

White Wash Sand Dunes



“Welcome to your Public Lands. Now go home!”

Reading BLM’s plans for the popular White Wash Sand Dunes reminded me of an observation made by Jerry Abboud, Executive Director of the Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO). He noted that some of BLM’s new management policies can be described (with tongue only lightly planted in cheek) as: **“Welcome to your Public Lands. Now go home!”**

At a meeting with BLM’s planning team, I asked if they were serious about this direction in their Preferred Alt. C:

Manage the central portion of the White Wash Sand Dunes for motorized sand play with exception of the dune field cottonwood trees and White Wash water sources which would be closed to motorized travel and fenced.

Limit camping use in the White Wash Sand Dunes area to designated sites and establish basic camping facilities on the bench on the north side of White Wash.

Implement a fee system, using individual Special Recreation Permits, to help fund cost of intensive management of the White Wash Sand Dunes area.

(Underline emphasis added)

They said yes! And they mentioned the Coral Pink Sand Dunes as an example. I pointed out that the Coral Pink Sand Dunes is home to no less than two listed endangered species. They responded by expressing great concern about the Cottonwood trees on the sand dunes.

Now, just for fun, zoom in on the picture above. See all that green stuff on the sand dunes? Cottonwood trees. Can you imagine a fence around each one of those clusters of trees?

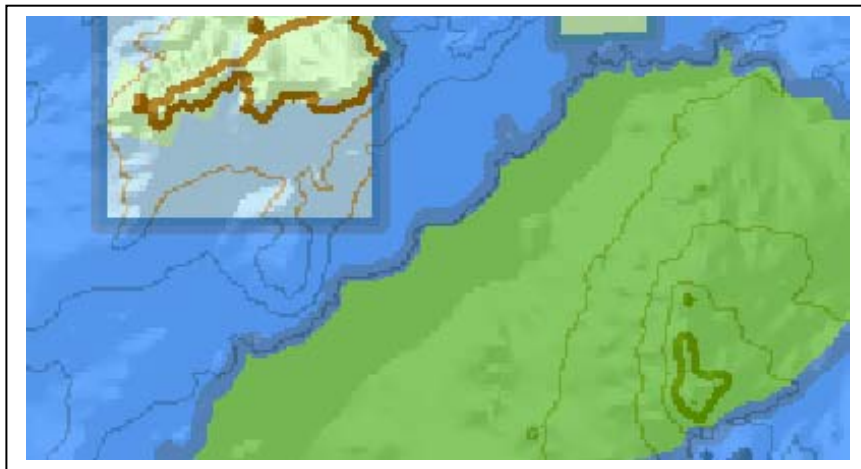
Obviously, this is a very serious problem and we will need to generate a lot of comments opposing this, as well as comments in support of another option.

There is another concern that jumped out at us when we were looking closely at our maps. It has to do with the way Moab BLM drew the “open” area, combined with the decision to eliminate all vehicle use off designated routes, even for camping.

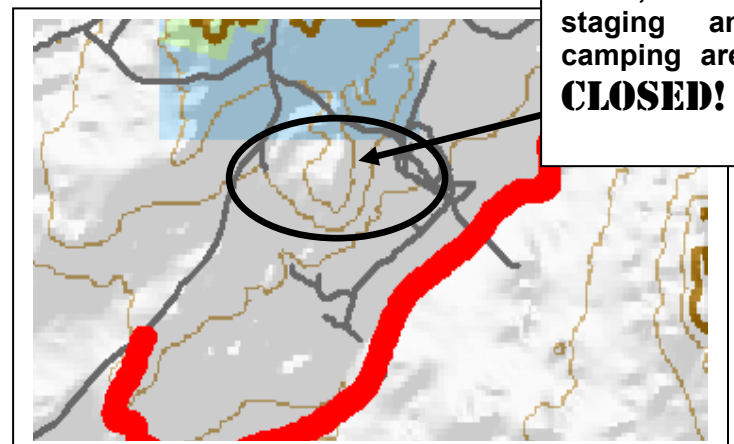
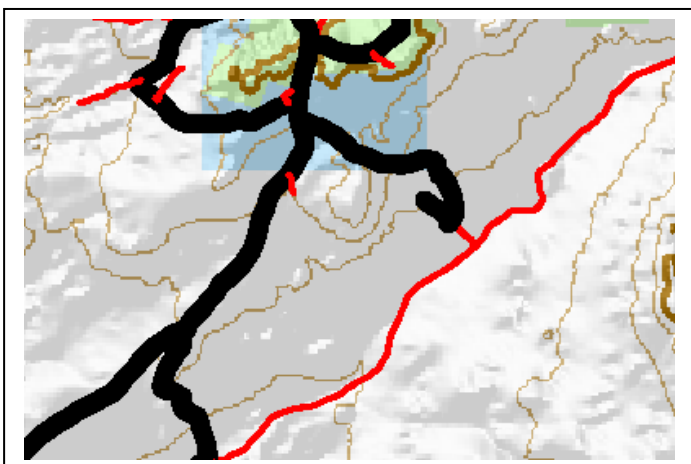
Check this:

In Alts C and D, the “open” area ends very near White Wash on the northwest. Remember that all vehicle use outside the “open” area must never, for any reason, stray off designated routes. Even to camp.

(BTW... in Alternative B the entire area is completely closed to motorized vehicles in order to designate a (fee free) hiking and equestrian area.)



The image on the left below is Alt. C's Travel Plan. The red line is the center of the Wash. Compare the “open” area map above and you’ll see that the “open” area does not extend to the top of the hill to the northwest of the Dunes. That not only closes one of the most popular hill climbs in the state (and the last sandy hill climb left open in the Moab Field Office as well), but it also closes many of the popular campsites on the ridge, and it looks like it will close many more at the bottom of the hill. The thin grey lines in the image on the right show existing roads.



Popular hill climb, OHV staging and camping area CLOSED!

BLM staff says not to worry; they'll get around to designating all that developed camping infrastructure and "individual recreation permit" fee area policy before they enforce the travel restrictions. I'm sure. Right after they get around to putting up all those fences around the Cottonwood trees!

Look, BLM's own documents state that the Travel Plan is an implementation decision. That means if they don't begin implementing soon after the plan is signed it will leave them (us) vulnerable to a SUWA lawsuit.

This has got to be fixed in the RMP, or a federal judge will be managing this from the desk of some distant courtroom.

To get an idea of how BLM wants to manage this popular OHV destination we recommend checking Moab BLM's proposed Recreation Policy in [Appendix E](#), the "management common to all" on pages 2-17 and 2-18 and specific guidance for the White Wash area on pages 2-23 through 2-25 ([DEIS Chapter 2](#)). Finally, check [Appendix F](#) (pages F-10 for Alt C and F-7 for Alt. D). You may want to have maps 2-8-A thru 2-8-D, 2-9-B thru 2-9-D, 2-10-B thru 2-10-D and 2-11-A thru 2-11-E.

Adding it all up, it amounts to a totally impractical, unjustified and unworkable management plan. This must be opposed, en masse, by the OHV community. Please help us by commenting on this important issue.