

# Wilderness, WSAs and other lands with wilderness characteristics

## Historical Overview



# Wilderness Act 1964, Sec. 2 (a) and (c)

❖ *“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”*

❖ *“...there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by the Congress as ‘wilderness areas’...”*

## Sections 201(a) and 603 of FLPMA

- Required BLM to ID lands possessing wilderness values (Sec. 201) and recommend to the President and Congress how much is suitable for preservation (Sec. 603).
- Required BLM to use the definition of wilderness characteristics (as described in the 1964 Wilderness Act) during its Sec. 201 inventories



# FLPMA, Section 201(a) and 603 Inventories

- Inventory - Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)
- Study - Legislative EISs
- Report - Wilderness Study Reports





# Post FLPMA

- Acquisitions, changing conditions & public interest >>> additional wilderness inventories.
- BLM previously identified new WSAs through Land Use Planning (FLPMA Sec. 202)
  - Administrative WSAs ended with the Utah Settlement

# 2003 Utah Settlement

- BLM's Section 603 authority to conduct wilderness reviews expired in 1993
- Lands with wilderness characteristics should be considered in RMPs for (Section 202)
- Section 201 Inventory of public lands for wilderness characteristics is OK
- Do not have to protect lwc; but must reveal impacts

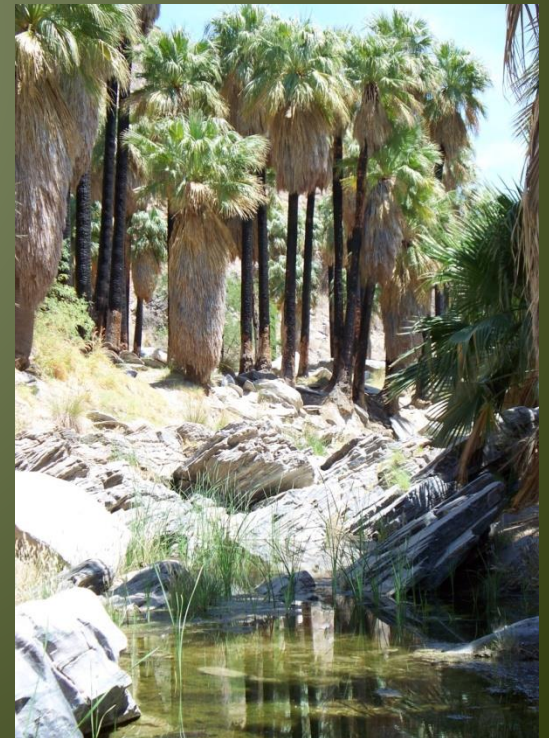
*2008 ruling by 9<sup>th</sup> circuit ruled that Sec. 201 required BLM to maintain inventories & Sec. 202 granted BLM authority to select management options through land use plans*

# Updating Wilderness Characteristics Inventories

- The inventories that determined that lands outside of WSAs do not have wilderness characteristics are now 38 years old
- Citizens are now providing BLM with new wilderness inventory information (e.g. Citizen Wilderness Plans, etc.)

# Consider Wilderness characteristics when they exist

- Manuals 6310 and 6320 provide guidance for:
  - Inventory of lands with wilderness characteristics
  - Considering lands with wilderness characteristics in land use plans
- Treat like other resources
  - Affected Environment
  - Description of Alternatives
  - Environmental Consequences
  - Record of Decision





# Range of Alternatives

- One that protects all identified wilderness characteristics
- One that does not any
- Combinations
- Decision could protect all, some, or none of the characteristics





# Thank You!





# Common Questions

- How many wilderness areas does BLM manage in Colorado?
- How many Wilderness Study Areas do we manage in Colorado?
- Can we do forest, fuels, or weed treatments in wilderness? WSAs?
- Is grazing permitted in wilderness? WSAs?
- Can we adjust boundaries?



# Wilderness Areas

## Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness

- Within MCNCA
- Red rock canyons
- Wildlife & recreation

## Gunnison Gorge Wilderness

- Within GGNCA
- Double canyon system
- Recreation

## Powderhorn Wilderness

- BLM & USFS
- Recreation & wildlife

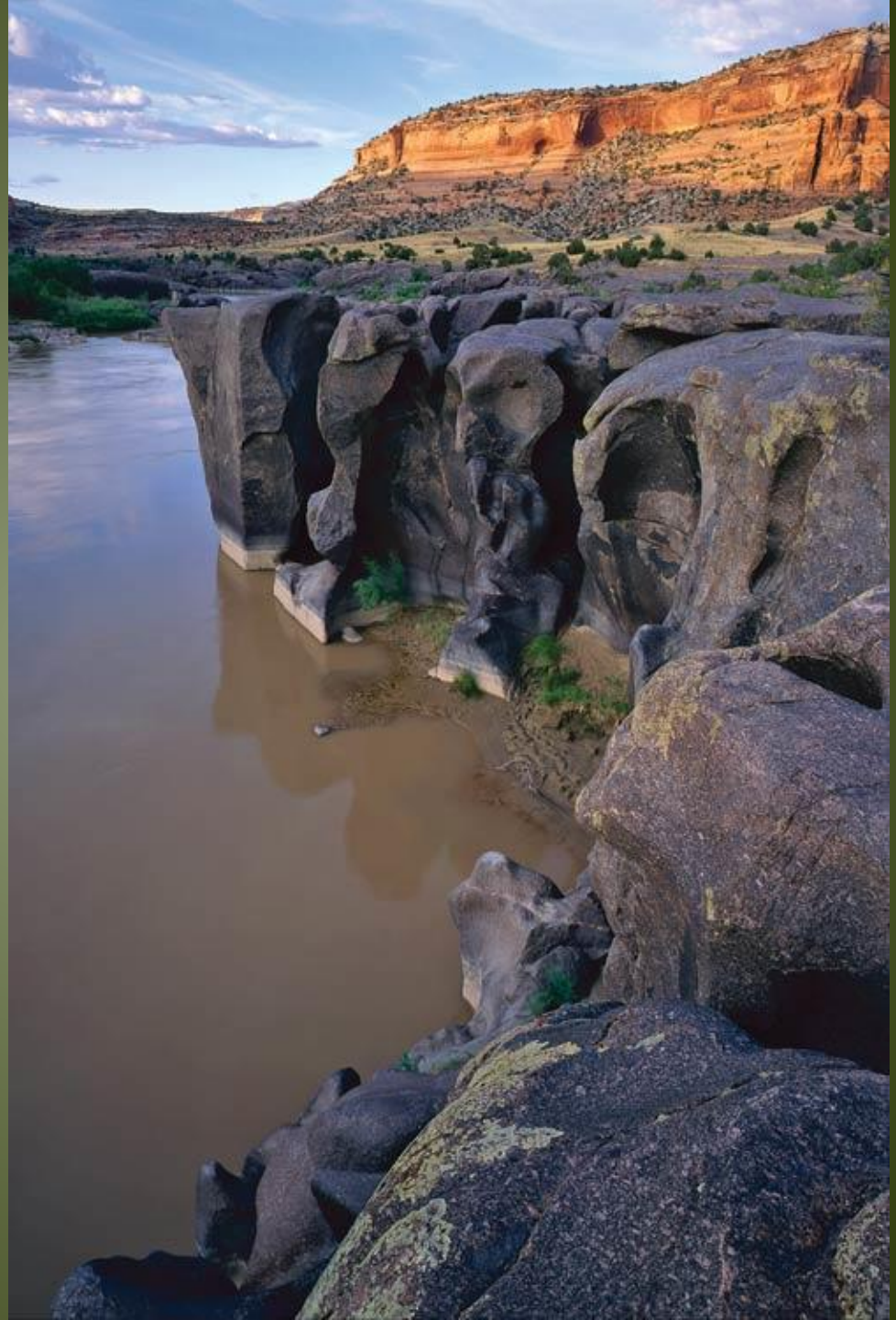
## Uncompahgre Wilderness

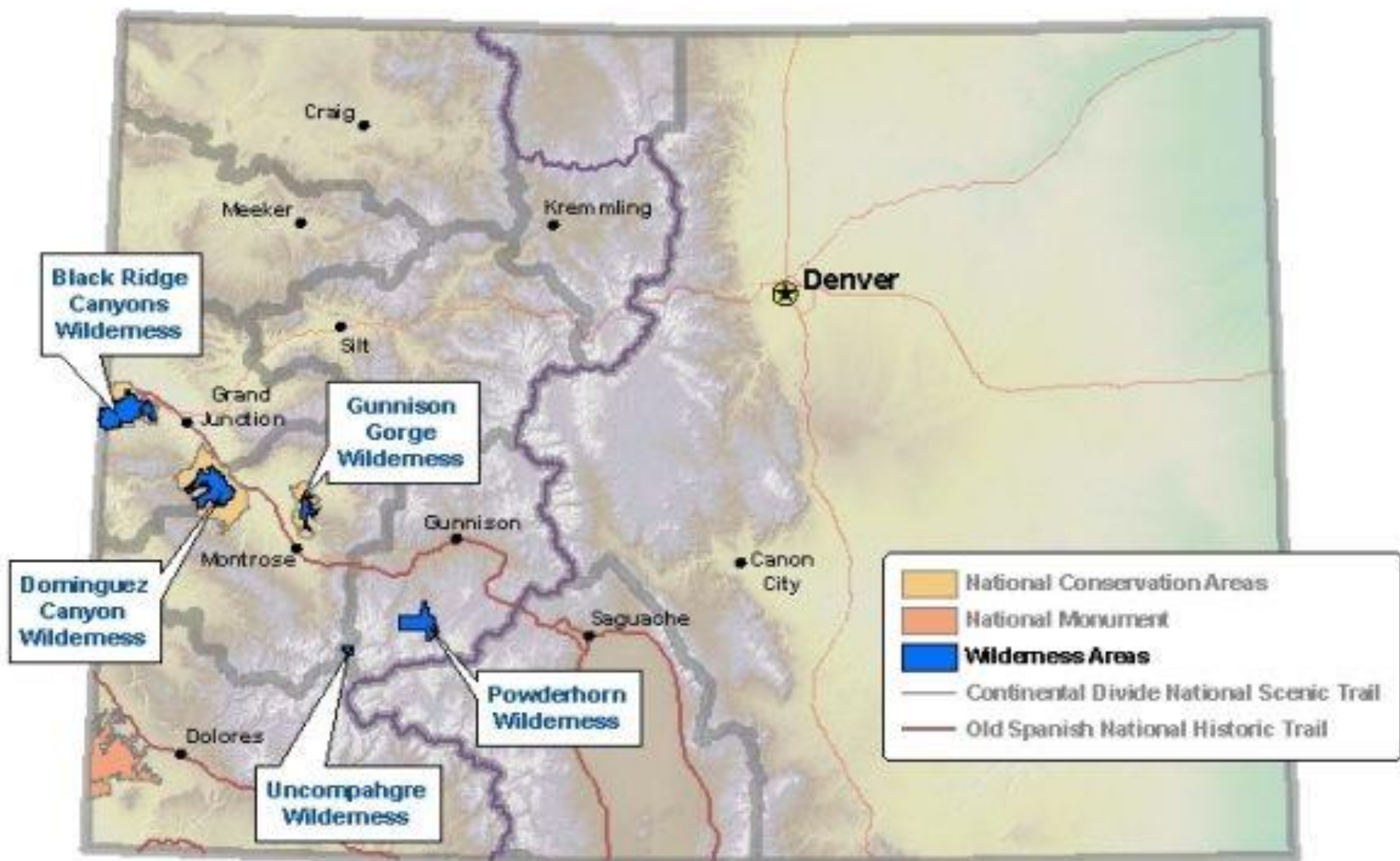
- BLM & USFS
- 2 fourteeners, 34 thirteeners
- Recreation & wildlife

## Dominguez Canyon

- Within D-E NCA
- Amazing backcountry opportunities

> 200,000 Acres







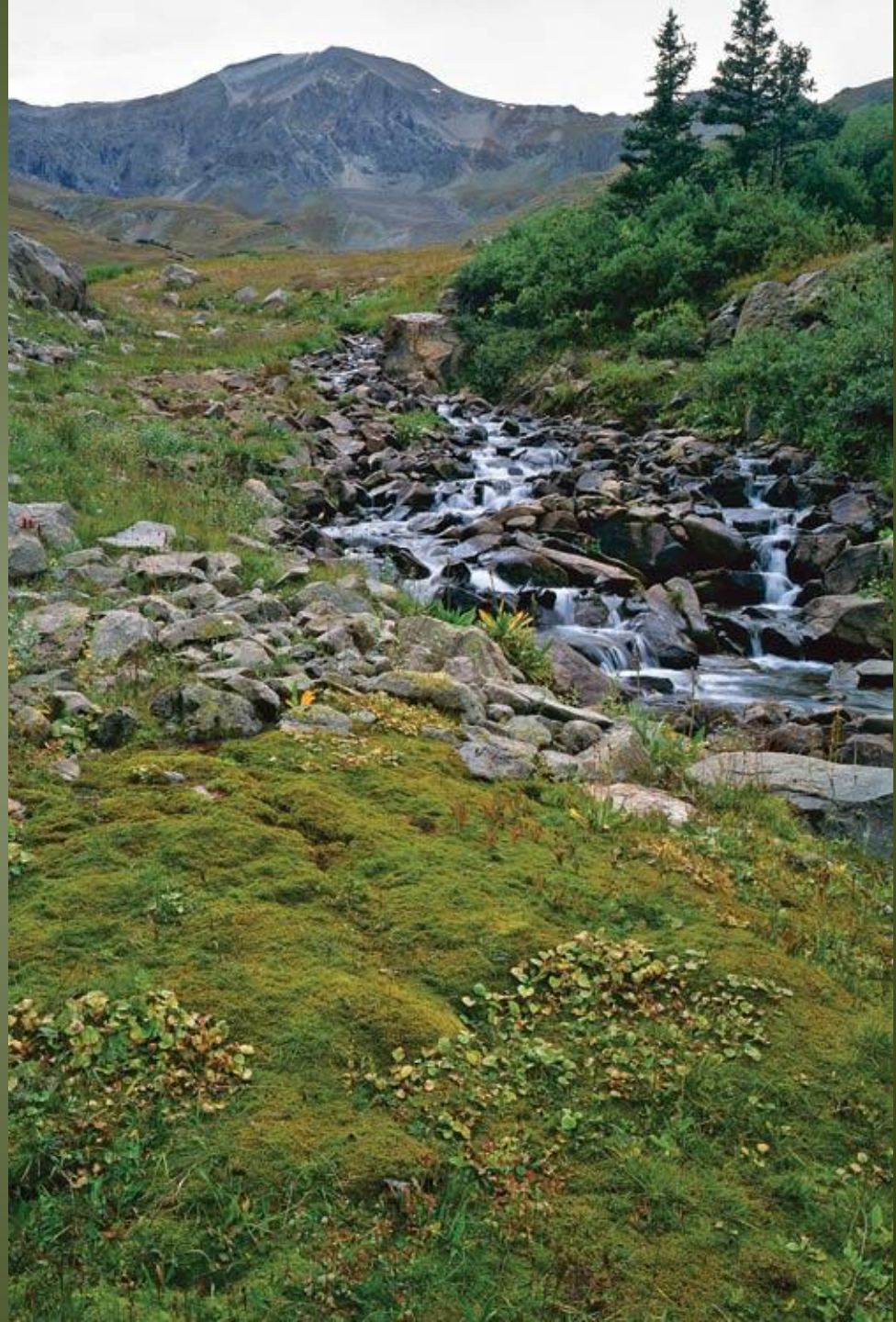
# Wilderness Study Areas

53\* WSA's in Colorado

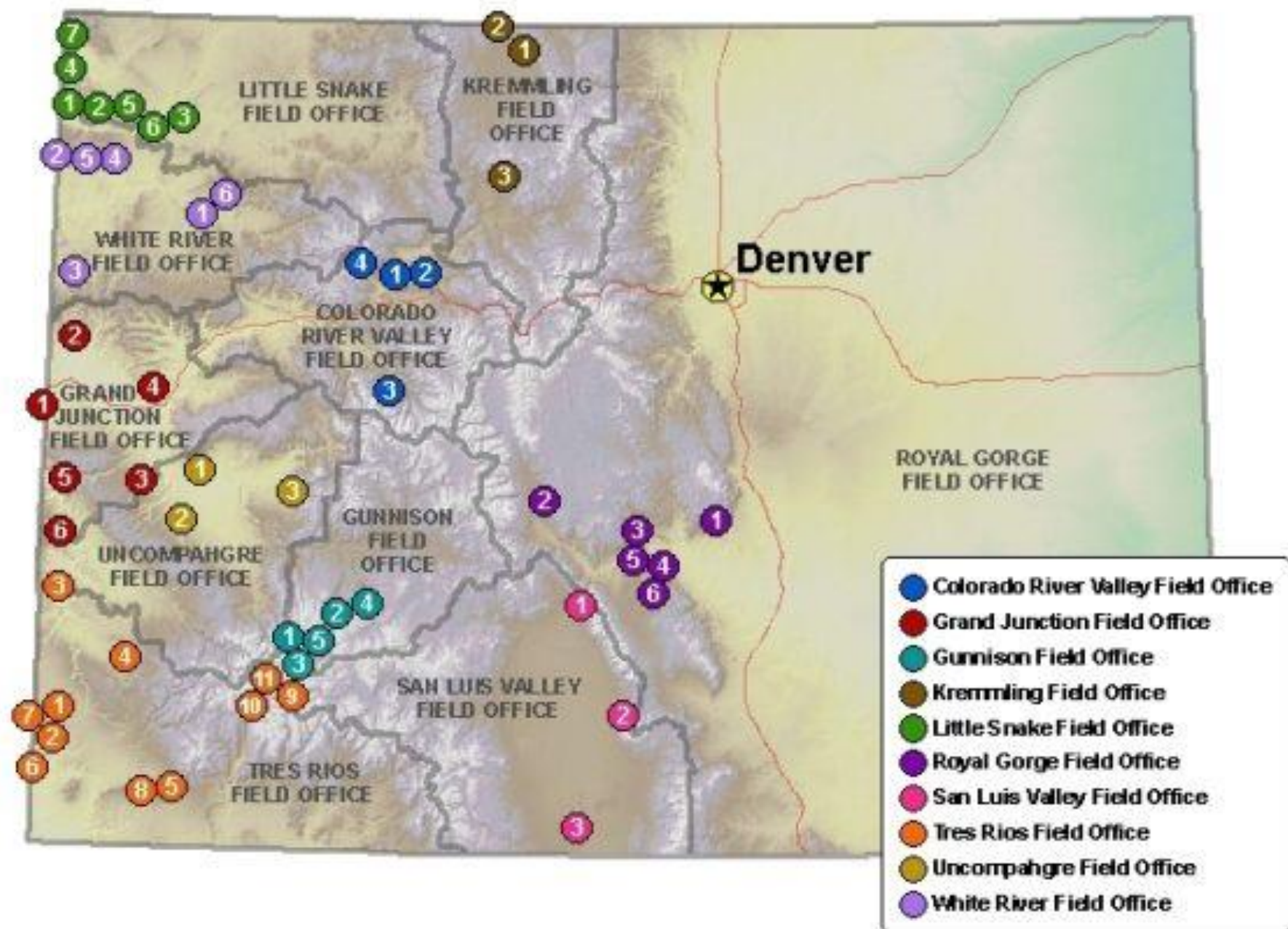
- Canyons of the Ancients NM
- Uncompahgre Field Office
- Gunnison Field Office
- Little Snake Field Office
- Royal Gorge Field Office
- White River Field Office
- Colorado River Valley Field Office
- San Luis Valley Field Office
- Grand Junction Field Office
- Tres Rio Field Office
- Kremmling Field Office

➤ 550,000 Acres

\*5 Instant Study Areas (ISAs)







# Other Special Designations

## Congressionally Designated Management Areas

- Tabeguache Area – *A Special Case*
  - 17,240 acres
  - Designated by Congress as part of the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993
  - Not formally designated Wilderness
  - Managed to protect its wilderness values

