

## **Decision Memo**

### **Murray Wildlife Guzzlers**

#### **Wasatch-Cache National Forest Logan Ranger District Cache County, Utah**

### **Decision**

I have decided to approve the installation of two wildlife guzzlers on the “Murray property”, a 604-acre parcel of land the Forest Service acquired from the Murray family in 2005. The project is located in the southern end of the Cache Valley within Sections 9 and 10 of T10N, R1W. The project area is adjacent to and east of the Wellsville Mountain Wilderness, approximately 1 1/2 miles southwest of Wellsville, Utah.

The guzzlers will provide wildlife access to water for drinking. Currently, no water sources are known in the upper portion of this property. The project will greatly enhance water availability for wild turkeys, mule deer, and other wildlife species.

A wildlife guzzler consists of a tank that collects and stores water and a self-level drinker extending approximately 100-200 feet from the storage tank. All water required for the guzzlers will be captured in the aprons; there will be no diversion from any pipes or naturally occurring springs. The catchment apron will be 16x32 feet in size with the tank located at the lower end of the apron.

In addition, the project includes installation of 500 feet of post and pole fence along the USFS/private land boundary to deter motorized access.

### **Mitigation Measures**

Mitigation measures, which are part of the decision, include the following:

1. This area has a landscape character of “natural appearing” and a scenic integrity index of “high”. To protect scenic integrity, the sheeting material used in construction of the apron should be of a non-reflecting color, such as bronze, to reduce the reflectivity of the catchment apron. If galvanized steel is used, an acid wash (i.e. vinegar solution) should be used to lessen the sheen.

### **Scoping and Public Involvement**

On September 10, 2007, the Forest Service began the public scoping process by mailing a letter describing the proposed project to individuals on the district mailing list. The project was included in the Fall 2007 Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). The District received 1 response; the letter generally favored the project (with caveats, including, post and pole fencing, a tank escape ramp, and no piping of water).

Documentation of public scoping is in the project file and available for review through the Logan Ranger District.

## Reason for Categorically Excluding the Project

Based on public input, interdisciplinary team review, past experience, and consideration of the resource conditions listed below, I have determined the effects of implementing this action will be of limited context and intensity and will result in little or no environmental effect to either the physical or biological components of the environment. As such, this is a decision that has been categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed action falls under Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 - Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook, Chapter 30, Section 31.2, Category 6 – Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.

As described above, all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts have been incorporated into the decision. The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action. There were no significant effects identified for the resource conditions listed below.

- a. **Federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.** The wildlife biologist, fisheries biologist, and botanist have determined there will be no significant effects to rare or endangered species or critical habitats from the implementation of this project. They have determined there will be “no effect” to any threatened or endangered species and “no impact” to any sensitive species because either there is no suitable habitat or the species are not found in the project area (see list in the project file). The project will benefit sensitive species such as the Townsend’s big-eared bat and the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse by providing water for drinking.
- b. **Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.** The forest hydrologist and soil scientist determined there will be no significant effect to any flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds as a result of this project because there are no wetlands in the area and the project is not located within any floodplains or municipal watershed.
- c. **Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas.** This project is not in any congressionally designated area.
- d. **Inventoried roadless areas.** The project is not in any inventoried roadless area.
- e. **Research Natural Areas.** The project is not in any Research Natural Area.
- f. **American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites.** The forest archaeologist has determined no such religious or cultural sites will be affected by the project because of its limited area of impact.
- g. **Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.** The forest archaeologist has determined no archaeological sites or historic properties will be affected by the project because of the limited area of impact.

## Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the Revised Wasatch-Cache National Forest Plan (USFS, 2003) as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan standards and incorporates appropriate forest-wide and management prescription guidelines. The project is consistent with the desired future conditions as described in the Forest Plan.

### **Appeal Opportunity and Implementation**

This decision pursuant to 36 CFR 215.4(a) is not subject to appeal and may be implemented immediately.

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Jennefer Parker, District Ranger, 1500 East Highway 89, Logan, Utah 84321, (435-755-3620).

/s/Jennefer Parker

January 25, 2008

**JENNEFER PARKER**  
**District Ranger**

**Date**

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