



SAN JUAN COUNTY COMMISSION

Kenneth Maryboy	Chairman
Willie Grayeyes	Vice-Chair
Bruce Adams	Commissioner
Mack McDonald	Administrator

October 6, 2020

Amber Johnson, Acting Field Manager
Monticello Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
PO Box 7
Monticello, Utah 84535

Re: Bluff River Trail

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Accessibility to public lands from a community center such as proposed for the Bluff River Trail, is a key element that contributes to quality of life. Rural communities that are able to provide infrastructure to neighboring natural amenities are more apt to recruit business expansion and future community investments. The proposed development of the Bluff River Trail would contribute to pedestrian, bicycle (including e-bikes), and equestrian uses that would not only support the local community, but also provide an added amenity for Bluff visitors.

This proposal is consistent with policies in the San Juan County Resource Management Plan which promote the development of recreation and tourism opportunities which would enhance the economy and local life style. For these reasons San Juan County supports the proposed Bluff River Trail project.

As to the environmental assessment we offer the following comment.

Page 2 section 1.5 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Other NEPA Documents.

Policies listed for the San Juan County Resource Management Plan could also include ... 3) "Encourage providing outstanding San Juan River-related recreational opportunities and visitor experiences while protecting natural and cultural resource values ..." This policy directly relates to impacts identified for recreation opportunities on pages 22 and 23 of the environmental assessment.

We concur with the Finding of No Significant Impact in the unsigned document.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment and look forward to completion of the project.

Sincerely,

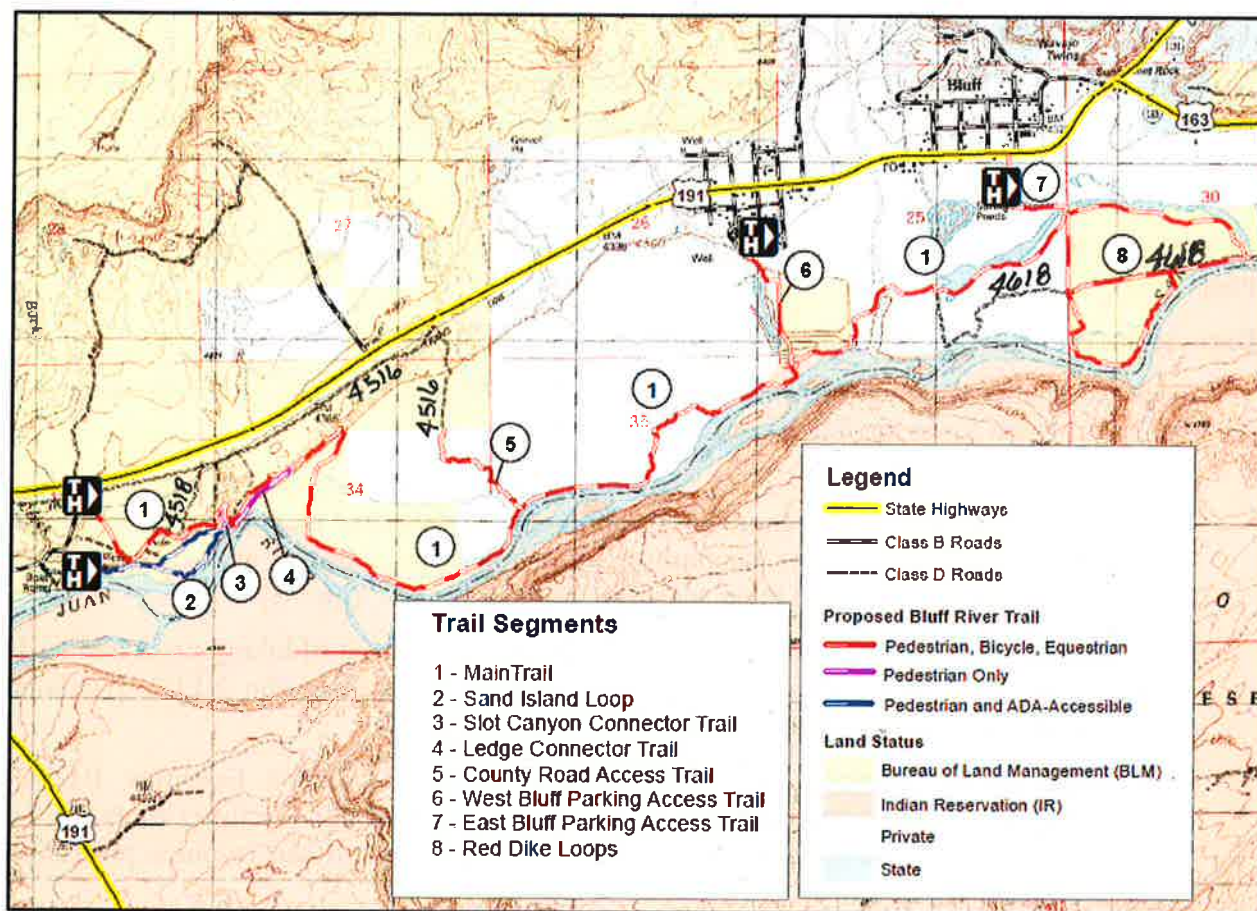
Kenneth Maryboy
Commission Chairman

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Proposed Project

The Bluff City Historic Preservation Association (BCHPA), in partnership with the Grand Canyon Trust (GCT), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Monticello Field Office (MFO), and local property owners, proposes to construct, maintain, and designate 6.7 miles of trails on BLM-managed lands, as part of a greater 10.6 mile Bluff River Trail system. The non-motorized trail system would be developed for pedestrian, bicycle (including e-bikes), and equestrian use on BLM-managed lands and private land easements (3.9 miles), along the San Juan River between Sand Island Recreation Area and the town of Bluff, UT. The trail would be natural surface, except for a 0.9-mile accessible trail segment (segment #2) that may require additional materials for hardening to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. In addition to two proposed trailheads on private property in Bluff, an approximately one-acre trailhead would be developed and maintained on BLM-managed lands along the entry road to Sand Island Recreation Area to provide access at the trail system's west end. The trail system would also be accessible from an existing parking area in Loop A of Sand Island Campground. The segments of trail on private property have already been constructed but the trailheads have not. See **Appendix E** for additional maps.

Map 1 Proposed Bluff River Trail Map



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2017-001-EA

Bluff River Trail

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) to assess the potential impacts associated with the construction, maintenance, and designation of the Bluff River Trail on BLM-managed lands. The EA is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No Significant Impact. The Proposed Action would meet the underlying need for the BLM to provide multiple recreational uses of public lands and to sustain a wide range of recreation opportunities and potential experiences for visitors and residents, while supporting local economic stability, and sustaining the recreation resource base and other sensitive resource values. The proposed action has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the Monticello Field Office (MFO) Resource Management Plan (RMP), as amended, dated November 2008.

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA, and considering significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that construction, maintenance and designation of the Bluff River Trail, as outlined in the Proposed Action, is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. The project does not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. No environmental effects identified for this alternative meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27(b) (1-10) and do not exceed those effects described in the 2008 MFO RMP, as amended. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required.

Authorized Officer

Amber Denton Johnson, Acting Field Manager

Date

Attachment: Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-UT-Y020-2017-001-EA)