



# Ashley National Forest

## 2008 Year In Review



### FOREST SUPERVISOR'S LETTER



**Kevin B. Elliott**  
Forest Supervisor

Dear Friends,

This past year was a remarkable year, a year full of accomplishments that only a partnership of skills and common interests could achieve. The following pages highlight just some of the projects planned and implemented by some of the finest employees the United States Forest Service has to offer. Through partnerships, be it county and state governments, research scientists from a number of universities, or the host of volunteers that have a passion for the forest, we strive to make a difference Caring for the Land and Serving People.

This year as a nation we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. And this year working with the State of Utah, County Commissioners, and the general public, the Utah Forest Supervisors decided to identify 10 river segments as suitable for inclusion to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. Two river segments on the Ashley include 13 miles of the Green River below Flaming Gorge Dam and 40 miles of the Upper Uinta River, including Gilbert Creek, Center Fork, and Painter Draw. Our Wild and Scenic River recommendations will determine the kind of water legacy that we are going to leave for our community and country.

We continue to make progress updating our travel management plan.

ATV's remain a legitimate use of National Forest System lands and like any recreational pursuit, one that needs to be managed. Our focus is to identify the appropriate places for people to ride. I asked my staff to take a collaborative approach to travel management. The public and our cooperating agencies have been extremely helpful as we identify and think through options for attempting to strike a balance between motorized recreation, non-motorized recreation, and resource protection. We fully expect to have a draft environmental impact statement this spring and a final Motor Vehicle Use Map by year's end.

This last year we also accomplished some remarkable work stabilizing Island and Brown Duck lakes in the High Uintas Wilderness Area as part of our High Lakes Stabilization project. This work could not have been accomplished without the shared vision and leadership of some very significant partners.

The Ashley has a reputation for being responsive to people's needs and providing for multiple-uses in a manner that demonstrates good land stewardship. Natural resource management is not without controversy. There are many interests, and often they conflict. However, I must fall back on the mission and purposes for which Congress created our national forests. Our national forests are an irreplaceable part of our American heritage, providing a wide variety of ecological, economic, and social benefits to current and future generations. This next year will present a new set of challenges as we transition with a new administration. I am encouraged by new possibilities and a shared commitment with all of you as we continue to make decisions that sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of our natural resources.

KEVIN B. ELLIOTT  
Forest Supervisor



## YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS: *A PARTNERSHIP WITH UINTAH COUNTY*

*"A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the community; and the community includes the soil, water, fauna and flora, as well as the people."  
- Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949*



Beginning of Yurt rebuild

At Left YCC Crew for 2008

2008 marked the first year of a three-year grant by the Uintah Impact Mitigation Special Service District to begin a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program on the Ashley National Forest.

Through the generous grant of \$150,000 dollars over the next three years, the Ashley National Forest in coordination with the Uintah Basin Campus of Utah State University and Uintah High School, formed a 10 student YCC crew for the summer.

Ten students were selected out of 23 applicants from Uintah High School to form the first YCC crew at a cost of \$50,000 dollars. Students selected for the crew earned \$10 dollars an hour and also received a \$500 dollar scholarship from Utah State University to pay for up to three college credits earned by participating in this program and by completing additional course work for the University.

Students assisted in projects such as trail maintenance and the construction of a new internal frame for one of our yurts.



Final Stages of Yurt Rebuild  
Great Job YCC Crew!!!



The 2008 Youth Conservation Corps Crew working to install a turnpike to improve drainage and reduce resource damage on a section of the Outlaw Trail.

## HIGH LAKES STABILIZATION PROJECT



**Brown Duck Lake, High Uintas Wilderness, Ashley National Forest**

Duchesne, Utah ... The purpose of the High Lakes Stabilization Project (HLS project) is to modify historic dam structures with the goal of stabilizing thirteen mountain lakes in the High Uintas Wilderness Area (HUWA) on the Ashley National Forest. To date six of the thirteen dams have been successfully stabilized at Brown Duck, Clements, Farmers, Island, Water Lily and White Miller lakes.

To stabilize a dam in the context of this project would be to modify the dam structure to a "No-Hazard" level, meaning the risk of damage to wilderness and downstream property resulting from potential floods would be no greater than if the dam was not there. Stabilization will restore wilderness characteristics by letting the water levels in the lakes return their natural level and water in the stream below the lakes return to natural levels.

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (URMCC), a Federal agency, and the US Department of the Interior (USDI) are authorized to complete the High Lakes Stabilization Project (HLS project), identified as a mitigation project within the scope of the Uinta Basin Replacement Project (UBRP). Project planning and implementation were accomplished through collaboration and cooperation among the Forest Service, the aforementioned agencies, Duchesne County Water Conservancy District, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), State of Utah, and Moon Lake Water Users Association. Cooperation from the Utah Conservation Corp (UCC), a non-profit organization that pro-

vides student career training and experience, was also critical to successful project implementation.

Kevin B. Elliott, Forest Supervisor stated, "2008 demonstrated organizational flexibility and the strength of partnerships in the stabilization of Brown Duck and Island Lake and will assist us in meeting the goal of stabilizing four lakes in 2009."

In 2008 both Brown Duck Lake and Island Lake dams were stabilized using minimum tools at a combined inter-agency project cost of over \$1 million dollars. Although heavier equipment was required to accomplish the work in one season, cooperators ingenuity, dedicated conservation crews, and the use of heavy lift helicopters, as well as pack strings, made this project a success.

Applicable wilderness law required that stabilization activities utilized only the minimum tools necessary to meet project constraints. To eliminate the risk of damage to wilderness and human health and safety, stabilization of each lake must be completed in one summer season to avoid potential flooding.

Work was accomplished a month early at Brown Duck and Island Lake and in less than one season through a combination of hard working UCC hand crews utilizing simple non-motorized tools, and highly skilled Duchesne County Water Conservancy District and Bureau of Reclamation equipment operators, who moved earth and rock using a few

*(Continued on page 8)*

**"Conservation is the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good."**

**Gifford Pinchot  
First Chief of the  
Forest Service**

## LIVESTOCK GRAZING AND VEGETATION MONITORING

**World-wide practice of conservation and the fair and continued access by all nations to the resources they need are the two indispensable foundations of continuous plenty and of permanent peace.**

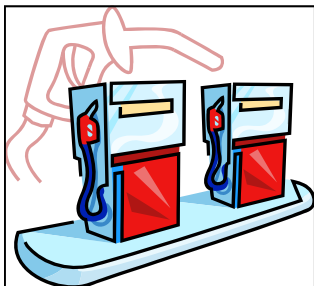
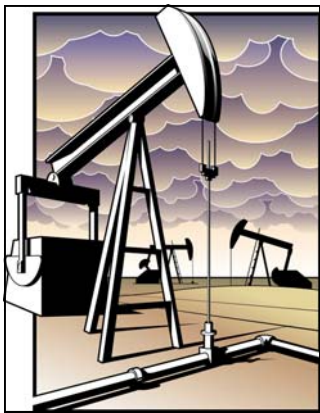
**Gifford Pinchot**

One important aspect of the management of the Ashley National Forest is its livestock grazing program. 2008 was no exception. There were 12,833 cattle, 16,795 sheep and 18 horses permitted to graze on 71 allotments located on the Ashley National Forest during 2008. 104 permittees owned and managed these livestock while they were on the forest.

Each spring permittees and Ashley National Forest rangeland management specialists get together to review existing allotment management plans to determine a strategy for grazing that particular allotment the following grazing season. Expected weather trends, recent fires or areas of pronounced insect or disease activities are all considered during these spring meetings. These strategies outline the number of livestock to be grazed, grazing rotations, water and fencing improvements, and best management practices that

will be implemented during the year.

A substantial part of the Ashley's grazing program includes monitoring to determine current forage use and other impacts along with long-term plant and soil conditions and trend. The Ashley National Forest takes it's stewardship of natural resources very seriously. As part of its commitment to the public to be responsible stewards of the land the Ashley National Forest has established more than 5,000 vegetation monitoring sites. These monitoring sites are visited periodically to determine the environmental effects of management practices such as livestock grazing, timber harvest, oil and gas exploration, recreational activities, etc. This vegetation monitoring program enables Forest decision makers to implement an "adaptive management" process and adjust these management practices as necessary to ensure a sustainable and environmentally acceptable use of forest forage.



## ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES

**Berry Petroleum:** The Ashley National Forest completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and several Categorical Exclusion (CE) reviews in 2006, approving Berry Petroleum (Berry) to drill wells on up to 14 new well pads. Some of those wells were drilled during 2007, and others were drilled during 2008. Berry is now proposing to drill up to an additional 400 wells, along with construction of up to 100 miles of new access roads and natural gas pipelines. To analyze this proposal from Berry, the Ashley National Forest started work on an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) during 2007, and continued working on that EIS through 2008.

**Vantage Energy:** Vantage Energy (Vantage) assumed control of several approved wells during 2008, which were originally drilled or proposed and approved



for EOG Resources. Vantage resumed testing operations on the Ashley Federal #2 Well, and drilled and began testing the Gilsonite 1-20 and Nutters Canyon 1-02 wells. Vantage plans to drill three additional wells, previously approved for EOG Resources but not yet drilled. In addition to these wells, Vantage is now proposing to drill another eight wells. The Ashley National Forest is currently preparing an EA to evaluate this new drilling proposal from Vantage.

# MOOSE POND

## A NEW DESTINATION FOR GETTING OUTSIDE ON THE NORTH SLOPE OF THE UINTAS.

Manila, Utah ... Are you looking for a beautiful destination where kids can catch their first trout while enjoying the great outdoors? Moose Pond on



tional activities, and to improve over-winter fish survival. Funding for the project was provided by the Forest Service, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and the Utah Department of Transportation (Scenic Byways funding).

Over four weeks in September and October Forest Service and Utah Department of Transportation personnel worked to substantially com-

over-winter fish survival.

A trail was also constructed around the pond's edge which will allow access around the pond without having to walk on Highway 44. The trail and fishing points along the trail were designed to be ADA accessible. This will allow improved fishing access and a stimulating 15 minute walk around the pond for anyone.

the North Slope of the Uintas approximately 10 miles south of Manila, Utah along the Flaming Gorge - Uintas National Scenic Byway provides just this opportunity.

Moose Pond was partially drained in 2008 for pond and facility improvements.

The Moose Pond Enhancement Project was designed to improve visitor safety, improve fishing access and other recrea-



plete this project.

The pond was deepened by removing debris and sediment that had built up over the last 50 years. This will improve fishing access and

Also helping in the project were two Boy Scouts hoping to earn their Eagle Scout awards, along with the rest of Manila's Boy Scout Troop 26.

To complete the pond additional work is planned for the spring of 2009... with everyone looking forward to the State of Utah's free fishing day in June of 2009 to officially "open" the pond and trail.



# PERMIT ADMINISTRATION

In the 1920's the Forest Service commissioned hundreds of cabins to be built on government owned land. Many of these cabins still stand today. On the Ashley National Forest (Ashley) there are 58 Recreation Residence cabins, divided between four separate tracts of land. The Forest Service still owns the land and charges the holders an annual rental fee, but any person can own the cabin at a cost lower than the cost of

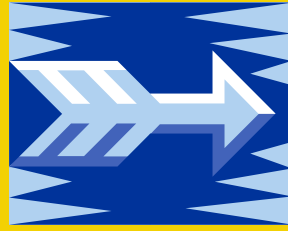
conventional real estate. In 2008 the Ashley reissued the permits for 20 years.

The Agency's special-uses program authorizes uses on National Forest Service System (NFS) land that provides a benefit to the general public and protects public and natural resource values. Currently there are over 74,000 authorizations on the NFS lands for over 180 types of uses.

Each year the Forest Service receives thousands of individual and business applications to authorize the use of NFS land for such activities as water transmission, agriculture, outfitting and guiding, recreation, telecommunication, research, photography and video productions, energy projects, utility and road rights-of-way.



# PLANNING



# FOR THE FUTURE

The Ashley was involved in three major planning projects in 2008: Travel Management planning, Forest Plan Revision and the statewide Wild and Scenic River Suitability study.

This was the second year of our Travel Management planning process. Our major emphasis in 2008 was to conduct field reviews of the nearly 1100 route proposals under consideration.



We also organized those proposals into a series of alternatives to be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Specialists are currently documenting the results of their field work and a draft EIS will be out for public review and comment in



**“Off Highway Vehicle use is a legitimate use of National Forest System lands, our goal through Travel Management Planning is finding the appropriate areas for their use.”**  
**Kevin B. Elliott, Forest Supervisor**



# ON THE ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST



River (including Gilbert Creek, Center Fork, and Painter Draw) from its headwaters to the High Uintas Wilderness boundary. The decision was signed in November 2008, and is a preliminary administrative recommendation.

The Forest Service will work with the State of Utah and other agencies to prepare and submit an interagency recommendation to Congress for inclusion of suitable Utah rivers in the NWSR system.

## Uintah River

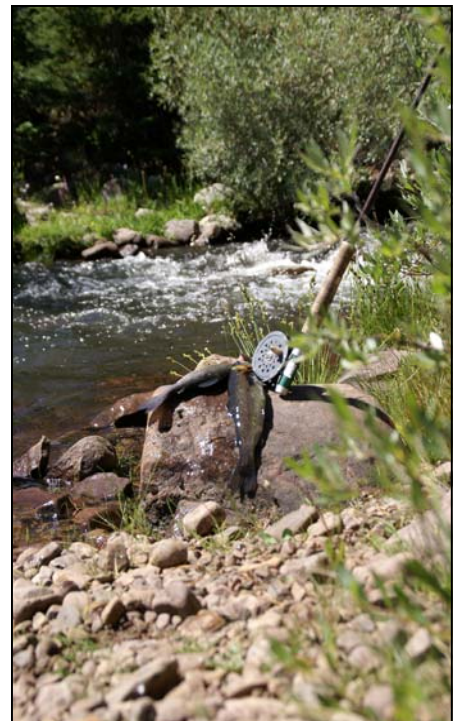
April 2009.

In Forest Plan Revision we prepared final drafts of key reference documents addressing ecosystem diversity, recreation trends, potential wilderness areas, vegetation condition and trend, water yield, economic contributions from National Forest System lands, and beliefs and values regarding resources and management of the Ashley National Forest. We will be updating the economic report and finalizing a species diversity report in 2009, as well as making all of these documents available for public review.

These reports will provide a solid foundation for our Comprehensive Evaluation report (a re-

quired precursor for Forest Plan Revision) and serve as reference points for predicting future conditions under various management alternatives.

The Ashley joined with other National Forests in Utah to complete a state-wide Wild and Scenic River Suitability study in 2008. This study included 24 river segments on the Ashley which had been found eligible for consideration in an earlier evaluation process. Of these eligible segments, two were found suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers (NWSR) system: the Green River from the Flaming Gorge Dam to the Forest Service boundary, and the Uinta



Protecting resources and activities important to everyone

# HIGH LAKES STABILIZATION CONT'



Small excavator removes material from the dam at Brown Duck Lake in the high Uintas wilderness

*(Continued from page 3)*

pieces of mechanized equipment (up to 12,500 lbs). Equipment was flown to the lake shore by a Chinook helicopter. Utilizing the Chinook helicopter avoided the risk of project delay and potential resource damage surrounding ground transport methods within a short operational time frame (from June 24th to September 22nd). The entire project was completed by August 25th. Also, Forest Service and private commercial outfitter pack strings contributed to project success by ensuring camping gear and hand tools were delivered. Forest Service and cooperator support

and coordination, as well as frequent inspections, ensured proper stabilization that followed implementation plans and met on-site design needs.

“ I am impressed with the level of skill and commitment of our interagency cooperators. Our work continues to benefit the local community and the wilderness resource.” - R. Brian Paul, High Lakes Stabilization Coordinator.

Bluebell, Drift, Five Points and Superior Lake dams, in the Garfield Basin, and Kidney Lake dam are currently being planned for stabilization during FY2009 . Work will be accomplished using minimum tools at a projected cost of over \$2 million dollars.



Students building gabion baskets at Brown Duck Lake

## DEFINITION OF WILDERNESS

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Wilderness Act of 1964



# ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST STATISTICS

Ashley National Forest Acres .....1,382,347  
 Acres in Utah .....1,286,124  
 Acres in Wyoming .....96,223

**Wilderness Areas                      Acres**

High Uintas Wilderness  
 Ashley N. F .....276,175  
 High Uintas Wilderness  
 Wasatch Cache N. F ..... 180,530

**Recreation**

Campgrounds (Family) .....60  
 Campsites .....1,156  
 Campgrounds (Group) .....12  
 Picnic Areas .....8  
 Trailheads .....10  
 Total Trail Miles .....1,196  
 • ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) .....194  
 • Biking .....325  
 • Hiking .....939  
 • Snowmobile .....116  
 Total Road Miles .....1,818  
 • ATV .....1,151

**Human Resources                      Work Value**

Volunteers .....\$84,000  
 163 Volunteers ..... \$639,352  
     14 YCC ..... \$83,960  
     3 Hosted SCSEP .....\$30,356

**Employees**

Permanent Employees .....105  
 Temporary/Seasonal .....125

**Payments to Counties                      Amount**

Uintah County .....\$367,082  
 Duchesne County .....\$880,484  
 Daggett County .....\$723,066  
 Sweetwater County, WY .....\$58,723  
 Summit County .....\$164,815  
 Utah County .....\$1,066,794  
 Wasatch County .....\$710,043



Ashley National Forest Headquarters

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Permits</u>	<u>Collected</u>
Non-Recreation	177	\$16,663
Recreation	97	\$142,488
Power	24	\$8,033

**Fire Management**

Fuel Treatment Acres .....720  
 Prescribed Burn Acres .....2,815  
 Number of Wildfires .....18  
 Wildfires Acres Burned .....741  
 Number of Wildland Fire Use Fires .....5  
 Wildland Fire Use Acres Burned .....737

**Aquatic Habitat 2008 Data**

Stream Enhancement (miles) ..... 21.5  
 Stream Surveyed (miles) ..... 10  
 Lake Enhancement (acres) ..... 97

**Terrestrial Habitat 2008 Data**

Enhanced (acres) ..... 3,840  
 Surveyed (acres) ..... 45,000

**Grazing**

**Livestock Grazed**

Horses .....18  
 Cattle .....12,833  
 Sheep .....16,795  
 Head Months Annually .....52,795  
 Allotments/Livestock Areas .....71

# AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL PASS

The America the Beautiful Pass Program is for use in National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico, authorized by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004. This pass provides access to, and use of, Federal Recreation Lands.

The Interagency Annual Pass (anyone can purchase); Interagency Senior Pass (62+ older); and Interagency Access Pass (requires documentation of permanent disability); issues hangtags as a means of display;



and decals for open-top vehicles in un-staffed areas only. More information about this pass can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/pas/permissions/annual.shtml> The Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of

Reclamation will honor all three passes at sites where Entrance or Standard Amenity Fees are charged. In addition, the Corps of Engineers and Tennessee Valley Authority may honor the Senior and Access Passes.

Now that the new passes are introduced the existing passes, such as Golden Eagle passes will no longer be sold or issued, but they will continue to be honored for as long as they are valid. Passes can be purchased or issued at all District offices on the Ashley National Forest.

## Flaming Gorge Recreation Pass Still Available

The Flaming Gorge Recreation pass is still available through our Ranger District offices for those that solely want to visit the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area.

The cost for the pass is \$35 for one calendar year, \$15 for seven days, or \$5 for one day.

# RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (NRA) is a High Impact Recreation Area (HIRA) that includes the 91-mile long Flaming Gorge Reservoir, a 13-mile stretch of the Green River that is renowned as a world-class fishery, a 7-mile National Recreation Trail, Swett Ranch Historic Site, three sites that offer visitor tours and three visitor information centers, and interpretive and educational programs at various campgrounds and visitor centers throughout the summer.

As a result of the high use of these ar-

reas a specific pass for the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area was created. The cost for the pass is \$35 for one calendar year, \$15 for seven days or \$5 for one day. National Passes, like the America the Beautiful Pass, are accepted for entrance to Flaming Gorge NRA.

Funds collected under the Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) are used to maintain recreational amenities and provide services.

In 2008 some of the REA funds were used to:

1. Hire recreational

2. Provide three campground hosts with campground maintenance duties,
3. Fund the renovation at Colton Guard Station,
4. Provide supplies to build an accessible ramp at Trout Creek Guard Station,
5. Leverage grant funding from Wyoming to replace courtesy docks at Buckboard and Anvil Draw boat launches.



Anvil Draw:  
New Courtesy Dock



Buckboard Crossing:  
New Courtesy Dock



Antelope Flat:  
New Fish Cleaning Station

# TIMBER CANYON CREEK

## RESTORING A NATIVE COLORADO CUTTHROAT TROUT FISHERY

Duchesne, Utah ... The Ashley National Forest in partnership with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Trout Unlimited are restoring Timber Canyon Creek to a native cutthroat trout fishery.

Non-native brown trout had migrated into Timber Canyon Creek and as part of this project they were removed and relocated into the Strawberry River and Starvation Reservoir to supplement existing populations. Approximately 1,000 brown trout were relocated in 2007.

In August of 2008, the first of two rotenone treatments to eradicate the remaining non-native brown trout took place. Rotenone is an odorless chemical that is used as a broad-spectrum insecticide, piscicide, and pesticide. It occurs naturally in the roots and stems of several plants. It is commonly used in powdered or emulsified liquid form in fisheries management to remove unwanted fish species, such as the eradication of exotic fish from non-native habitats.

In order for the rotenone to effectively treat Timber Canyon Creek explosives were used to breach



The detoxification station at the fish barrier with purple dye showing flow of the potassium permanganate.

beaver dams that were impeding the flow of water. Nine rotenone drip stations were spaced out approximately .75 miles apart from the headwaters down to the fish barrier which was installed in 2007, to stop brown trout from repopulating this section of stream.

At the fish barrier a detoxification station using potassium permanganate, (a rotenone neutralizer), was

used to protect the Strawberry River, a blue ribbon trout fishery, downstream. Sentinel fish at and below the fish barrier responded positively to the treatment and detoxification.

The second rotenone treatment took place on September 17 and treated Timber Canyon Creek from



One of the rotenone stations along Timber Canyon Creek with green dye used to show the flow of the rotenone.

the headwaters to the fish barrier to ensure complete coverage of the stream.

The Division of Wildlife Resources is expected to initially restock with Colorado Cutthroat Trout in the spring or early summer of 2009.

# FUEL TREATMENTS IN 2008



A drip torch used to ignite prescribed fires.

4,121 acres were treated for fuels across the Ashley National Forest; 737 acres during Wildland Fire Use fires, 492 acres mechanically and 2,892 acres with prescribed fire.



Under story burn in Yellowstone Canyon in 2008

USDA Forest Service,  
Intermountain Region

Ashley National Forest  
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Vernal, Utah 84078

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**We're on the Web**  
[www.fs.fed.us/r4/ashley](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/ashley)



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## 2008 FIRE SEASON IN REVIEW

During the 2008 fire season the Ashley National Forest experienced a total of 18 fires burning 741.40 acres. Of these 18 fires, 15 were lightning caused with 3 being managed as Wildland Fire Use Fires and 3 were human caused. 2.75 acres were human caused fires. The remaining 737.30 acres burned were part of Wildland Fire Use Fires.

District	Total Number	Lightning Caused	Human Caused	Lightning Caused-Acres	Human Caused-Acres	Total Acres
Flaming Gorge	6	5	1	0.5	2	2.5
Vernal	3	2	1	0.2	0.5	0.7
Roosevelt	4	4	0	0.6	0	0.6
Duchesne	5	4	1	737.35	0.25	737.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>738.65</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>741.4</b>