Joe’s Valley Recreation and Bouldering Area
Environmental Assessment

January 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Price Field Office and The Manti-La Sal National Forest, Ferron/Price Ranger District are requesting public input regarding future management of recreation activities in and around Straight and Cottonwood Canyons west of Orangeville, Utah.

The BLM, Price Field Office in conjunction with the Manti-La Sal National Forest will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the impacts of recreation activities taking place in the area commonly known as the Joe’s Valley Bouldering Area (see map on page 3). This EA will formulate future management direction for this area.

Bouldering has become increasingly popular in Emery County. Climbers visit Joe’s Valley to climb the numerous sandstone boulders scattered throughout the area. The Joe’s Valley Bouldering Area impacts BLM lands, US Forest Service lands, State of Utah School and Institutional Trust lands, and private property. The Joe’s Valley Bouldering Area accommodates diverse outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, kayaking, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, and off-highway vehicle use. However, bouldering has positioned Joe’s Valley as a world-renowned rock climbing destination. Climbers come not just from Utah, but from across the country and around the globe. The peak season for activity in Joe’s Valley occurs during spring and fall. Bouldering and associated camping in and around Joe’s Valley, Straight Canyon, and Cottonwood Canyon are contributing to increasing impacts. Multiple user created trails, soil erosion, bare soil, vegetation degradation, and numerous redundant campfire sites are common impacts that can easily be observed. These impacts can have an effect on the aesthetics of the area, which may decrease the overall recreational experience. Additionally, these impacts can negatively affect non recreation resources including water quality.

To assist with the management of these impacts the Forest Service has closed overnight use, including camping, in Straight Canyon. This closure is from the National Forest boundary to Joe’s Valley Dam in Straight Canyon, a distance of five miles. The areas along SR 29 through this section will now be reserved for day use parking and day use activities.
YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE SCOPING PROCESS. HERE’S HOW:

You can comment during the public scoping period; the public scoping period is being held so that members of the public can provide written comments on specific issues and concerns they have regarding the future management direction. Written comments will help determine the issues to be addressed in the EA. All comments will be carefully reviewed and considered and become part of the official record.

Written comments must be submitted by March 1, 2015. Please reference “Joe’s Valley Bouldering Area” when submitting comments. Comments can be submitted by any of the following methods:

- In person at the BLM Price Field Office
- U.S. Mail:
  
  BLM, Price Field Office  
  ATTN: Matt Blocker  
  125 South 600 West  
  Price, Utah 84501  

- Email: blm_ut_pr_recreation@blm.gov

PROJECT TIMELINE

The anticipated timeline for the project is:

- Public Scoping period: Jan. 30, 2015 until March 1, 2015;
- Public Meeting: Will schedule if needed
- Draft EA available for 30-day public review: Summer 2015
- Final EA and Decision Record issued: Fall 2015.