

FOREST SUPERVISOR'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

Occasionally I am asked about my vision for the Ashley National Forest. I typically frame my vision around three perspectives, i.e. forest resources, our users, and our employees. The Ashley National Forest is a scenic and productive forest with tremendous opportunities. The Forest has a reputation for providing multiple-uses in a manner that demonstrates good land stewardship. Many people care deeply for the Ashley. It is also apparent that we have a committed workforce. My personal vision is that our work environment encourages participation, that we celebrate diversity, dignity, ownership, job satisfaction, and employee growth.

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 mission is broad and finding the

right balance is a challenging problem and one we take seriously. Our national forests are a irreplaceable part of our American heritage, providing a wide variety of ecological, economic, and social benefits to current and future generations. Our challenge and responsibility as land stewards is to involve more people, incorporate science, and to make decisions that sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of our natural resources.

In the following pages we have highlighted many of the accomplishments completed with partnerships that could only be accomplished with the passion and dedication of people like you. One milestone is after five years we completed the High Lakes Stabilization project. As part of the Uinta Basin Replacement Project and mitigation for the expansion of Big Sandwash Reservoir water rights and storage capacity were transferred from 13 lakes in the High Uintas Wilderness Area allowing us to begin restoring natural character to a human altered landscape. This past summer we stabilized the last two out of 13 lakes, Deer and East Timothy, both in the Swift Creek drainage. This was a tremendous partnership involving players from a variety of affiliations and sharing a common interest of water and wilderness stewardship.

We continue to place an emphasis on connecting people with America's great outdoors, renewing mind, body, and spirit, and inspring passion for the land. Despite changes in population and fluctuating visit use patterns, outdoor recreation is traditional part of the American way of life. We are fortunate to have a gem such as the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area and other developed and dispersed recreation opportunities across the Forest.

The preceding paragraphs reflect our Intermountain Region's legacy priority of water stewardship, i.e. restoring and maintaining water quality and biotic integrity, protecting public interests in water on National Forest System lands, and connecting people to lands that provide the very water resources they depend on.

Thanks for all that you do helping us make a difference.

KEVIN B. ELLIOTT Forest Supervisor

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the timber and vegetation program is to manipulate forest vegetation to maintain or promote the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems on the Ashley National Forest.

In 2010, four conventional timber sales were sold and two stewardship contracts with timber removal were awarded. A total of 1,315,800 cubic feet (CF) of timber was sold through permits, timber sale contracts, and stewardship contracts, and 792,700 CF of wood was removed, 522 acres of forest vegetation was



Fellerbuncher working on the Reservation Ridge Stewardship Project

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'If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second."

Edward Bellamy American Author

"About 60 percent of the oil consumed daily by Americans is used for transportation, and about 45 percent is used for passenger cars and light trucks."

Sherwood Boeblert

U.S.House of Representatives 1983-2007

RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

More and more people recreate on national forests and grasslands every year. Meeting the increasing needs of these visitors, delivering quality recreation, heritage and wilderness opportunities, and protecting natural resources has become challenging.

To help address this issue, President Bush signed the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA). The Act permits federal land management agencies to continue charging modest fees at campgrounds, rental (Continued on page 10)



The entrance to Yellowstone Campground on the Duchesne/Roosevelt Ranger District

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES

NEPA Projects

Berry Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): The Ashley National Forest continued work on the South Unit Oil and Gas Development (Berry) EIS, a programmatic proposal from Berry Petroleum to drill up to 400 new oil and gas wells over an approximate 20-year period. The Public Draft EIS was released for comments in February 2010. Since then, we've been reviewing the comments received, and updating the EIS

documents, getting ready to release the Final EIS sometime in 2011.



Vantage Environmental Analysis (EA): The Ashley National Forest continued work on the Vantage EA (Vantage Energy Uintah LLC Ashley National Forest Oil and Gas Exploration Project Environmental Assessment) pro-

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PARTNERSHIPS IN LAND STEWARDSHIP: A GROWING TREND?

Partnerships in land stewardship reflect a growing and important trend: the joining of passion and resources between groups to accomplish the task of caring for and managing our natural environment. During the past year, many accomplishments have been made possible through these collaborative efforts. Partnerships are involved in almost every aspect of Forest management --from watershed restoration and conservation, to improvements in recreation and transportation.

One example is a unique project that was completed through partnership with the Northeastern Utah Off-Highway-Vehicle Working Group. In order to better educate the public on proper OHV use and provide travel route information, an interagency OHV visitor station was created. The station consists of a toy-hauler trailer outfitted to be a "rolling" education center. The trailer provides the ability to take mate-



rials and information to the public, wherever they may be located. Its debut this past year has been a huge success. It has been used at OHV events, county fairs, parades, and on-theground locations to distribute travel route information and provide a message to ride responsibly.

The OHV visitor station project was

a true partnership effort. Additional funding and contributions were made from Utah Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Land Management, State of Utah Schools and Institutional Lands Administration, Uintah County, Tread Lightly, and other organizations.

Another partnering success can be found at the Flume Trail in Dry Fork



Canyon. This popular hiking and biking trail is one of the most heavily used paths on the Forest. Previously, the trail incorporated parts of the Red Cloud Loop road because of terrain and other obstacles. This created a concern with mixed pedestrian and motorized traffic use.

A solution was found by collaborating with several groups to reroute the trail. Utah Parks and Recreation shared in funding materials and labor. Students involved in a Youth Conservation Corp (Y.C.C.) program funded by the Uintah Impact Mitigation Special Service District assisted in the work.

According to Don Jaques, partnership coordinator for the project, "The students were great! They really jumped in and went to work. Before they started, nothing existed but a flagged route through a tangled mass of trees, shrubs, and rocks. When they finished, the route was there."

Forest employees continued to work

"The success or failure of conservation today depends on building partnerships for community-based stewardship."

> Dale Bosworth Former Chief U.S. Forest Service

PRESCRIBED FIRE

The Ashley National Forest has an active hazardous fuel treatment program. In 2010, the Forest treated about twelve square miles or 8,100 acres for hazardous fuels.

About 6 square miles or 3,872 acres were treated with prescribed fire. Prescribed Fire is used to approximate the natural vegetative disturbance of periodic fire occurrence to maintain and restore fire dependent ecosystems. Generally, low intensity prescribed fire, is applied by trained experts to clear ground of dangerous fuels like dead wood and brush. Low intensity fire is vital to the life cycles of fire-dependent range and forest lands. Most prescribed fires are lit by crews using the drip torch, a hand-carried device that pours out a small stream of burning fuel. Other fires or burns are ignited by helicopters carrying a gelled fuel torch (helitorch) or a sphere dispenser machine that drops material to ignite the surface fuels. Exactly how each unit is ignited depends on weather, the lay of the land, and the intensity of the fire needed to meet the



Firefighter igniting a fire with a hand-held drip torch

goal of the burn.

An additional six square miles or 4,044 acres were treated using mechanical methods, including thinning, piling and lop and scatter.

One project area of 184 acres was seeded with fire friendly grass to assist in future prescribed fire treatments.

PARTNERSHIPS IN LAND STEWARDSHIP CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

on the trail throughout the year, installing retaining structures, a footbridge, and completing additional trail construction. Although the trail is not yet complete, it will be a wonderful contribution to the Forest. Opportunities for volunteer work will

take place this summer, and additional partnerships are being developed to complete a trailhead area.

These are just two of many examples of partnering and collaborative efforts that occurred during the 2010 year. Special thanks to these and each of our partners who are making these successes happen.

Prescribed Fire is used to approximate the natural vegetative disturbance of periodic fire occurrence to maintain and restore fire dependent ecosystems.

http:// www.fs.fed.us/ fire/fireuse/rxfire/ rx_index.html

OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

(Continued from page 2)

ject. During 2010, we reviewed public and internal comments on the Vantage EA, prepared responses to those comments, and started working on a decision for the project.

Iron King EA: During 2010, the Ashley National Forest signed a decision on our Iron King Project, which is a proposal to conduct exploratory drilling for locatable minerals in the Farm



Creek area, along with construction of a temporary road to access the proposed drilling area. The decision approved the exploratory drilling and access road construction to proceed. The access road was then constructed by the project proponent, but because of the last season, drilling activities have been postponed to the 2011 field season.

Ongoing Minerals Development:

Oil and Gas Development: During 2010, Berry Petroleum constructed several new well pads, and drilled approximately 17 new oil and gas wells. This brings the total number of active or semi-active oil and gas wells on the Forest to approximately 37 wells

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VEGETATION MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

(Continued from page 2)

improved through precommercial thinning to improve future growth, 1,350 acres were surveyed and determined to be fully stocked with trees and required no planting of trees and 20 acres were planted.

The timber and vegetation program on the Ashley National Forest employs six full-time employees, two permanent full-time employees who are shared with the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest and up to 8 seasonal employees.

In 2010, cutting unit layout, timber designation and cruising was completed on approximately 550 acres. Four additional sales totaling approximately 500,000 CF were prepared for sale in 2011.

Forest goals for the timber and vegetation program in 2011 include selling 1,102,300 CF of timber, improving vegetation on 600 acres and surveying 1,000 acres to ensure they are fully stocked with trees. Other work includes spraying campgrounds to minimize tree mortality from bark beetles, distributing insect pheromones to prevent tree loss, coordinating noxious weed treatments on completed timber sales, and monitoring harmful insect activity and disease levels on the Forest.

The vegetation and timber program is active and working to maintain or promote the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems on the Ashley National Forest. Forests are key to clean water. About 80 percent of the Nation's scarce freshwater resources originate on forests, which cover about one-third of the Nation's land area.

Publication: Water and the Forest Service January 2000

http://www.fs.fed.us/public ations/policyanalysis/water.pdf

High Lakes Stabilization

Multi-Agency Partnership in Action



After more than a decade of discussion, collaboration and planning, implementation of the High Lakes Stabilization Project began in the summer of 2006 and ended in the summer of 2010 achieving the goal of stabilizing 13 reservoirs within the High Uinta Wilderness Area at natural or nearnatural levels, restoring natural hydrologic functioning and removing the need for reservoir operation and maintenance activities within a Congressionally designated wilderness area.

The project was a cooperative effort of numerous state and federal agencies, as well as local water users and wilderness advocacy groups. The project was expected to take six to seven years to complete but was completed in just five years. Water storage rights for three reservoirs were transferred downstream to the recently enlarged Big Sand Wash Reservoir (located off-Forest), and specialuse permits for the wilderness reservoirs were retired (closed).

All of the reservoirs were built in the early 1900's by Euro-

American settlers who expanded the storage capacity of natural lakes with embankments and/or created tunnels and trenches with outlet works to access and control the outflow of water in the lake basins for irrigation of fields downstream. The reservoirs, associated outlet works, and primitive tools left behind are cultural resources that have been extensively documented, and have been preserved to the extent practical.

Complete removal and restoration of the reservoirs was not the objective, restoring natural lake levels and natural flows to the streams, removing the need for any operation or maintenance activities, and minimizing new impacts on the wilderness were the goals and they were all accomplished.

The project costs amounted to

High Lakes Stabilization Project Other Partners				
Central Utah Water Conservancy District	State of Utah	Moon Lake Water Users Association		
Construct UBRP	Interim and Final Inspections	Special Use Permit Holder		
	Approve Designs & Reports	Operate some UBRP Facilities		

about 7 million dollars over a 5year period. The reservoirs stabilized during this project included Bluebell, Brown Duck, Clements, Deer, Drift, East Timothy, Farmers, Five Point, Island, Kidney, Superior, Water Lily, and White Miller. Through detailed annual plan-



ning, equipment, resources and personnel were gathered and employees were trained to move equipment into high mountain reservoirs within the High Uinta Wilderness Area to stabilize the spillways and dam structures. Through the use of government and outfitter pack strings and medium and heavy lift helicopters, and a combination of hand tools and motorized equipment the work associated with each reservoir was completed on or ahead of each year's schedule. Impacts to wilderness characteristics were mitigated by minimizing the movement of tracked equipment and using manual labor where possible.

To ensure public safety work at each reservoir had to be completed in one field season often from the beginning or the middle of June through the end of September. This ensured that the breached spillway structures could withstand the spring runoff without incident.

Ashley National Forest

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HIGH LAKES STABILIZATION CONT'

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In order to increase the skill level of all employees engaged in this project work activities at the reservoirs were classified from the simplest to the most difficult in terms of design complexity and type and amount of earth that needed to be moved, and the equipment required to move it in one field season. Work was also scheduled in order to maximize logistical efficiencies, which were a function of geography, which contributed to the difficulty in identifying work targets for each field season.

Annually, before any work began, a minimum tools analysis was completed to determine the "minimum tool" needed to complete the work. This ensured maximum compatibility with the goals of wilderness management. For example, analysis showed that Farmer's Lake reservoir, was a small project (36 cubic yards of material moved), and could be stabilized entirely by hand tools in one season. At Farmer's Reservoir, a tunnel, used to access the lake's natural storage basin was closed with spoils from the original excavation. This work was accomplished by hand crews which sealed the inlet, outlet, and a hazardous air shaft with native soil and rock. In 2008, Clements Lake Dam (730 cubic yards of material moved) stabilization required the movement of a larger volume of material by two small skid steers and one small excavator in combination with hand tools and labor to accomplish work in a single season. This motorized equipment was flown in and out by a medium lift helicopter to ensure that wilderness values were protected in moving equipment to the reservoir deconstruction site. In 2010, the project faced its greatest challenge, East Timothy Reservoir Dam, which was constructed in 1951 with bulldozers and other large motorized machines. Due to the sheer mass of material to be moved (15,000 cubic yards of material moved) and deconstruction design challenges at East Timothy Reservoir, 10 pieces of medium sized motorized equipment

with tracks, 4 of which were disassembled to meet flight weight restrictions, were flown in by heavy lift helicopter to perform the majority of the earthwork. Hand crews completed the detail work such as blasting to prepare rock for movement, sifting sand for concrete work, campsite management, and breaking, placing and removing small rock, as well as rerouting trails and some work site rehabilitation.

Brian Paul, High Lakes Stabilization Project Leader stated, "Without complete cooperation from all of the partners involved in this project it would not have been possible. Leaders in each organization ensured the safe and timely completion of this project without injury to employees or to the characteristics that make the High Uinta Wilderness Area special to many Forest visitors."

There were many organizations with working roles in the completion of this project and deserve recognition.

They include the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, US Department of Interior's Central Utah Project Completion Act Office, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Duchesne County Water Conservancy District, Moon Lake Water Users Association, the Utah State Division of Water Rights and Division of Wildlife Resources, Flying J Outfitters, and the United States Forest Service.

Hand crews from the Student Conservation Association and the USU Logan Utah Conservation Corps provided the majority of the hand labor during the project, and Forest Service employees including animal packers, trail crews, wilderness manager, wilderness rangers, engineers, lands and special uses manager, archaeologists, fire crews, recreation, wildlife and fisheries biologists, maintenance crews, and various administrators (contracts, agreements, purchasing), Fire & Aviation Officers, Public Affairs Officer, Planning personnel and a lot of others all provided critical support to accomplish the work.

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST STATISTICS

Ashley National Forest Acres:	1,382,347
Acres in Utah:	1,286,124
Acres in Wyoming:	

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
Senior Community-	
Enrollment Program	\$212,000

Employees

Permanent Employees	.126
Temporary/Seasonal	

Payments to Counties	<u>Amount</u>
Uintah County	\$289,700
Duchesne County	\$573,760
Daggett County	\$542,868
Sweetwater County, WY	\$45,724
Utah County	\$8,046
Wasatch County	\$63,657



Ashley National Forest Headquarters

Land Use	Permits	Collected
Non-Recreat	ion.184	\$39,001
Recreation	100	\$189,863
Power		\$1,306

Fire Management

Fuel Treatment Acres	4,044
Prescribed Burn Acres	.3,872
Number of Wildfires	14
Wildfires Acres Burned	166
Number of Wildland Fire Use Fires	0
Wildland Fire Use Acres Burned	0

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improved

Enhancement (Miles)	2
Terrestrial Acres	3,305
Lake Acres	70
Stream Miles	16
-Surveyed:	
Terrestrial Acres	.33,000
Aquatic Acres	1,000
Grazing	
Livestock Grazed	

Horses		
Cattle		12,857
Sheep		13,795
Head M	onths Annually	90,958
Allotme	nts/Livestock Areas.	71

RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT CONT'





cabins, high-impact recreation areas and at dayuse sites that have certain facilities.

On the Ashley National
Forest fees are collected
through the Flaming
Gorge National Recrea-
tion Area, (FGNRA),
passes sold at our local
offices and campground
fees across the Forest.Ing water and sewer s
tems for fishing and b
ing facilities at Buck-
board, Lucerne, Fireh
and Little Hole recrea
complexes.In 2010 funds were us
fees across the Forest.In 2010 funds were us
to match funding from
the Utah Division of
Wildlife Resources to
install a new floating
restroom and boat pure

In 2010 Recreation Act Enhancement, (REA), funds were used to support a workforce of employees and volunteers who perform compliance checks and resource protection patrols, informed the public of local fire restrictions, presented bear safety education and Smokey Bear interpretive programs at trailheads, interpretive sites, picnic areas, and fishing and boating sites along the Flaming Gorge Reservoir. In addition, REA funds provided safety patrols and site maintenance for guided and non -guided floating trips down the Green River. Many tasks on the reser-

voir would not be accomplished without the en-

hanced funding provided through REA. Tasks such as maintaining reservoir buoys, collecting trash, cleaning and maintaining toilets, maintaining water and sewer systems for fishing and boating facilities at Buckboard, Lucerne, Firehole, and Little Hole recreation complexes.

In 2010 funds were used to match funding from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to install a new floating restroom and boat pumpout station at Cedar Springs Marina that will be installed in 2011. New restrooms at Buckboard and Anvil Draw were funded with REA funds and matching funds from the State of Wyoming and will be installed in 2011.

Work on the Dam Point Trail located near Flaming Gorge Dam. This project will create a new section of trail, a gangway and a fishing dock to facilitate fishing and boating near the visitor center, picnic area and dam.

Outside of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area REA funds were used to maintain trailhead facilities and over 100 miles of trails in the High Uintas Wilderness Area, monitored wilderness conditions, funded employees for visitor contact and law enforcement and supported other backcountry areas in support of the outfitter and guide program.

In 2010 funds were used in coordination with the Ashley National Forest Youth Conservation Corps Crew to refinish picnic tables, unit signs and posts, repaint restroom doors and trim and fix or replace fire rings at Paradise Campground. REA funds were also used to maintain access to rental cabins and yurts including winter crosscountry ski and snowmobile trails.

REA funding reduced the risk to campers and provided firewood by removing a large number of hazard trees from 22 campgrounds. Sheep Bridge, along the main access trail to backcountry and the High Uintas Wilderness, was repaired with REA funds after sustaining damage from spring runoff in 2010. REA funding is used across the Ashley National Forest to maintain infrastructure and amenities for forest visitors

TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

In June the Ashley National Forest distributed new Motorized Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs) depicting routes open to motorized travel and areas open for motorized dispersed camping across the Forest.

state, (Wyoming and Utah), Vernal Ranger District maps are separated by cardinal direction, (east and west), and Duchesne/ Roosevelt District Maps are separated by cardinal direction, (north and south). Motorized



The new Motorized Travel Management Plan designates 1,458 miles of open roads and 185 miles of open motorized trails for a total of 1,643 miles of open motorized routes Forest -wide. Some designated routes require work before opening to public use.

In 2010 the Forest focused on the distribution of the new travel maps and explaining the decision to forest visitors. Work began to update traffic signs across the Forest to depict the changes in motorized use and to clear routes designated in the plan that require additional work.

There are six maps in total with two for each Ranger District. Flaming Gorge Ranger District maps are separated by Vehicle Use Maps will be updated annually and a new map will be produced for 2011.

Changes to the MVUM for 2011 will include map corrections, and the addition of routes that have been cleared for public use.

The new MVUMs depict roads and trails open to all motorized vehicles, seasonal closures, trails open to motorized vehicles

less than 50 inches wide, routes open to highway legal vehicles only, roads and trails where high ground clearance vehicles are recommended, and areas approved for motorized dispersed camping within 150 feet of designated routes in Utah and 300 feet from designated routes in Wyoming.

The Travel Management Plan decision also states that motorized retrieval of big game animals is not allowed.

Maps for 2011 will be available at all Ranger District Offices and the Supervisor's Office in Vernal in May or June of 2011.



USDA Forest Service.

 Intermountain Region

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 OILL AND GAS ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

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 (on 23 well pads).

 Mining and Minerals Exploration:

Forest (hand-tools only).



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2010 WILDFIRE SEASON

The Honeycomb Mine and Limestone Mine continued to operate during 2010, mining decorative calcite and chemical-grade limestone respectively. Various prospecting activities also occurred on the Dal Cuinn mining claims (drilling and sampling), Iron King Claims (road building), and various other locations on the

During the2010 fire season the Ashley National Forest experienced a total of 14 fires burning a total of 166 acres. Of these 14 fires, 10 were lightning caused and 4 were human caused. Of the 166 acres, 1.2 burned as a result of human caused ignitions, with the remaining coming from lightning ignitions.

District	Total Number	Lightning Caused	Human Caused	Lightning Caused-Acres	Human Caused-Acres	Total Acres
Flaming Gorge	12	9	3	164.7	1.1	165.8
Vernal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roosevelt	0	0	0	0	0	0
Duchesne	2	1	1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Total	14	10	4	164.8	1.2	166