



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

MAR 01 2010

The Honorable John Salazar  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative  Salazar:

Thank you for your letter of January 8, 2010, to Secretary Ken Salazar requesting that the Bureau of Land Management implement a pilot project with Colorado Discover Ability (CDA) to accommodate recreational use on the public lands by special populations. You also raise concerns about whether the nonprofit organizations are able to compete for Special Recreation Permits (SRP) due to financial constraints.

The Department of the Interior shares your concern about providing opportunities for high-quality recreational experiences for individuals with disabilities. The BLM endeavors to accommodate people with special needs and to work with outfitters who are able to serve them. Currently, the BLM's local field offices work directly with many organizations, such as Adventure Bound and SPLORE Accessible Outdoor Adventures, that provide recreational opportunities for public land visitors with disabilities. Also, the BLM has long-standing assistance agreements with two nonprofit organizations—Wilderness Inquiry, Inc. and the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation—that focus on providing recreational opportunities for adults and children with disabilities.

In 2008, the BLM updated the Resource Management Plans for the Gunnison Gorge Canyon and West Canyon areas and established the number of available SRPs. Many of the commercial outfitters operating under the BLM's SRPs are nonprofit organizations and businesses that offer services for people with disabilities. The cost to apply for a commercial SRP varies by location, ranging from no charge to a \$100 application fee.

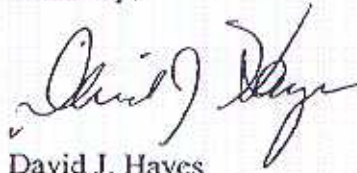
I understand that CDA is frustrated in its efforts to offer guided river trips for disabled veterans in the Westwater Canyon and the Gunnison Gorge because all use permits for these areas have already been allocated. To assist CDA in serving its clients during this past summer, the BLM offered several suggestions, including partnering with one of the existing, authorized outfitters that hold permits for these river segments in order to provide trips for clients with disabilities. CDA selected a permitted outfitter for its August 19, 2009, trip through Westwater Canyon.

The BLM is committed to facilitating the use and enjoyment of the public lands by all citizens, including those with special needs, and is willing to meet with CDA and other organizations that provide services to disabled veterans. I invite CDA to contact the BLM's new State Director for Colorado, Ms. Helen Hankins. Ms. Hankins would be happy to discuss options with CDA for meeting its clients' special needs, and she can be reached at 303-239-3700 or [helen\\_hankins@blm.gov](mailto:helen_hankins@blm.gov).

BLM Director Robert V. Abbey would be happy to meet with you and members of the Colorado delegation to discuss this matter further. He can be reached at 202-208-3801. Mr. Bob Ratcliffe, the BLM's Chief of Recreation and Visitor Services, is also available to meet with your staff and can be reached at 202-912-7250 or [bob\\_ratcliffe@blm.gov](mailto:bob_ratcliffe@blm.gov).

Similar letters have been sent to Senators Mark Udall and Michael Bennet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Hayes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

David J. Hayes