

"Dolores River Dialogue"

Working Group for the Lower Dolores River Management Plan Update to Kick Off Monday

Contact:

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End Date: December 15, 2008

A new community Working Group will hold its first meeting on Monday, December 15th, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Dolores Public Lands Office. This new group, the *Lower Dolores Management Plan Working Group*, will meet until fall 2009 and provide recommendations in updating the current Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS/BLM) 1990 *Dolores River Corridor Management Plan*.

The *Lower Dolores Management Plan Working Group* includes diverse stakeholders with many perspectives and interests in the lower Dolores River Valley. Working Group members will participate in approximately 10 meetings and several field trips over the course of the next year. The goal of this Working Group is to gather information; identify values worthy of protection in the planning area; formulate ideas for protection of the values; and make recommendations to the Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS/BLM). Once the *Lower Dolores Management Plan Working Group* makes its recommendations, the Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS/BLM) will initiate a formal Environmental Assessment process, conduct public involvement, and issue a decision notice likely by March of 2010.

The *Lower Dolores Management Plan Working Group* is comprised of representatives from all three surrounding counties (Dolores, Montezuma, and San Miguel); the Towns of Dove Creek and Dolores, and the City of Cortez, water managers and water rights holders; grazing and property owner stakeholders; oil, gas, mineral and mining representatives; government agencies; recreationists; conservation groups; staff members from the USFS/BLM; and other interests. The Working Group members will meet monthly and participate in field trips throughout the planning process. There will be time on the agenda for the public to comment at each meeting.

The Dolores River Dialogue (DRD) started in 2004 and has been meeting regularly ever since. This diverse group has been defining and exploring collaborative action(s) for

flow management, riparian and aquatic stewardship and other opportunities while honoring water rights and contractual obligations.

The Working Group's steps will be:

- Orientation including background information from the DRD's previous and ongoing efforts, studies, science activities and deliberations
- Identification of key issues, opportunities and values in the planning area
- Topic specific meetings
- Formulating alternatives and recommendations
- Defining the planning boundary
- Developing a Working Group report to the Dolores Public Lands Office (USFS/BLM)

For more information:

Dolores River Dialogue

DRD Web Site: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/>

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