

Addendum "D"

Nomination of Moody Wash ACEC



Moody Wash ACEC is hereby nominated by

Citizens for Dixie's Future to:

BLM St. George Field Office  
345 East Riverside Drive  
St. George, UT 84790

Moody Wash is a tributary of the Santa Clara River that begins on Forest Service land where there are high quality segments with populations of Virgin Spinedace. This is a degraded landscape in need of restoration. On BLM land there is strong evidence of historic over-grazing which stressed the riparian corridor. Subsequent flood events destroyed evidence of a defined channel and has created a wide gravel swath, lacking in vegetative cover. Without proper river and floodplain processes the effects of flooding are exacerbated downstream causing damage to

environmental values, special status species, and human communities. Connectivity between functioning stream reaches has been disabled.

### **Boundaries – See Mood Wash Map Exhibit “D1”**

We have included a larger area of adjacent washes and urge BLM to do a range analysis to identify similar dysfunction and restoration requirements. This area is in need of improved range management.

### **Relevance and Importance**

Biological – Moody Wash contains significant populations of Virgin Spinedace above and below the area of disturbance. With proper restoration connectivity of these populations can be restored.

Given the importance of riparian corridors to migratory wildlife movement this huge area of openness creates a barrier to connectivity.

Human – Recent flood events on the Santa Clara River (2005) were largely attributed to high flood peaks in Moody Wash. Restoration of river channel and floodplain function can significantly reduce peak flood heights.

### **Threats**

Biological – Grazing, wild fires, and habitat loss due to fires and flooding are the primary threats to native species.

Human - The failure in the Moody Wash riparian and floodplain system poses a huge threat to the safety and welfare of downstream communities of Gunlock and Santa Clara. Millions of dollars in damage were caused by the floods of 2005.

### **ACEC Provides Permanent Protection**

Management – Upland restoration of rivers, streams, and washes as a means to improve river function and reduce flooding while also protecting and enhancing habitat for native fish is largely ignored by the Virgin River Program and to date has not been implemented. We suggest Moody Wash as a prime candidate for a multi-agency collaborative effort to demonstrate that the landscape can be managed to enhance species protection and property.

Restoration – We propose that BLM undertake a major restoration effort to restore functioning floodplain and a healthy riparian corridor. The former channel location must be determined (possibly using aerial photos or other physical evidence) and configured appropriately using heavy equipment. Due to a total lack of soil,

sediment from dredging at Gunlock reservoir can be used to provide a soil base. The entire area will then be planted and maintained with native species.

All grazing will cease until the restoration is complete and the landscape fully functioning.

Grazing and Fire Prevention – discussions among interested parties (USFS meeting on Moody Wash March 3, 2010) led to the topic of grazing. The Forest Service lands are grazed in such a way that the cattle come on the land in the spring after cheat grass matures and browns and cattle are removed before cheat grass greens up in the fall. This means that cheat grass is available as a fuel. Grazing could be used as a fire management tool. A collaborative effort between BLM and UFS could employ adaptive management to attempt to capture the cheat grass cycle as a food source in order to minimize the risk of fire. While this idea involves a change to Forest Service management practices it is mentioned herein because it would enhance the likelihood of a successful restoration on BLM land.

There have been numerous fires in upper Moody Wash and adjacent lands on Forest Service lands. The Moody Fire in 2007. The Hawkins Fire was farther upstream in 2004. The Bull Complex (specifically the Cove fire) fire was in 2006 and Moody 2 was in 2006. The Bull Mountain Fire in 2004. Specifically the Bull Mountain and Cove Fire areas are said (USFS 7-15-10) to have serious cheat grass issues.

#### **General Management Practices:**

Add language

#### **Nomination**

Pursuant to FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. § 1701, *et seq.*, the undersigned formally nominate and petition the BLM to designate the Moody Wash parcels as ACEC. We respectfully submit this nomination as part of the ongoing Plan Amendment and as interested parties, pursuant to BLM Manual 1617.81B (2000) and section 553(e) and 555(e) of the Administrative Procedures Act, 5 U.S.C. § 553(e), *et seq.* which grants members of the public an independent right to nominate areas of BLM-administered lands for ACEC designation. We have proposed the Moody Wash parcels as potential ACECs based on the criteria set out in applicable laws and regulations, and as outlined in BLM Manual 1613.

Evaluation of Relevance Criteria for Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

ACEC proposal for Moody Wash Parcels		
Nominator: Citizens for Dixie’s Future PO 161 Hurricane, Utah 84737		James P McMahon jim@jamespmcmahon.com Phone 435-574-2711
BLM land as outlined in attached map Detailed Description below.		Boundary of ACEC includes the stream; the riparian zone, flood plain and uplands
Values		- Virgin Spinedace habitat - Riparian resources - Wildlife Habitat - Water quality maintenance - archeological - flood control
<b>Relevance—</b> An area meets the “relevance” criterion if it contains one or more of the following:		
Relevance Value Yes/No Rationale for Determination		Evidence
A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).	Yes	Moody Wash and the drainages of the Bull Mountains contribute significant water to the Santa Clara River. Historic over grazing, wild fires, and subsequent flooding have resulted in severe degradation of landscape function.
A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).	Yes	Moody Wash is critical habitat for the Virgin Spinedace. Also habitat for Peregrine Falcon, Golden and Bald Eagle, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo.
A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plants	Yes	Protection to Moody Wash’s ecological systems (vegetation, physical and aquatic habitats) for birds, fish and plant communities is important to sustain these populations and the health of the land. Natural processes in Moody Wash have been disabled by man induced and natural causes.

Evaluation of Importance Criteria for Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Moody Wash ACEC		
<b>Importance—</b> An area meets the “importance” criterion if it contains one or more of the following		
Relevance Value	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination Evidence
Has more than locally significant qualities which gives it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to similar resource	Yes	Executive Order 13186 requires BLM to protect migratory birds and their habitat. The degradation of natural processes on Moody Wash is the cause of serious downstream property damage. Where the flows are lost and riparian corridor and floodplain are missing critical Spinedace habitat has been lost.
Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or adverse change or vulnerable to adverse change	Yes	Moody Wash is critical habitat for the Virgin Spinedace Also important habitat for migratory birds and Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo.
Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA	Yes	FLPMA -Minimize adverse impacts on natural, environmental, scientific, cultural and other resources and values including fish and wildlife. (see above)
Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criterion if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.	Yes	Flooding-ACEC designation can also be established to reduce the threat to human safety and property. Riparian habitat and uplands restoration reduces the impacts of floods.