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Karl,

Since you were here last week I have had some response to your inquiries and also done some research about the use of these abandoned airstrips on public lands.

Enclosed is a copy of two pages from the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review that deal with aircraft and airstrips in these areas of consideration. Wilderness Study Areas and designated Wilderness Areas are certainly more stringent even than this.

Also, the following is the response I got from our lead realty person in the State Office dealing with some of the questions that you had:

After speaking with Dave Grayson, [BLM solicitor] Vanessa Engle [BLM Washington Office realty specialist], Maggie Kelsey [BLM Utah State Office Wilderness specialist] and Joan Hubert [BLM Price office realty specialist with experience in "airstrips" in rural and "wilderness" areas] regarding the subject of existing unauthorized airstrips, I responded to Maxine's questions by phone this morning.

Based on the information I gathered, I suggested that landing, taking off, and minimal maintenance activities like removing shrubs and rocks by hand and mowing grass on previously bladed/constructed airstrips be considered casual use on most BLM-managed lands. We don't have plans to reclaim those old airstrips, but if someone insists on having a ROW because they need to do more than minimal maintenance, NEPA would need to be done and liability insurance should be required.

According to the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP), an existing (pre-FLPMA) airstrip (facility) within a WSA may be used and maintained as before as long as this does not cause new impacts that would impair the areas wilderness suitability. Issuing a ROW in a WSA would not be advisable although according to the IMP, if necessary it *could be* done after a 30-day public notice period, for a temporary term with stringent maintenance stipulations (no use of mechanical equipment or new surface disturbance) in order to regulate activities to the non-impairment standard. The ROW would also need to include a stipulation that it would immediately terminate upon wilderness designation.

Casual use of these airstrips would be allowable without any official authorization from the BLM and would be covered, as you indicated last week, just as any other casual use. This would be like moving a few rocks or boulders out of the way or grubbing or cutting off some brush. This would be non-mechanical and non-surface disturbing activity. BLM would not be involved in any FAA regulations that you might have to adhere to. In fact, in the scenario above, BLM would probably not even be aware of the activity.

If your group wanted an official authorization, that is a right-of-way, even though you are noncommercial, you would have to have liability insurance. Also, the restrictions could be much more stringent. You could be subject, for instance, seasonal closures for critical wildlife concerns, cultural/archaeological concerns, etc.

Because we are unaware of there being any pre-FLPMA (10/76) authorizations for any of these airstrips, they would not be "grandfathered". In fact, they are considered trespasses on public lands. But, as stated above, the BLM has no intention of doing any rehabilitation on them. Nor, do we intend to do any action other than letting nature do her job with rehabilitation.

Some information specific to the Browns Rim airstrip: It appears to be in a withdrawn or area reserved to the Bureau of Reclamation. I am requesting further documentation to verify if that is still the current situation or not. Also, this airstrip is right up against the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA) boundary. They are working on more stringent regulations regarding air travel over their area of jurisdiction. If we were to receive a formal proposal for a right-of-way for that airstrip, we would have to coordinate with GCNRA. Nothing is ever simple or straight forward is it?

As regards to the airstrips you say are in Idaho Wilderness designated areas, I would be interested in seeing some documentation on those. Perhaps they know something we do not!

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or concerns. It is always so nice to visit with you both.