requesting an additional 2,108 user days. Permitted activities include hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and camping. All of these activities are associated with course instruction.
- 3) **Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC)** provides outdoor experiences for mentally and physically challenged persons (primarily youth). They are requesting an additional 1,260 user days. Permitted activities include hiking, biking, backpacking, and snowshoeing.
- 4) **Rocky Mountaineering Guides (RMG)** offers mountaineering (winter and summer) activities. The permittee is requesting an additional 155 user days. Trips usually consist of 2-5 clients. This proposal is primarily for the same activities in new locations.

A total of 5,147 user days are proposed.

For detailed information, refer to the Appendices B and C. There are eight documents that are entitled with the outfitter / guide name followed by winter or summer routes. These spreadsheets identify the summer and winter activities for each outfitter / guide. For example, in the Colorado Mountain College summer routes document, the Summer Rocky Mountain Birds – Old Dillon Reservoir course currently involves a total of 16 people on several dates between April and May. The proposed additional use is for 8 people. The routes involved are shown on Map #103 which is in Appendix C.

Refinement of the Proposed Action

The impacts to the natural resources are primarily limited to increased foot travel either on system roads and trails or cross-country foot travel off of those routes. Ninety-seven percent of the proposed use is educational in nature. The permittees are guiding students into the forest in order to provide nature-based education. Most of the proposed use is not measurably increasing the amount of recreation use in the Dillon Ranger District; it is increasing travel in the same areas where visitors recreate. Ninety-one percent of the proposed use is on system roads and trails, therefore, only a small amount of use is cross-country travel.

Table 1 – Summary of use on and off system trails.

Outfitter / Guide	Total User Days on System Roads and Trails	Total User Days off of System Roads and Trails
Colorado Mountain College	1,346	278
Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center	1,235	25
Keystone Science School	2,053	55
Rocky Mountaineering Guides	25	130
TOTAL	4,659	488

The four permittees submitted proposals for numerous activities on the Dillon Ranger District for a total of 21,330 user days. Each proposed activity in specific locations was analyzed by the District Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) to determine consistency with the White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. A list of screening criteria was developed to eliminate activities inconsistent with direction and objectives. The screening criteria identified where social or natural resource concerns existed. If design criteria could be developed to address concerns, then proposed activities were included in the Proposed Action. If the concerns could not be mitigated, then the activities were dropped from the proposal. For example, where use is proposed in wilderness in areas that already receive high use, the proposal was modified to weekdays only when use is lowest. The Proposed Action contains about 24% of the activities requested by the permittees. Most of eliminated activities were off-trail use. The Proposed Action was developed such that there would be minimal effects to the resources considered. The following screening criteria were used to identify potential negative effects and to refine the Proposed Action:

- Located in Wilderness Pristine Management Area 1.1
- Associated parking areas have capacity problems
- Associated trails are in poor condition.
- Use on non-system trails
- Areas in wilderness where high use exists
- Located in or near occupied boreal toad habitat, or previously occupied boreal toad habitat.
- Involves camping within 100 feet of water bodies
- Involves off-trail travel in or near wetlands or within 100 feet of water bodies
- Involves off-trail use in watersheds that have green lineage cutthroat trout or certain blue lineage cutthroat trout populations.
- Includes use off of system roads or trails where there is occupied or suitable Eutrema habitat within an area where U.S. Fish and Wildlife consultation would be necessary.
- Includes use in habitat for Eutrema that has not yet been surveyed

- Includes off-trail use in alpine areas that have not yet been surveyed for threatened or endangered or R2 Sensitive plants
- Includes use in sensitive botanical areas.
- Includes camping or travel through fens or wetlands
- Needs additional field work to determine effects (because additional resources are not available to perform the field work)
- Includes use in areas that are known occupied Canada lynx habitat (summer or winter).
- Includes off trail use in the Canada lynx conservation corridor, lynx movement corridor, and/or lynx linkage zones (summer or winter)
- Includes use in elk winter range (during the winter)
- Includes use in elk calving areas (during the spring)
- Includes off trail use in alpine areas
- Is located in areas where birds are nesting in the alpine in the spring and summer.
- Includes use in known raptor nesting habitat.
- Increases winter snow compaction.
- Is located on the Continental Divide land bridge (over the Eisenhower/Johnson tunnels)

Because foot travel off of system trails can negatively impact threatened, endangered or sensitive plant species, those activities that were proposed in areas where these plants are known to exist were dropped from the proposed action. Even winter activities (crosscountry skiing and snowshoeing) can cause snow compaction which can adversely affect these plants. Additionally, in alpine areas where these plants are likely to exist, but have not been surveyed, proposed activities in these areas were dropped because resources are not available for additional surveys. Similarly, activities that cross known fen wetlands were re-routed or dropped from the proposal.

Boreal toads are a sensitive species and individuals can be killed by the simple act of walking and being stepped on. Activities in known boreal toad habitat were dropped from the proposal as some proposed trails are in close proximity to occupied habitat where crushed toads by foot traffic have been documented.

The Dillon Ranger District includes areas that are habitat for Canada Lynx. Specific conservation corridors have been established and known occupied habitat has been identified. Most of the proposed activities in these areas were dropped from the proposed action, but where user days were relatively low they were carried forward. In some cases, the proposed use was reduced to an acceptable level.

The Proposed Action includes the following Design Criteria:

- Any watercraft use has to have ANS inspections for Green Mtn. Reservoir or Dillon Reservoir
- For trails that receive a high amount of public recreation use, the proposed outfitter / guide use is limited to weekdays only.
- In areas with sensitive plants, use is restricted to system roads and trails.
- For the CMC winter use in the Shrine Pass area, a map of fen wetlands will be provided by the Forest Service so that they can be avoided.
- No camping or off-trail travel is allowed in fens or riparian areas
- Eagle and osprey nests will be avoided.

- Any use in elk calving areas must be after July 1.
- camping at lakes is not allowed
- In peregrine nesting areas, use will be restricted to after July 31.
- Any activities at Alpine or Nordic ski areas must be coordinated with the resort managers.
- Any activities at the Vail Pass Winter Recreation Area must be coordinated with the program manager.

Therefore, the proposal was developed such that there would be little to no effect to wildlife, botany, fisheries, cultural, or recreation resources.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL

No other alternatives were considered other than the activities that were dropped from the proposal through the screening process.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

This section summarizes the potential impacts of the proposed action and alternatives for each impacted resource. Resources that were not impacted and therefore not further analyzed include: Heritage, Scenery, Soils, and Water resources. Because the proposal does not include any ground disturbing activities, these resources will not be affected.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, the proposed action would not be implemented. The four permittees would only offer the services that are currently authorized under their existing special use authorization. There would be no additional opportunities to educate the public on the Dillon Ranger District

Without any additional use, there would be no impacts to recreation, botany, wildlife, or fisheries resources.

Alternative 2 - Proposed Action

Recreation

Forest Plan Direction

Objectives

- Improve the capability of the national forests and grasslands to provide diverse, high quality outdoor recreation opportunities (P 1-10).
- Improve the capability of national forests and rangelands to sustain desired uses, values, products, and services (P. 1-11).

Standard

- Prohibit camping within 100 feet of lakes and streams and system trails, unless exceptions are justified by terrain or specific design that protects the riparian and aquatic ecosystems (P. 2-34)

Existing Condition

Recreation activities occur throughout the Dillon Ranger District. The White River National Forest Travel Management Plan (2010) documented decisions made about travel on roads and trails. Numerous non-system routes were adopted into the travel system in an effort to provide for a wide variety of recreation uses and to disperse that use. Summer activities include: Hiking and riding of horses, mountain bikes, ATVs, and off-highway motorcycles. The road system provides access and challenge for full sized vehicles. Winter activities include snowshoeing, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing

Four local ski areas provide for alpine skiing and snowboarding as well as summer trail uses. Four Nordic centers provide for groomed cross-county skiing activities.

Several authorized commercial outfitter / guides provide assistance to those who do not have the equipment or expertise to participate in some recreation activities. There are numerous recreation events that are authorized annually (such as running and mountain bike races.)

Direct and Indirect Effects

All of the roads and trails proposed to be used by the permittees and their clients are routes that are open to the public for recreation. Because the client group sizes are typically less than 15 and the use is spread out over the winter and summer seasons, it is not anticipated that this amount of use would negatively affect the experience of the recreating public. Rocky Mountaineering Guides group sizes are 2 to 5 and most of the use is off trail so impacts to the public would be negligible. Where high use trails are proposed, the guided activities are limited to weekdays only when public use is lower. The following trails receive a high amount of use, therefore, use is prohibited on weekends: Shrine Pass, Gore Range, Rock Creek, Lower Cataract, Mesa Cortina, Eaglesmere, Upper Cataract, Elliot Ridge, Pass Lake, Peaks, Vail Pass-Ten Mile Rec path, Mount Royal, and the Swan Mountain Boulderling Trails. This restriction also reduces the likelihood of competition for parking at trailheads.

There are a few proposals that include overnight camping. In these cases, the campsites will be more than 100 feet from lakes, streams, and trails. They will be inspected to ensure compliance with Leave No Trace techniques.

Some of the proposals include use in the Eagles Nest Wilderness. The amount and type of use is consistent with maintaining wilderness character. Education activities include training that increases awareness of wilderness values and ethics.

The Colorado Mountain College proposal includes avalanche training for 348 people annually. This training improves the safety of those recreating in the national forest in the winter. All of the educational activities increase the awareness of students which leads to greater respect for nature and the Forest Service rules and regulations that are in place to protect the environment. Any program that increases participation of youth and the physically challenged persons in the national forest helps the Forest Service in its mission.

A Minimum Requirements Decision Guide process was used to address the issue that commercial enterprises are prohibited uses identified in the Wilderness Act (Section 4c).

Section 4 (d) (6), however, states that commercial services may be performed to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas. Although commercial services are a prohibited use in wilderness, the benefits of education outweigh any possible negative effects. Wilderness character will be maintained and greater understanding and support of wilderness will result through the educational services provided by the permittees.

Cumulative Effects

The area of analysis is the Dillon Ranger District. There are no other recent, current, or proposed actions that involve an increase in recreation activities, therefore, there would be no cumulative effects.

Botany

Forest Plan Direction

PROPOSED, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

- Standards**
1. Review the forest plan as necessary to determine consistency with new information concerning proposed, threatened, and endangered species (PTES) species. Where appropriate, the plan will be amended to incorporate direction resulting from new information, such as new species listed as PTES; new recovery plans, conservation agreements or conservation strategies; newly described habitats or occurrences for PTES species; newly designated critical habitats; or regional documents that contain new management direction for PTES species.
 2. Restrict activities to avoid disturbing proposed, threatened, or endangered species during breeding, young rearing, or at other times critical to survival. Exceptions may occur when individuals are adapted to human activity, or the activities are not considered a threat.
 3. Activities will be managed to avoid disturbance to sensitive species that would result in a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability. The protection will vary depending on the species, potential for disturbance, topography, location of important habitat components, and other pertinent factors. Special attention will be given during breeding, young rearing, and other times that are critical to survival of both flora and fauna.

Existing Condition

There are two categories of management status plants including; 1) Threatened, Endangered and Proposed (TEP) Species and 2) Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS). A Biological Assessment, Biological Evaluation has been prepared for this project and is available as a portion of the administrative record.

An extensive Geographic Information System (GIS) exercise was conducted in and near the project area. The pre-field review considered the elevation range, eco-region types, vegetation cover types and riparian features present within the project area as well as existing habitat

models and any management status plants that were known to occur in the vicinity to determine which management status plant species to evaluate for this analysis.

As part of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requirements, extensive field surveys for TEP and RFSS plant species were mainly focused in and near routes and areas designated for off-trail use which were identified in the original proposed action (Kirkpatrick 2010, Kirkpatrick 2011, McNeill 2010, McNeill 2011, Malone 2011, Proctor and Owen 2011, Proctor and Owen 2012, Proctor 2013, Elliot 2013). Populations of the following management status plant species were found or historic occurrences were revisited as a result of those field surveys including:

- *Eutrema penlandii* (New by Kirkpatrick 2010)
- *Armeria maritima* (Revisit by McNeill 2011)
- *Braya glabella* (New by McNeill 2010)
- *Draba exunguiculata* (Revisit by McNeill 2010, New by Elliot 2013)
- *Draba grayana* (Revisit by McNeill 2010)
- *Draba weberi* (Revisit by Proctor and Owen 2010)
- *Eriophorum gracile* (New by Malone 2011, New by Proctor 2013)
- *Kobresia simpliciuscula* (New by Malone 2011, New by Proctor 2013)
- *Parnassia kotzebuei* (Revisit by Proctor and Owen 2011, New by Proctor and Owen 2012)
- *Ptilagrostis porter* (Revisit by Proctor and Owen 2011)
- *Ranunculus karelinii* (Revisit by McNeill 2011)
- *Utricularia minor* (New by Proctor 2013)

Direct and Indirect Effects

Through project design under the final proposed action, screening criteria were used to avoid potential negative effects to TEP and RFSS plant populations and their habitats such that there would be No Effect. These criteria are listed in the description of the Proposed Action.

Through project design no plant species federally listed as Threatened, Endangered, or Proposed (TEP) have known occurrences or suitable habitat within the area of influence of the final proposed action. Because no TEP plant species or their suitable habitat occur in the action area, TEP plant species were not carried forward past the pre-field review portion of the analysis and will not be discussed further in this document.

Through project design no RFSS plant species have known occurrences or suitable habitat within the area of influence of the final proposed action. Because no RFSS plant species or their suitable habitat occur in the action area, RFSS plant species were not carried forward past the pre-field review portion of the analysis and will not be discussed further in this document.

Implementation of the proposed action would be consistent with the Endangered Species Act and would be consistent with WRNF Standards and Guidelines which are specific to the management of TESP plants.

Cumulative Effects

The project does not have any cumulative effects due to no direct or indirect effects.

Wildlife

Forest Plan Direction

Refer to the White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2002) and the Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment (2008) for Forest Plan direction.

Existing Condition

Land managed by the USFS within the Dillon Ranger District provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species including mammals protected under Endangered Species Act (ESA), Sensitive Species, and Management Indicator Species (MIS). See table 2 for a list of wildlife species found or their habitat found on the Dillon Ranger District.

Table 2: Wildlife species found on the District and potentially affected by the proposed project and its associated habitat.

Species	Status	Occupied Habitat	Habitat Present, but not Occupied
Canada lynx	Threatened	Yes, forested habitats	
Wolverine	Sensitive	Potentially, alpine habitats	All alpine habitats
American Marten	Sensitive	YES	YES
Pygmy Shrew	Sensitive	YES	YES
River Otter	Sensitive	YES	YES
Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep	Sensitive	YES	YES
Hoary Bat	Sensitive	Potentially	YES
Peregrine Falcon	Sensitive	YES	YES
Bald Eagle	Sensitive	YES	YES
Boreal Owl	Sensitive	YES	YES
Brewer's Sparrow	Sensitive	YES	YES
Northern Goshawk	Sensitive	YES	YES
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Sensitive	YES	YES
White-tailed Ptarmigan	Sensitive	YES	YES
Elk	MIS	YES	YES

Direct and Indirect Effects

The impacts to the wildlife resources are primarily limited to increased foot travel either on system roads and trails or cross-country foot travel off of those routes. Ninety-seven percent of

the proposed use is educational in nature. The permittees are guiding students into the forest in order to provide nature-based education. Ninety-one percent of the proposed use is on system roads and trails, therefore, only a small amount of use is cross-country travel.

The Interdisciplinary Team that worked on this project completed a very detailed list of project design criteria for screening out impacts to individual species or their habitat. If an individual project did not meet the list of criteria, then it was either dropped from the proposal or left in for additional analysis. The project design criteria developed for this project can be found in the appendix of this document.

There was not a single project that did not meet the project design criteria (listed under the description of the proposed action) created for wildlife resources. As a result, the proposed action would have no direct or indirect effect to any wildlife resources or their habitat.

The proposed action is consistent with all applicable Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for T&E, Sensitive, and MIS species. The proposed action would have **No Effect** to any Federally Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Sensitive, or MIS species or their habitat.

The proposed action is consistent with all applicable Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for T&E, Sensitive, and MIS species. The proposed action would have **No Effect** to any Federally Threatened, Endangered or Proposed species; **No Impact** to Region 2 Sensitive species, or MIS species or their habitat.

Cumulative Effects

The project does not have any cumulative effects due to no direct or indirect effects.

Fisheries

Forest Plan Direction

FSH 2509.25 Watershed Conservation Practices Handbook Design Criteria under Management Measure 3, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Species of Viability Concern Boreal Toad and Leopard Frog:

Standard 1. Allow no loss or reduction in habitat quality of occupied or known historic boreal toad or leopard frog habitat.

Standard 2. Maintain adequate vegetation cover around occupied boreal toad or leopard frog breeding ponds when implementing management activities to minimize avian predation on newly metamorphosed frogs and toads.

Guideline 4. Where roads or trails are located within 300 feet of occupied or historical boreal toad or leopard frog breeding sites, consider reclaiming, redirecting, or redesigning trails and user traffic to minimize direct mortality and disturbance of adjacent vegetation.

Existing Condition

Land managed by the USFS within the Dillon Ranger District provides habitat for a variety of aquatic species including fish protected under Endangered Species Act (ESA), Sensitive

Species, and Management Indicator Species (MIS). See table 3 for a list of aquatics species found or their habitat found on the Dillon Ranger District.

Table 3: Aquatic species found on the District or occurring downstream and potentially affected by Forest activities

Species	Status	Occupied Habitat	Habitat Present, but not Occupied
Bonytail	Endangered	Lower CO River species	Lower CO River Species, impacted by water withdrawals
Colorado Pikeminnow	Endangered	Lower CO River species	Lower CO River Species, impacted by water withdrawals
Humpback Chub	Endangered	Lower CO River species	Lower CO River Species, impacted by water withdrawals
Razorback Sucker	Endangered	Lower CO River species	Lower CO River Species, impacted by water withdrawals
Green Lineage Cutthroat Trout	Threatened	YES	YES
Boreal Toad	Sensitive	YES	YES
N. Leopard Frog	Sensitive	NO	YES
CO River Cutthroat Trout	Sensitive	YES	YES
Brook Trout	MIS	YES	YES
Brown Trout	MIS	YES	YES
Rainbow Trout	MIS	YES	YES
Sculpin (misc. species)	MIS	YES	YES
Aquatic Macroinvertebrates	MIS	YES	YES

Direct and Indirect Effects

The impacts to the aquatic resources are primarily limited to increased foot travel either on system roads and trails or cross-country foot travel off of those routes. Ninety-seven percent of the proposed use is educational in nature. The permittees are guiding students into the forest in order to provide nature-based education. Ninety-one percent of the proposed use is on system roads and trails, therefore, only a small amount of use is cross-country travel.

There was not a single project that did not meet the project design criteria (listed in the description of the proposed action) created for aquatic resources. As a result, the proposed action would have no effect or impact to any aquatic resources or their habitat.

The proposed action would have **No Effect** to any ESA, Sensitive, or MIS species or their habitat.

Cumulative Effects

Because the proposed action has no impact on aquatic resources, there are no cumulative impacts.

Finding of No Significant Impact

As the responsible official, I am responsible for evaluating the effects of the project relative to the definition of significance established by the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1508.13). I have reviewed and considered the EA and documentation included in the project record, and I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. As a result, no environmental impact statement will be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

Context

The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts and varies with the setting. In the case of a site-specific action, significance usually depends on the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR § 1508.27).

The environmental effects of this project are analyzed at varying scales (e.g. the project area or the watershed) as described for each resource in the EA and in the project record. I have reviewed the cumulative effects of past management combined with this project and reasonably foreseeable future actions as they are analyzed in the effect section and feel that the context of this proposal is limited to the land in and adjacent to the project area. The analysis indicates that project design and application of Forest Plan standards and guidelines and best management practices would minimize negative impacts to all resources. Given the localized nature of impacts described in the EA, the project would have no measurable effects at the regional or national levels and therefore consideration of significance will focus on the local setting.

Intensity

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, and is based on information from the effects analysis of this EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered with an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public and forest service specialists. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits. My finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using the ten factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b).

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.*

As described in the effects section and project record, there are likely to be beneficial effects, but very little adverse effects to certain resources from taking the actions proposed in the Selected Alternative. In reaching my finding of no significant impact, I did not ignore or trivialize negative effects by "offsetting" them with beneficial effects. The EA demonstrates that, due to careful project design that incorporates protective measures (Forest Plan standards and guidelines, water conservation practices, and site-specific design features), the possible

negative effects are relatively minor, and are not directly, indirectly, or cumulatively significant. I find that the beneficial effects do not meet a threshold for significance either.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

As discussed throughout this EA and its appendices, there would be no significant adverse effects to public health and safety because of the project design.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as the proximity to historical or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There are no park lands, prime farmlands, research natural areas, or wild and scenic rivers or in or near the project area, and therefore none would be affected by this project. The interdisciplinary team identified areas and special features to be protected. The cultural resources would not be affected by the activities. Some activities do occur in the Eagles Nest Wilderness. The activities are consistent with the wilderness direction in the Forest Plan as well as the Eagles Nest Wilderness Management Plan. As a result, the EA clearly demonstrates there will be no significant effects to any of these resources.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

In the context of the National Environmental Policy Act, controversy refers to a substantial dispute in the scientific community regarding the effects of an action, not social opposition. Our contacts with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife did not identify any scientific controversy regarding the direct, indirect, or cumulative effects of this project. The interdisciplinary team for this project considered scientific research to determine its applicability to the project and found no controversy related to the predicted effects. Based on these factors, and the analysis provided in the EA and project record, I have concluded that the effects of the Selected Alternative on the quality of the human environment are not controversial.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The White River National Forest has considerable experience with managing outfitter / guides. The range of effects is similar to those taken into consideration and disclosed in the Forest Plan FEIS, Chapter 3, and the effects of this project are within the range anticipated in that FEIS and the Forest Plan Record of Decision. The effects analyses in this EA demonstrate that the effects and subsequent use are not uncertain or significant and do not involve unique or unknown risks. The body of knowledge gained through years of project-level and programmatic monitoring, wildlife surveys, and professional experience provides a basis for the effects analysis in this EA and supports my determination that there will be no highly uncertain effects or unique or unknown risks associated with this project.

6. The degree to which the action may establish precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This is not a precedent-setting decision. Similar projects have occurred for decades across the Forest and the Region. The effects of implementing the Selected Alternative were disclosed in the effects section of this EA and the project record, and are within the range of effects of similar actions. They also are within the range of effects disclosed in the Forest Plan FEIS, which

analyzed the effects of special uses management at a larger scale. The implementation of the Selected Alternative does not make a commitment to do anything in other areas on the White River National Forest or any other national forest. It would not set a regional or national precedent. For these reasons, I have determined this action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.*

The effects section of this EA discloses the combined effects of this project with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. None of the actions included in Selected Alternative would create significant impacts alone or when considered with other actions. The ID Team carefully considered cumulative effects analysis areas and timeframes, including private lands where it made sense for the resource, that would most thoroughly examine and predict effects. Based on the analysis in this EA and incorporating by reference the range of effects predicted in the Forest Plan FEIS, I have determined that implementing the Selected Alternative will not result in significant cumulative effects because there are no direct or indirect effects due to the screening and design criteria.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

The proposed project would result in no effect to historic properties because the activities are consistent with those already occurring. I find that this decision will not adversely affect any cultural or historical resources.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

The biological assessment (BA) determination for this project is a "No Affect" for the Canada lynx, a species listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

As described in the EA and in the project record, Alternative 2 fully complies with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and the National Forest Management Act. It is consistent with the Forest Plan for the White River National Forest and complies with Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice). All applicable laws for the protection of the environment are incorporated into the standards and guidelines in the White River National Forest Plan. The Selected Alternative complies with the Forest Plan, as described above in the Rationale for the decision, and in this EA. I find that none of the actions in this decision threaten to violate applicable Federal, State, or local laws or other requirements to protect the environment.

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**Appendix A
Dillon Outfitter / Guides
Summary of Roads and Trails Used**

The following routes are proposed for use in the proposal:

Trails

Acorn Creek	Oro Grande
Bakers Tank	Pass Lake
Bemrose	Peaks
Bills Ranch	Rainbow Lake
Blair Witch	Rock Creek
Blue Lakes	Rockys Ride
Bouldering	Sapphire Point
Brush Creek	Shrine Pass
Buffalo Cabin	Soda Ridge
Buffalo Mountain	South Connector
Burro	Surprise
Buzz Connector	Tenderfoot
Buzz Saw east	Upper Cataract
Buzz Saw West	Ute Peak
Buzz Spur	Vail Pass- Ten Mile Rec Path
Colorado	Wheeler Lake
Corral Creek	Wilder Gulch
Crossover	Willow Lakes
Crystal Lake	Woods
Eaglesmere	
East Connector	
Elliot Ridge	
Gore Range	
Hatties	
Horseshoe Gulch	
Jodys Connector	
Jodys East	
Jodys West	
Keystone Aqueduct	
Lakeshore Perimeter	
Lenawee	
Little French Gulch	
Lost Lake	
Lost Lake	
Lower Cataract Lake Loop	
Mahan Lake	
Mason Town	
Meadow Creek	
Mesa Cortina	
Miners Creek	
Mount Royal	
North Ten Mile	
Officers Gulch Pond	
Old Dillon Reservoir	

Roads

Bald Mountain
Boreas Pass
Brush Creek
Cataract Lake
Chihuahua Gulch
Crystal Lake
Deer Creek
Deer Creek
French Gulch
Heaton Bay Campground
Hunkidori Mine
Keystone Gulch
Keystone Ranch
Landfill
Mayflower Gulch
Miners Creek
Montezuma
Pass Lake
Peak 9
Radical Hill
Rock Creek
Saints John
Sallie Barber
Shrine Ridge
Spring Creek (1831)
Spring Creek (1832)
Spring Creek (1833)
Spring Creek (1834)
Spring Creek (23)