

APPENDIX D: NEEDED AGREEMENTS, RESEARCH, AND ACTION PLANS

The following items are needed to fully and successfully implement Alternative 2 (The Proposed Action) of this Resource Protection Study (RPS). Many of them would be dependent upon congressional action regarding the Proposed Action.

New Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service

The existing Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the National Park Service (NPS), “Relating to the Development and Administration of Recreation on the Curecanti Unit, Colorado River Storage Project,” was approved by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI) on February 11, 1965. That MOA describes the roles and responsibilities of the two agencies in managing the reservoirs, dams, natural and cultural resources, recreation, and associated facilities, within the area generally known as the Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA). Although these roles and responsibilities would remain the same with the legislated establishment of the NRA, a new MOA would need to be written to respond to new legislation for the NRA, and to changes that have occurred since 1965, such as completion of development of the originally intended recreational and administrative facilities, and the maturing of the relationship between Reclamation and the National Park Service.

The new MOA would be coauthored by the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Park Service, and it would describe in detail the responsibilities of the two agencies regarding the administration and management of everything within the new NRA. The preparation of a new MOA would likely be encouraged, and/or mandated, by the legislation. It is expected to be similar to the existing 1965 MOA, wherein the following responsibilities would continue.

- The National Park Service would manage the natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and associated facilities.
- Reclamation would manage all facilities associated with Reclamation Projects.
- In areas where management responsibility overlaps, the two agencies would work together, when necessary, to resolve conflicting uses with full respect for the legislative mandate of the other agency. The ability to operate the Aspinall/Uncompahgre projects for their authorized purposes would be given priority.
- There would likely be some clarification as to management responsibilities for lands within the NRA that are not withdrawn for Reclamation project purposes (such as NPS acquired land and land transferred to the NRA from other agencies).

Land Protection Plan

This RPS has identified a Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) of privately-owned lands surrounding the NRA that contain natural, cultural, scenic, and potential recreational resources that warrant special conservation measures that would be compatible with NRA goals and objectives. The RPS has also described various tools of resource conservation that could be employed in partnership between the National Park Service and neighboring landowners. Those tools have varying degrees of commitments and costs associated with them. A land protection plan (LPP) is needed to specify in detail which tool, or set of tools, would be necessary and appropriate to apply to each parcel of land within the COA, to satisfy the mutual conservation goals and objectives of both the landowner and the National Park Service. The LPP would establish a priority of needs for conserving each parcel of land, and the estimated costs involved. An environmental assessment and a public involvement process would accompany the LPP.

Land Appraisals

For those parcels identified within the LPP for acquisition, either in fee simple or less-than-fee interest (for example, a conservation easement), and subject to the willingness of the landowner to sell such interest or interests, government ordered land appraisals would be needed to determine fair market value, and provide other information that would be used in negotiations with landowners. An environmental hazard assessment would additionally be required prior to any such acquisition.

Boundary Surveys, Posting, and Fencing

After agreed-upon interests have been acquired from participating landowners, or other agreements have been consummated, the National Park Service would need to conduct and document boundary surveys and mark new boundaries that have been created. The National Park Service would work with landowners along boundary segments in locations where fencing would be necessary because of individual circumstances, such as the need to control livestock.

Specific Implementation Plans for New Lands

The existing NPS GMP, under which the NRA is managed, was approved in 1997. Specific Implementation Plans, or a revised GMP, would have to be produced to address resource management; visitor use, recreation, and interpretation; and associated development that would be required for the new lands added to the NRA.

Agreement(s) Pertaining to Curatorial Collections Associated with Land Transfers

Just as the National Park Service conducts research on cultural resources within the NRA, partnering agencies have conducted research on the archeological and/or historical resources on some of their lands that would come under NPS administration as part of the new NRA. Many artifacts have been collected as a result of that research. The National Park Service and the other agencies would continue to conduct such research on their lands, which are connected by history, regardless of the location of modern boundaries. In order to maintain the integrity of these curatorial collections, and the sites where the artifacts were discovered, it would be necessary for the National Park Service to enter into agreements with the other agencies pertaining to the management of both the collections and the sites.

Additional Strategy and Long-Term Goals and Objectives for the Joint Agency Management Effort

The National Park Service would need to increase its efforts to identify and meet common goals and objectives among agencies and across jurisdictional boundaries for conservation of resources.

Input to Development of Gunnison County Comprehensive Plan

The National Park Service would need to participate in the development of that portion of the Gunnison County Comprehensive Plan that includes planning for the area surrounding the NRA. Also, the potential exists for working with the county to establish a special geographic area (SGA) for the Curecanti area. This would include identifying strategies and policies that allow development and/or encourage conservation practices that minimize impacts to area resources.

Increased Interaction with Montrose County

The National Park Service would increase its participation with the Montrose County planning staff and management to mutually identify resources worthy of conservation measures, and to identify and implement tools to achieve goals and objectives. A potential tool would be the

establishment by the county of a conservation zone, or overlay zone, that would include the NRA and COA. Such a zone could be used to guide development decisions in that area. However, establishment of such a zone would likely occur only during or after revision of the county master plan.

