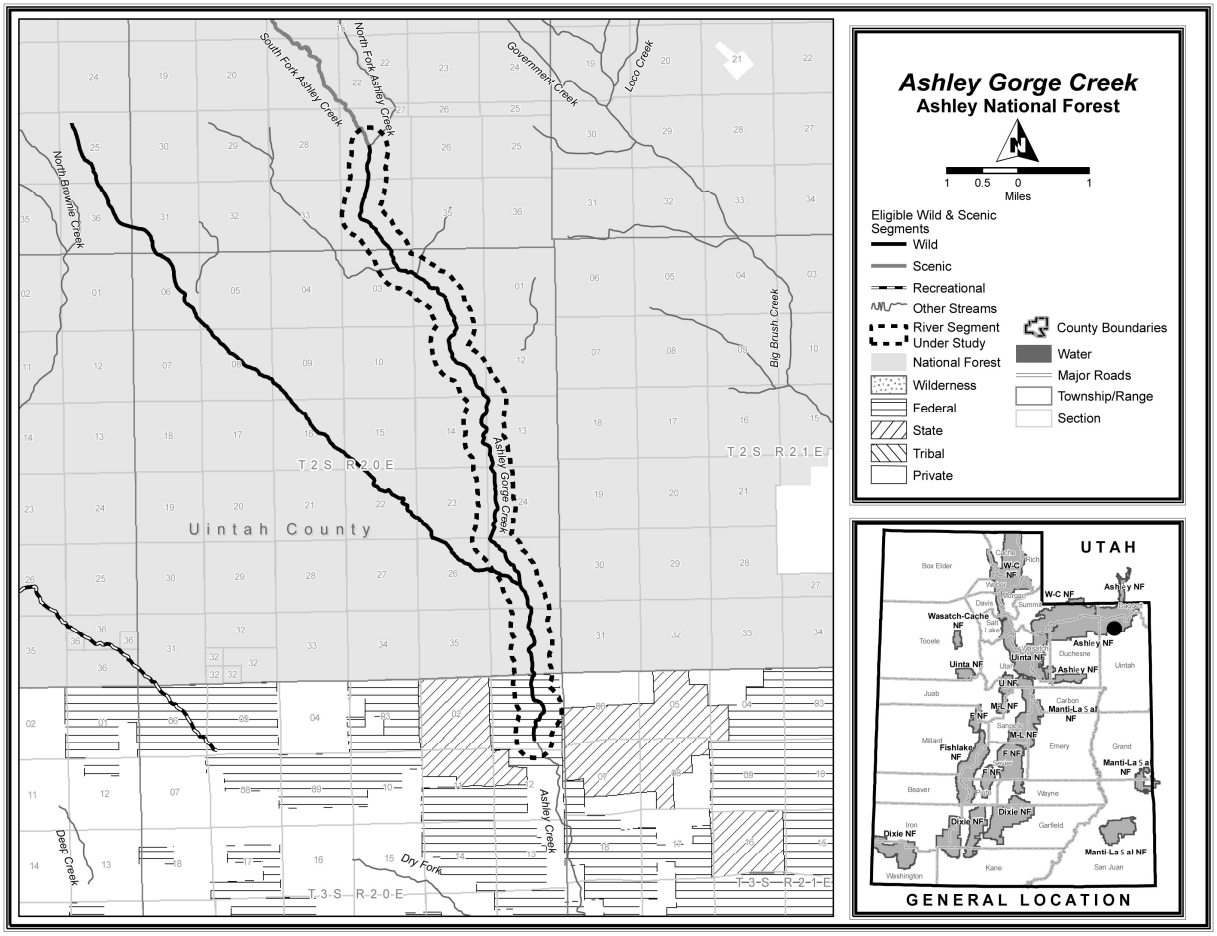
Ashley Gorge Creek
Suitability Evaluation Report (SER)



STUDY AREA SUMMARY

Name of River: Ashley Gorge Creek

River Mileage:

Studied: 10.16 miles, from the junction with the North Fork and South Fork Ashley Creeks to the mouth of the Gorge at the "spring box" located approximately 1.07 miles south of the Ashley National Forest.

Eligible: Same

Location:

Ashley Gorge Creek	Ashley National Forest, Vernal Ranger District, Uintah County, Utah		Congressional District UT-2	
	Start	End	Classification	Miles
Segment 1	NE ¼ SW ¼ Sect. 27 T 1 S, R 20 E, SLM	SW ¼ SE ¼ Sect. 1, T 3 S, R 20 E, SLM	Wild	10.16

Physical Description of River:

Ashley Gorge Creek is located in an extremely rugged and steep canyon area, with the exception of short sections near the upper and lower ends of the segment, i.e., near the junction of the segment with the North and South Forks of Ashley Creek, and at the terminus near the "spring box" on land administered

by the Bureau of Land Management. The upper portion of this segment flows between steep colluvial slopes underlain by Mississippian limestone. The stream at the bottom constantly removes material, thus keeping the slope movement active. Much of the valley bottom is filled with alluvium and glacial outwash, with numerous benches and debris flows below the side slopes. The slope wash has built terraces and side valley fans which stand well above the glacial outwash. Flash floods carry sediment into the stream channels, but the numerous boulders in the material inhibits deep cutting. The lower gorge has exceedingly steep canyon sides and vertical cliffs, underlain by the Weber Sandstones. Whitewater and high flows occur in spring with snow and ice thaws. Duration of high flows is dependent on snow pack and summer storms. The springs in the lower portion of the gorge are charged by water entering a large karst system connected to the Dry Fork, Brownie Canyon, and other drainages. Water discharged from Oaks Park is diverted in a side drainage and enters Ashley Creek about 1/4 of the way down the drainage. Flows from this diversion add additional water in the fall when natural flows are reduced. As in other drainages along the Western Section, there is considerable loss of water to the underground karst system.

ELIGIBILITY

Name and Date of Eligibility Document: Final Eligibility of Wild & Scenic Rivers - Ashley National Forest USDA Forest Service July 2005

Determination of Free-flowing Condition: There are no diversions or impoundments in this segment. The flow reductions associated with the sinks in the canyon are considered as part of the natural stream environment.

Summary of Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV):
Scenic – Ashley Gorge is located in an extremely rugged and steep canyon area, with the exception of short sections near the upper and lower ends of the segment, i.e., near the junction of the segment with the North and South Forks of Ashley Creek, and at the terminus near the “spring box” on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Steep slopes, rock outcrops, and a mosaic of conifers, aspen, cottonwoods and willows provide breathtaking scenery to those who venture on foot in the canyon.

Geologic/Hydrologic – The upper portion of this segment flows between steep colluvial slopes underlain by Mississippian limestone. There are numerous palisade cliffs with talus piles beneath. There is active down slope movement of the colluviums, probably by creep. The stream at the bottom constantly removes material, thus keeping the slope movement active.
Much of the valley bottom is filled with alluvium and glacial outwash, with numerous benches and debris flows below the side slopes. As opposed to the outwash, which is composed of Uinta Mountain quartzite, the slope wash is composed of material derived from the Morgan and Weber formations. The slope wash has built terraces and side valley fans which stand well above the glacial outwash. Flash floods carry sediment into the stream channels, but the numerous boulders in the material inhibits deep cutting. The lower gorge has exceedingly steep canyon sides and vertical cliffs, underlain by the Weber Sandstones. The vertical nature of these slopes is caused by the "jointing" in the Weber formation. In the process of down cutting the valleys, the stream also undercut the bottoms of the canyon thus removing support from the overlying rocks. The already existing "joint sets" create natural planes of weakness for rocks to fracture, break and fall. Thus, the process of canyon formation is accompanied by very impressive and spectacular rock falls. Whitewater and high flows occur in spring with snow and ice thaws. Duration of high flows is dependent on snow pack and summer storms. High flows and the rugged nature of the land provide the adventurous with unforgettable experiences. However, due to the isolation and rugged nature of the gorge, easy access is not possible. The springs in the lower portion of the gorge are charged by water entering a large karst system connected to the Dry Fork, Brownie Canyon, and other drainages. This limestone karst system (sinkholes, caves, and underground drainage) provides a significant amount of water for the Vernal Municipal Watershed. Water discharged from Oaks Park is diverted in a side drainage and enters Ashley Creek about 1/4 of the way down the drainage. Flows from this diversion add

additional water in the fall when natural flows are reduced. As in other drainages along the Western Section, there is considerable loss of water to the underground karst system.

Wildlife – Good wildlife habitat exists due to the diversity of vegetation and deciduous trees in the canyon corridor. Habitat exists for peregrine falcon. The corridor serves as an escape route for deer and elk. This segment also provides important habitat for raptors. It also has potential for bats. The segment is valuable habitat for bobcat, cougar, and bear. The benches above the canyon bottom and within the 0.5-mile wide corridor provide habitat for deer in the spring and fall.

Historic – Red Pine Trail is an historic transportation route. There is also evidence of an old trail along the canyon bottom, with several historic mining sites and writings on rocks and boulders. The springs in the lower area of the gorge were used as water sources during early settlement days.

Other Similar Values – This segment of Ashley Creek begins in irregular shaped, steep and very steep limestone canyon side slopes. The drainage descends a boulder falls just above the Redpine setting location, and enters what is known as Ashley Gorge. Vegetation is highly diverse from the top of the canyon to the bottom. There is not much of a riparian zone in the bottom. Numerous springs occur toward the mouth of the gorge. The Research Natural Area within the corridor is a good representation of local undisturbed community types: riparian, cottonwood, dogwood, and blue spruce understory communities. Aspen snowberry community occurs, with mixed conifer on numerous debris fans and on lower canyon slump slopes. Mountain brush occurs on the south facing slopes on the east side of the canyon, and Douglas-fir on north facing slopes. Shrubs associated with bottomlands occupy the canyon bottoms. Dogwood, aspen-narrow leaf cottonwood-snowberry and mountain ash are also present. Engelmann spruce is also intermingled in the canyon bottom. "Everet Spring Parsley" is found in riparian areas along the canyon bottom.

CLASSIFICATION

Basis for the Classification of River: Wild

This watercourse is generally inaccessible except by trail. Red Pine Trail crosses the upper portion of the gorge, and several undeveloped roads access points at several sites along the plateau above the gorge, the boundary to the area. The terminus of the segment is just north of the road leading to the USGS Gauging Station on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

SUITABILITY REPORT

Landownership and Land Uses – This segment is located almost entirely on the Ashley National Forest, Vernal Ranger District, except for a short segment on BLM-administered land.

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0-9.09	Ashley National Forest	2908.8
9.09-10.16	Bureau of Land Management	342.4
	Total	**3251.2**

Readers Note: The study area boundaries displayed in Appendix A, Suitability Evaluation Reports, do not represent actual Wild and Scenic River boundaries, but the area of interest for eligible river segments. It should be noted that of the eligible rivers studied, 14 of the 86 river segments appear to include portions of private land, at the end of segments near the National Forest boundary. These typically short river stretches (1/4 to 4 miles long) were included in the eligibility study as part of the river segment length because they brought the river segment to a logical terminus at a confluence with a larger stream, also contained the ORVs of the National Forest portion of the segment, or National Forest land was located within ¼ mile of these segments. These lengths are also included in the tables found in this suitability study. The magnitude of this effect is small, representing approximately 22 miles total over 14 segments,

or less than 3 percent of the total mileage in the study. The final decision will apply only to river segments located on National Forest System lands. The dashed lines on the individual river maps represent the approximate 1/4 mile river corridor boundary of the river segment under study. If Congress chooses to add any of the recommended river segments to the National Wild and Scenic River System, the Forest Service would be required to develop Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP). Section 3(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires the establishment of detailed boundaries (an average of not more than 320 acres per river mile). At that time, the boundary would be adjusted to exclude private, State, or other Federal agency land located at the end or beginning of the river segment. Congress could include private lands (in holdings) within the boundaries of the designated river area, however, management restrictions would apply only to public lands.

In Uintah County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as RFM-Recreation, Forestry and Mining (http://www.co.uintah.ut.us/gis/Zoning%202005.pdf). The RFM zone has been established as a district in which the primary use of the land is for recreation, forestry, grazing, wildlife and mining purposes. In general, this zone covers the mountainous portion of the unincorporated area of the county, and is characterized by naturalistic land areas, mountain canyons, and high grazing lands interspersed by ranches, recreational camps and resorts, outdoor recreational facilities, and mines and facilities related thereto. Natural and manmade lakes are also characteristic of this zone.

Conditional land uses that are permitted only when approved by the planning commission include (Uintah County code 17.64.030):

A. Forest product industries and buildings related thereto;
B. Oil and gas wells, mining and processing of minerals;
C. Gravel and rock quarries;
D. Reservoirs, dams, power plants, electric substations, oil and gas pipelines;
E. Hot-road-mix plants on temporary basis for not more than six months;
F. Ski resorts, recreation camps and uses incidental to such uses;
G. Gas stations, cafes, resorts;
H. Radio and television transmitter facilities.

Special provisions exist for construction near waterways and flood channels. No building shall be constructed within the boundaries of any natural waterway. Where buildings are to be constructed within seventy-five (75) feet of the exterior boundaries of the high water mark of a flood channel existing at the effective date of the ordinance codified in this title, adequate measures must be taken, as determined by the board of county commissioners, to protect the building or structure from damage, due to floods, and so as not to increase the hazard to surrounding lands and buildings (Uintah County code 17.64.060) http://www.co.uintah.ut.us/countycode/index.html

Mineral and Energy Resource Activities – There are no large past or currently active minerals or energy development activities, mining claims, or minerals leases located adjacent to this river segment (www.geocommunicator.gov). Based on the underlying geology, and lack of past minerals and energy development, little if any future mineral or energy extraction activities would be expected.

Water Resources Development – There are no diversions, impoundments or channel modifications along this segment. No future water developments are known or expected at this time. A unique flow alteration occurs in this drainage, as water from Oaks Park Reservoir is diverted via the Oaks Park Canal into Ashley Gorge, which augments stream flows in the gorge. There are reservoirs on Ashley Twin and Goose Lakes in the upper watershed above the segment.

The Utah State Water Plan for the Uintah Basin (1999) identifies a shortage of irrigation water that generally occurs during July and August due to inadequate reservoir storage in the Uintah Basin. The recommendation of this report is that storage reservoirs should be constructed on the Yellowstone River

(near Altonah), Uinta River (near Neola) and Whiterocks River (near Whiterocks), as well as upper and lower Ashley Creek (Utah State Water Plan – Uintah Basin – 1999, pages 10-6 and 13-8). The report also recommends bank stabilization along Dry Fork (near Maeser). Bank stabilization, rebuilding old meander bends, and larger bridges were also recommended along Ashley Creek.

No proposed water development projects in the Utah State Water Plan for the Uintah Basin are proposed on eligible Wild and Scenic river segments. All of these proposed projects are downstream of the Ashley National Forest, and are not expected to alter (or be altered) by potential Wild and Scenic designation. Designation into the Wild and Scenic river system does not affect existing, valid water rights.

Transportation, Facilities, and Other Developments – Red Pine Trail crosses the upper portion of the gorge, and undeveloped roads access points at several sites along the plateau above the gorge. The terminus of the segment is just north of the road leading to the USGS Gauging Station on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Rights of way: There are three recorded rights of way in the corridor, one and two water facilities.

Grazing Activities – Ashley Gorge creates the boundary between the Taylor Mountain and Black Canyon allotments, but due to the rugged and inaccessible nature of the canyon, no grazing use occurs along the river corridor.

Recreation Activities – Hiking is the dominant recreation use. Some hunting and fishing occurs in both the upper and lower portions of the segment. Limited kayaking and canoeing occurs in the lower half of the gorge for about a 30 to 40 day period during early spring runoff (classes 2 through 5 experience level). Outstanding fishing occurs along the upper portion of the gorge. Rock hounding within the gorge is a very popular recreation use. Historic features in the gorge also attract visitors.

Other Resource Activities – Some harvest activities have taken place in the upper reaches of this segment, but outside the 0.5 mile corridor. Due to the sheer canyon walls and inaccessible nature, the majority of Ashley Gorge is not suitable for timber harvest.

Special Designations – The Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986) identifies the following management prescriptions for this area:

- (n) Range of resource uses and outputs. Commodity production modified for amenity production. Resource protection as needed outside of NRA. The riparian objective is to maintain and restore. This management prescription encompasses the majority of the segment.
- (f) Dispersed Recreation Roaded. Areas receiving a variety of uses in a variety of landforms and vegetation types located throughout the Forest in a roaded environment. The riparian objective is to maintain. Control as needed to protect streambank stability, minimize sedimentation, prevent compaction and maintain visuals. This management prescription applies to some scattered areas in the segment.
- (g) Undeveloped dispersed recreation – unroaded. These areas are characterized by a variety of timbered and non-timbered lands between mid and high elevations. The riparian objective is to protect. This prescription applies to the lower portion of the segment.

The Ashley Gorge Research Natural Area encompasses approximately 2.3 miles of the eligible segment. This RNA was established principally as a representative blue spruce forest type, with lesser amounts of Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, mountain shrub, and riparian vegetation. Management direction in Research Natural Areas is to allow natural processes to operate with minimal management intervention. Various representative ecosystems are to be maintained for future research use.

This entire segment falls within the Ashley Spring (Vernal City) Drinking Water Source Protection Zone.

A portion of this same area is set aside and managed as the Vernal municipal watershed.

The Ashley Gorge segment is located completely within inventoried roadless areas, except for the final mile below the Forest Boundary.

Socio-Economic Environment – Some of the downstream communities in Uintah County include Maeser, Naples and Vernal. Vernal is the largest community in the basin with an estimated population of 7, 577 (2007 estimate). The Ashley Valley is set in a picturesque rural environment, where traditional land uses such as agriculture, timber harvest and grazing have been important over time.

The economy in the Uintah Basin relies largely on agriculture, industry, traditional land uses, and tourism. Oil and gas, manufacturing, and construction are important growth industries. In recent years, oil and gas activities have increased dramatically. Oil and gas operations are evident in many areas, consisting of well sites, gathering lines and distribution sites. The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation lies within and adjacent to the county boundaries, which provides an important social and economic context to the Uintah Basin (http://duchesne.net/demo/).

The Uintah Basin has been affected by the boom and bust cycles related to the oil and gas industry over the years, but in spite of these cycles the population and economy are expected to grow. The long term outlook for the economy in the Uintah Basin is positive, with growth in oil and gas, minerals, and tourism (http://www.water.utah.gov/planning/SWP/Unitah/swp_ub02.pdf).

Travel and tourism in the area is generally related to the abundant outdoor opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized recreation, camping, hunting, fishing, Dinosaur National Monument etc.

Current Administration and Funding Needs if Designated – The current administering agencies are the USFS and the BLM.

The following information is based on 2001 data, which doesn't account for inflation over the past six years, but is the best available data. If a river is designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational, the actual cost of preparing the comprehensive river management plan would average $200,000 per plan for 86 segments, which would cost approximately $17.2 million the first two to three years following designation. It was estimated that annual management costs for a high complexity river would be $200,000; a moderate complexity river would be $50,000; and a low complexity river at $25,000. Using an average of complexity costs, it would cost the Forest Service around $7.8 million annually for 86 segments. (Estimated Costs of Wild and Scenic Rivers Program - V. 091104)

SUITABILITY FACTOR ASSESSMENT:

(1) **The extent to which the State or its political subdivisions might participate in the shared preservation and administration of the river, including costs, should it be proposed for inclusion in the National System.**

The State of Utah has not shown interest or disinterest in the designation of these segments. Local county officials do not support Wild and Scenic designation, and would not share in the costs.

(2) **The state/local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-federal lands. Include any local zoning and/or land use controls that appear to conflict with protection of river values.**

In Uintah County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as RFM-Recreation, Forestry and Mining. The RFM zone has been established as a district in which the primary use of the land is for recreation, forestry, grazing, wildlife and mining purposes. Wild and Scenic designation could be inconsistent with the stated uses of forestry, and mining. Designation could also be inconsistent with conditional land uses in Uintah County, including oil and gas wells/pipelines, gravel and rock quarries, reservoirs, dams, and

power plants. Designation could be consistent with the purposes of recreation, permitted grazing, and wildlife. In addition, designation would be consistent with special provisions that exist for construction near waterways and flood channels.

(3) **Support or opposition to designation.**
Comments received during the eligibility study;
Uintah County officials, the Uintah County Water Conservancy District, and various members of the public were opposed to designation. Some reasons for opposition were potential effects to downstream water rights, potential effects to reservoir and canal system management, potential effects to future water developments, and that other means of protecting outstandingly remarkably values are available.

The High Uintas Preservation Council, the Uinta Mountain Club, the Utah Rivers Council, and various members of the public were in support of designation. Some reasons in support of designation were the preservation of various outstandingly remarkable values, the prevention of further development or modification of river segments, the protection of river segments within inventoried roadless areas, and the protection of water quality within municipal watersheds.

Comments received during scoping for the suitability study:
Letters in support of designation were received from several individuals and nonprofit organizations. These letters cited its wild character, contribution to river system/basin integrity, scenery, and wildlife habitat values as reasons it should be considered suitable. One letter also expressed concern that any new reservoir construction on Ashley Creek would negatively affect recharge of the aquifer underlying Ashley Valley, and supported designation as a means of preventing further development.

Letters from the Uintah Water Conservancy District and a group of Ashley valley residents expressed opposition to designation. These letters cited the need for irrigation, municipal and industrial water, risk to private property if the river is not properly managed, and seasonally dry channels in some portions of the segment as reasons it should not be considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.

Comments responding to the draft EIS
Many letters commented that all segments within a single river system should be considered together, because they are ecologically connected and a joint recommendation would enhance their contribution to the river system's integrity. Common examples included: South Fork Ashley, Ashley Gorge and Black Canyon.

The Ashley Creek and Whiterocks river systems provide virtually all the water used by residents in the eastern Uintah Basin. Local officials and residents expressed great concern that operation of existing facilities would be restricted, compromising water rights and affecting local economies. Rapid population growth and potential oil shale development activities were also cited as reasons to retain the option of building additional water storage and delivery systems in these systems.

Proponents of designation for Whiterocks and Ashley Creeks cited the opportunity to protect large, intact watersheds and for their scenic, recreational and wildlife values. Ashley Creek in particular spans many life zones, from alpine to cottonwood – more than any other segment or combination of segments in the study.

A common theme was that all rivers within Wilderness or roadless areas should be designated, in part because they pose few conflicts with other uses or activities and would be relatively simple to manage. In addition to the Wilderness rivers listed above, the following rivers were recommended based on being all or mostly within roadless: South Fork Ashley Creek, Ashley Gorge, all of the Whiterocks segments, and Lower Dry Fork (these are examples; different letters cited different examples). Of the three organized

campaigns none supported a positive finding of suitability for this segment.

(4) **The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional objectives**. Designation may help or impede the "goals" of other tribal, federal, state or local agencies. For example, designation of a river may contribute to state or regional protection objectives for fish and wildlife resources. Similarly, adding a river which includes a limited recreation activity or setting to the National System may help meet statewide recreation goals. Designation might, however, limit irrigation and/or flood control measures in a manner consistent with regional socioeconomic goals.

Designation would complement the existing direction in Forest management prescription areas, inventoried roadless areas, Drinking Water Source Protection Zones, the Vernal Municipal Watershed, and the Ashley Gorge Research Natural Area.

As discussed in suitability factor (2), designation could be both inconsistent and consistent with county zoning ordinances. Uintah County's General Plan (2005 draft, obtained from the County web site) states that water quality and availability are necessary for continued growth and development, and contains policies to promote efficient management and use of water resources. With respect to Wild and Scenic River designation, the County's Public Lands Policy provides the following position statements:

- Special designations, such as wilderness, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), wild and scenic rivers, critical habitat, semi primitive and non-motorized travel, etc., result in single purpose or non-use and are detrimental to the area economy, life styles, culture, and heritage.
- Needed protections can be provided by well planned and managed development.
- No special designations should be proposed until it is determined and substantiated by verified scientific data, that there is a need for the designation, that protections can not be provided by other methods, and the area in question is truly unique when compared to other area lands.
- Designations must be made in accordance with the spirit and direction of the acts and regulations that created them.
- Designations that are not properly planned or managed are inconsistent with the mandates that public lands be managed for multiple use and sustained yield.

Uintah County also has a Public Lands Implementation Plan. It contains the following direction related to Wild and Scenic Rivers:

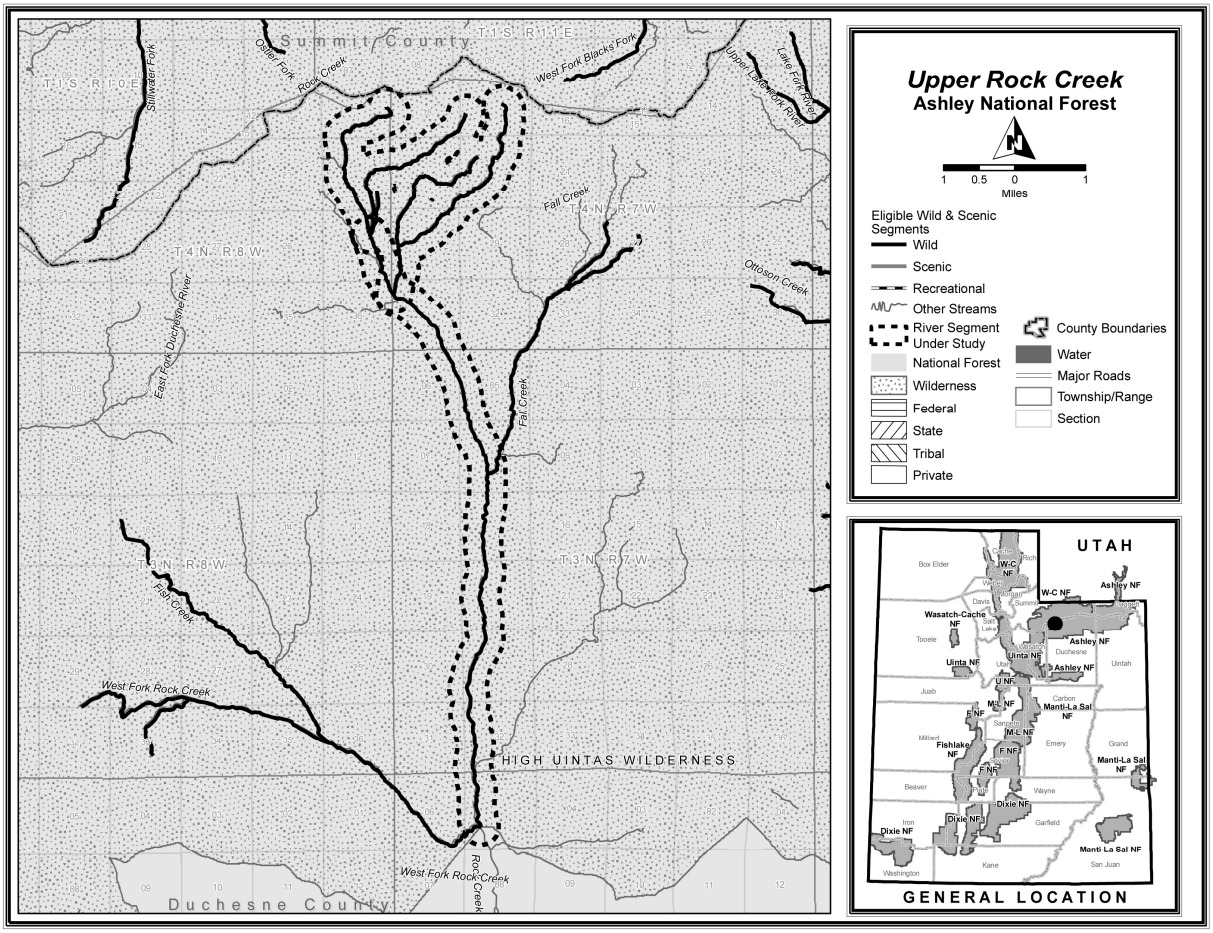
- WSR classifications must be appropriate and reflect the existing conditions and uses of bordering lands and the definitions contained in Sec. 2(b)(1)(2)(3) of the Act.
- The County must be provided an opportunity to participate in the preservation and/or administration of any river proposed or designated in the WSR system (Sec. 5(c) of the Act). Such designations must be provided for protections of water rights and access to water contained in that right. No WSA [*sic*] may be designated that have the effect of reducing water rights or access to those rights.
- Boundaries or buffers for designated water courses shall not exceed 320 acres/mile measured from the ordinary high water mark [Sec. 3(b)] and 1/4 mile from the ordinary high water mark on each side of the river [Sec. 4(d), Sec. 8(b), Sec. 9(a)(iii)].
- In addition to the boundary limitation provided in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Congress and the Department of Interior have found these limitations to be adequate on sections of the lower Green River where protection of scenic value was requested by them [Cooperative Government to Government Agreement Concerning Transfer of Naval Oil Shale Reserve Number 2, Public Law 106-398 Sec. 3405 (2)(c)].
- Any protection applied to streams or rivers must provide that such protections will in no

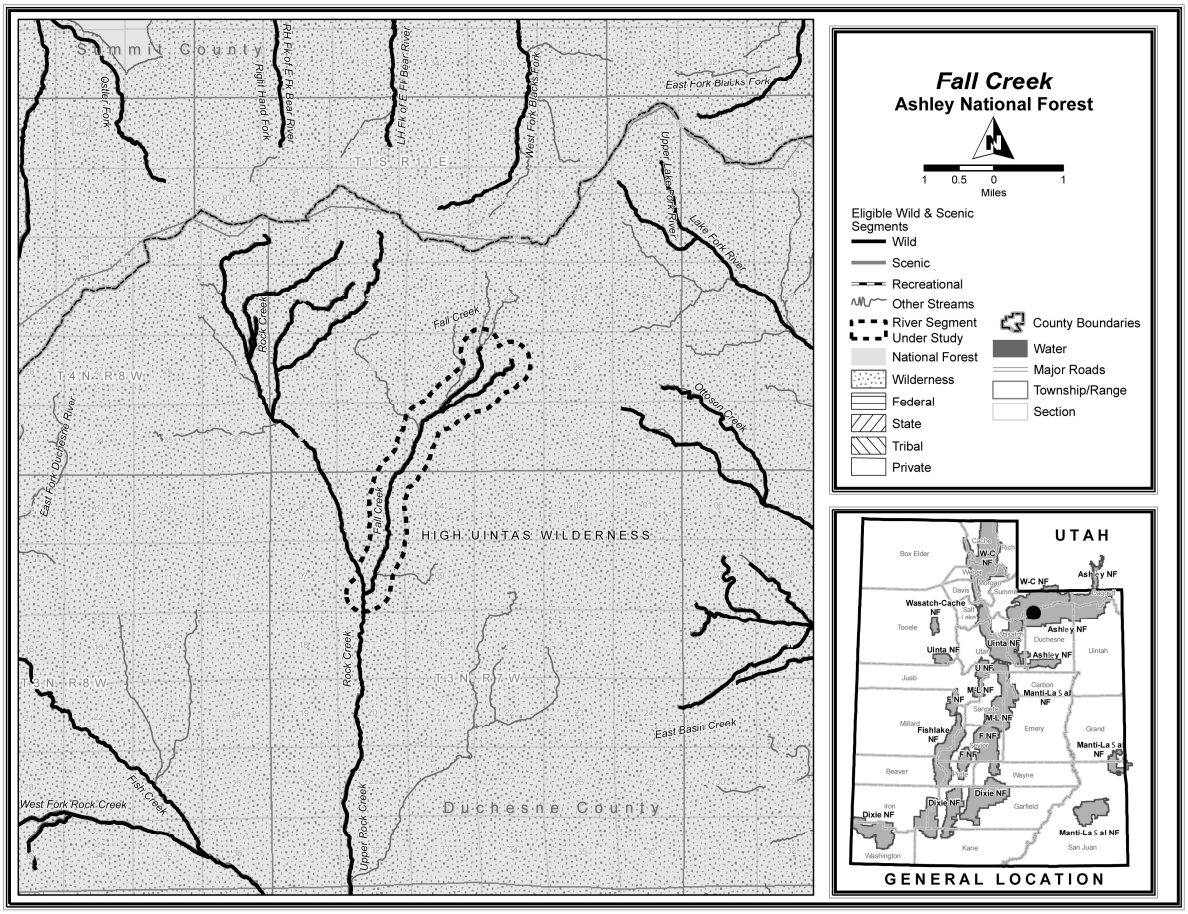
manner affect, impair, or limit the ability of holders of water rights to utilize their water rights. This is consistent with Department of Interior and congressional actions where similar protections were requested by them. [Cooperative Government to Government Agreement Concerning Transfer of Naval Oil Shale Reserve Number 2, Public Law 106-398 Sec. 3405 (2)(c)].

(5) **Contribution to river system or basin integrity**.
This majority of this segment is on National Forest System Lands, with the last mile on lands administered by the BLM. Designation would provide a comprehensive and holistic protection strategy between the Ashley National Forest, BLM, other cooperating agencies, and public groups. The larger basin integrity and the opportunity to design a holistic protection strategy could be improved by considering Ashley Gorge, Black Canyon, and South Fork Ashley Creek together.

(6) **Demonstrated or potential commitment for public volunteers, partnerships, and/or stewardship commitments for management and/or funding of the river segment.**
There has not been a demonstrated interest or disinterest in public volunteers, partnerships or stewardship commitments.

Upper Rock Creek and Fall Creek
Suitability Evaluation Report (SER)





STUDY AREA SUMMARY

Name of River(s): Upper Rock Creek and Fall Creek
River Mileage:

Upper Rock Creek
Studied: 21.26 miles headwaters to the southern boundary of the High Uintas Wilderness.
Eligible: Same

Fall Creek
Studied: 5.90 miles from the headwaters to the confluence with Upper Rock Creek.
Eligible: Same

Location:

	Ashley National Forest, Duchesne Ranger District, Duchesne County, Utah		Congressional District UT-2	
	Start (TRS)	End (TRS)	Classification	Miles
Upper Rock Creek	NE ¼ SE ¼ Sect. 13 T 4 N, R 8 W, USM	NW ¼ SW ¼ Sect. 5, T 2 N, R 7 W, USM	Wild	21.26
Fall Creek	SW ¼ NE ¼ Sect. 27, T 4 N, R 7 W, USM	NE ¼ SW ¼ Sect. 8 T 3 N, R 7 W, USM	Wild	5.90

Upper Rock Creek consists of lakes within the headwaters, the watercourse corridor, and three adjacent principal perennial tributaries, 21.26 miles in all.

Fall Creek consists of lakes within the headwaters, the watercourse corridor, and an adjacent principal perennial tributary (5.90 miles).

Physical Description of River: Upper Rock Creek and Fall Creek have headwaters above tree line in a cirque basin of scoured bedrock. Downstream they enter more defined glacial valley bottoms with numerous meadows and ground morainal landforms. Many of the meadows have low gradient meandering streams that pick up gradient through the ground moraine tree covered areas. After flowing through low relief glacial valley upland, the stream enters a steep canyon with lateral moraines to either side. The glacial bottom in the main portion of Rock Creek and Fall Creek is in a glacial canyon bottom with wet meadows, springs and seeps with thin hummocky ground moraines and outwash with some inner gorges cut deep in the underlying quartzite bedrock. Boulder moraines and outwash have created a hummocky topography that covers the glacial valley floor. These hummocks have damned some of the tributary streams and formed wet meadows, seeps and spring areas.

ELIGIBILITY

Name and Date of Eligibility Document: Final Eligibility of Wild & Scenic Rivers - Ashley National Forest USDA Forest Service July 2005

Determination of Free-flowing Condition: There are no diversions in these segments and they are free of impoundments.

Summary of Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV):
Scenic – The watercourses serve as the corridor for primitive trails to the panoramic and strikingly beautiful lakes, meadows, cirque basins, and surrounding peaks and ridgelines in the headwaters. Wildflowers provide variation in color in the higher basins and meadows during mid- and late summer months. Seasonal variation in color occurs in the lower portions of the watercourses where small stands of Aspen and streamside riparian vegetation exist.
Vegetation in the canyon bottoms has great diversity, is highly variable, and contributes to the outstanding scenery. The glacial bottoms in the main portion of the watercourses are in glacial canyon bottoms with wet meadows, springs and seeps with some inner gorges cut deep in the underlying quartzite bedrock. This unit type contains most of the larger glacial lakes in the Uinta Mountains, and the wet meadows resulted from the filling of former lakes. Backpackers and horse packers are attracted to this outstandingly beautiful scenery, with the season of use from late June to mid-October.

CLASSIFICATION

Basis for the Classification of River: Both rivers are classified as Wild.
All segments of these watercourses are in a designated Wilderness area and have no modifications of the waterway or shoreline. The segments are generally inaccessible except by trail and essentially primitive with little or no sign of human activity. Developments are limited to trails, trail signs and foot bridges.

SUITABILITY REPORT

Landownership and Land Uses – Both of these segments are located on the Ashley National Forest, Roosevelt/Duchesne Ranger District, and are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area.

Upper Rock Creek

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0 – 21.26	Ashley National Forest	6803.2

Fall Creek

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0 – 5.9	Ashley National Forest	1888.0

In Duchesne County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as A-10, agricultural 10 acre minimum lot size. Purposes related to Forest management in this zone include the protection of the economic base of the county for such uses as forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution and the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat, and range livestock (Zoning Ordinance 05-240). http://www.duchesnegov.net/planning/05240zoningordfinal.pdf

Mineral and Energy Resource Activities – There are no large past or currently active minerals or energy development activities, mining claims, or minerals leases located adjacent to this river segment (www.geocommunicator.gov). Because this river segment is located entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness, where minerals and energy development activities are prohibited, no future mineral or energy extraction activities would be expected.

Water Resources Development – There are no existing water developments (dams, diversions or channel modifications) on these segments. As these segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, no future water developments are expected. Designation into the Wild and Scenic river system does not affect existing, valid water rights.

There are no known Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands on these segments. Bureau of Reclamation lands withdrawn for the purposes of water development are located downstream, associated with Upper Stillwater Reservoir. Upper Stillwater Reservoir provides water to downstream communities in the Uintah Basin, as well as the Wasatch Front via a pipeline built by the Central Utah Project.

None of the proposed water development projects in the Utah State Water Plan for the Uintah Basin are on eligible Wild and Scenic river segments. All of these proposed projects are downstream of the Ashley National Forest, and are not expected to alter (or be altered by) potential Wild and Scenic designation.

Transportation, Facilities, and Other Developments – Transportation routes and facilities are limited to trails, trail signs, and foot bridges. Trails run along both the Upper Rock Creek and Fall Creek segments.

Grazing Activities – The Rock Creek cattle allotment is permitted for 170 cow/calf pairs from June 1 – October 15. This allotment includes the area along Upper Rock Creek from Stillwater Reservoir to the confluence with Fall Creek. Above the confluence with Fall Creek, there is no permitted livestock use. In the Fall Creek drainage, there is a free use permit with the Ute Indian Tribe for Sheep grazing, but this allotment has been vacant for approximately 30 years. Allotments are managed under allotment management plans and annual operating procedures.

Recreation Activities – Most use is concentrated in the headwater areas and consists of backpacking, recreation stock use and dispersed camping. Some deer and elk hunting occur in the lower portion of the segment. The season of use is about four to five months, from late June to mid-October.

Other Resource Activities – As these segments are within designated wilderness, no additional resource activities such as timber harvest are planned in the area.

Special Designations – These segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, which was created by the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. The establishing legislation for the High Uintas Wilderness Area specified that the purpose was to, "designate certain national forest system lands in Utah as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System in order to preserve the wilderness character

of the land and to protect watersheds and wildlife habitat, preserve scenic and historic resources, and promote scientific research, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration for the benefit of all of the American people."

The specific management direction for the High Uintas Wilderness was developed as amendments to the 1985 Wasatch-Cache and 1986 Ashley National Forest Plans through an EIS completed in 1997. This amendment directs land managers to maintain a wilderness where ecosystems are influenced primarily by the forces of nature, provide diverse opportunities for public use, enjoyment and understanding of wilderness, and preserve a high quality wilderness resource for present and future generations. The overall management goals for the High Uintas Wilderness are to:

Wilderness:	Manage the wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. Allow ecosystems to function naturally.
Air:	Protect air quality to wilderness standards.
Water and Soil:	Protect soil and water resources. Allow development, protection, and monitoring of water resources as provided for in Title III of the Utah Wilderness Act.
Wildlife and Fish habitats:	Allow natural processes to shape terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Cooperate with Utah DWR in managing fish and wildlife resources. (FSM 2323.3)
Vegetation:	Protect the wilderness resource while allowing established livestock grazing to continue, including maintenance of improvements and predator control, as provided for in Title III of the Utah Wilderness Act. Allow fire to play, as nearly as possible, its natural role in maintaining wilderness values and natural processes.
Recreation:	Manage recreation to sustain the wilderness resource.
Minerals:	Protect the wilderness resource by limiting mineral development and exploration activities to that necessary to exercise valid existing rights.

Socio-Economic Environment – Upper Rock Creek and Fall Creek are the principal tributaries to Upper Stillwater Reservoir, which provides water to the downstream communities in the Uintah Basin, as well as the Wasatch Front via a pipeline built by the Central Utah Project.

The Duchesne County General Plan (1997, amended 1998 and 2005) identifies the importance of water resources to downstream communities. The plan the infrastructure and communities of Duchesne County are dependent on water that flows to them from watersheds located on public lands. The rivers and streams flowing from these watersheds supply water for municipal, industrial, livestock, irrigation, and recreation use. As set forth in Utah Code 63-38d-401 (5) (c), "The waters of the state are the property of the citizens of the state, subject to appropriation for beneficial use, and are essential to the future prosperity of the state and the quality of life within the state."

Some of the downstream communities in Duchesne County include Mountain Home, Talmage, Altonah, Altamont, Boneta, Mt. Emmons, Upalco, Bluebell, Cedar View Neola, and Roosevelt. The largest community in the county is Roosevelt, with an estimated population of 4,333 in 2007. These local communities are set in a picturesque rural environment, where traditional land uses such as agriculture, timber harvest and grazing have been important over time.

The economy relies largely on agriculture, industry, traditional land uses, and tourism. Oil and gas,

manufacturing, and construction are important growth industries. In recent years, oil and gas activities have increased dramatically. Oil and gas operations are evident in many areas of the county, consisting of well sites, gathering lines and distribution sites. The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation lies within and adjacent to the county boundaries, which provides an important social and economic context to the Uintah Basin (http://duchesne.net/demo/)

The Uintah Basin has been affected by the boom and bust cycles related to the oil and gas industry over the years, but in spite of these cycles the population and economy are expected to grow. The long term outlook for the economy in the Uintah Basin is positive, with growth in oil and gas, minerals, and tourism (http://www.water.utah.gov/planning/SWP/Unitah/swp_ub02.pdf).

Travel and tourism in the area is generally related to the abundant outdoor opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized recreation, camping, hunting, fishing etc.

Current Administration and Funding Needs if Designated – The current administering agency is the USFS.

The following information is based on 2001 data, which doesn't account for inflation over the past six years, but is the best available data. If a river is designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational, the actual cost of preparing the comprehensive river management plan would average $200,000 per plan for 86 segments, which would cost approximately $17.2 million the first two to three years following designation. It was estimated that annual management costs for a high complexity river would be $200,000; a moderate complexity river would be $50,000; and a low complexity river at $25,000. Using an average of complexity costs, it would cost the Forest Service around $7.8 million annually for 86 segments. (Estimated Costs of Wild and Scenic Rivers Program - V. 091104)

SUITABILITY FACTOR ASSESSMENT:

(1) **The extent to which the State or its political subdivisions might participate in the shared preservation and administration of the river, including costs, should it be proposed for inclusion in the National System.**

The State of Utah has not shown interest or disinterest in the designation of these segments. Local county officials do not support Wild and Scenic designation, and would not share in the costs.

(2) **The state/local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-federal lands. Include any local zoning and/or land use controls that appear to conflict with protection of river values.**

In Duchesne County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as A-10, agricultural 10 acre minimum lot size. Purposes related to Forest management in this zone include the protection of the economic base of the county for such uses as forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution and the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat, and range livestock (Zoning Ordinance 05-240).
http://www.duchesnegov.net/planning/05240zoningordfinal.pdf

Wild and Scenic designation would be inconsistent with the stated purposes of forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution. Designation would be consistent with the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat.

(3) **Support or opposition to designation.**

Comments received during the eligibility study

Duchesne County officials, the Duchesne Water Conservancy District, the Ute Indian Tribe, and various members of the public were opposed to designation. Some reasons for opposition to designation were

that these segments are already protected by the High Uintas Wilderness, potential effects to water rights and management of reservoirs, human structures and development should preclude rivers from being classified as free flowing, and interference with grazing, hunting, and fishing rights.

The High Uintas Preservation Council, the Uinta Mountain Club, the Utah Rivers Council, and various members of the public were in support of designation. Some reasons in support of designation were the preservation of various outstandingly remarkable values and the prevention of further development and modification of river segments.

Comments received during scoping for the suitability study

The Central Utah Water Conservancy District specifically addressed Rock Creek in its comment letter. They noted that a small section of the stream just above Stillwater Reservoir might be impacted by dam maintenance activities. However, the stream reach in question is below the eligible segments so this shouldn't create a conflict with suitability.

Some letters expressed support for finding all river segments within the High Uintas Wilderness to be suitable, which would include Upper Rock Creek or Fall Creek. None singled out Rock Creek or discussed values unique to this drainage.

The State of Utah, Central Utah Project Completion Act office, and various water users and water conservancy districts had general concerns about designation of stream segments adjacent to high mountain lakes currently used for water storage. These concerns involve potential impacts to water storage rights and the ability to operate reservoirs as needed to deliver water to downstream users. They also discussed the potential for additional management restrictions to impede high lakes stabilization work. Although no reservoirs have been targeted for stabilization in the Rock Creek drainage at this time, new proposals may developed as part of ongoing work in Uinta Basin.

Comments on the DEIS

Some individuals, local government officials and water user representatives commented that Wilderness protections are adequate and additional designation under the WSRA would be burdensome and unnecessary. Others specifically stated that WSRA and Wilderness protections are not duplicative, since they address different factors. Moreover, a number of respondents supported designating all segments within existing Wilderness on the basis of their pristine character and the complementary nature of WSR and Wilderness management practices.

Local governments and water conservancy districts have the following specific concerns about rivers in the High Uintas Wilderness:

- Designation may affect operation and maintenance of existing facilities, especially if it means that reservoir releases must be altered to ensure year-round flow in downstream segments or prevent releases that artificially augment flow. This would restrict the exercise of existing water rights and harm water users.
- Some high elevation reservoirs are or may be considered for stabilization in the future. WSR designation could restrict such work. (See, however, CUPCA letter #95 stating that stabilization work appears compatible and could still be completed with WSR designation).
- Since existing reservoirs alter the natural flows, no downstream segments should be considered free-flowing. Shale Creek is frequently cited as an example of this.
- Future projects downstream of eligible segments may be negatively affected, either by management restrictions or by loss of federal funding opportunities, if a segment is designated upstream. This concern is based on language in Sec. 7a of the WSRA. There is some concern that the option of expanding Moon Lake (on the Lake Fork River) would be lost if Lake Fork were designated.

Of the three organized campaigns none supported a positive finding of suitability for this segment.

(4) **The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional objectives**.
Designation may conflict with some elements of downstream zoning and land use, but would be completely consistent with the management direction in the High Uintas Wilderness. Since these segments are within the Wilderness boundary, designation is not expected to impede other socioeconomic goals downstream.

The Duchesne County General Plan states that special designations, including wild and scenic rivers, "may result in non-use, restricted use, or environmental impacts on public and private lands. Special designations dictate practices that restrict access or use of the land that impact other resources or their use. Such designations cause resource waste, serious impacts to other important resources and actions, and are inconsistent with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield." The County's position is that:

- The objectives of special designations can be met by well-planned and managed development of natural resources.
- No special designations shall be proposed until the need has been determined and substantiated by verifiable scientific data available to the public. Furthermore, it must be demonstrated that protection cannot be provided by other means and that the area in question is truly unique compared to other area lands.
- Special designations can be detrimental to the County's economy, life style, culture, and heritage. Therefore special designations must be made in accordance with the spirit and direction of the laws and regulations that created them.

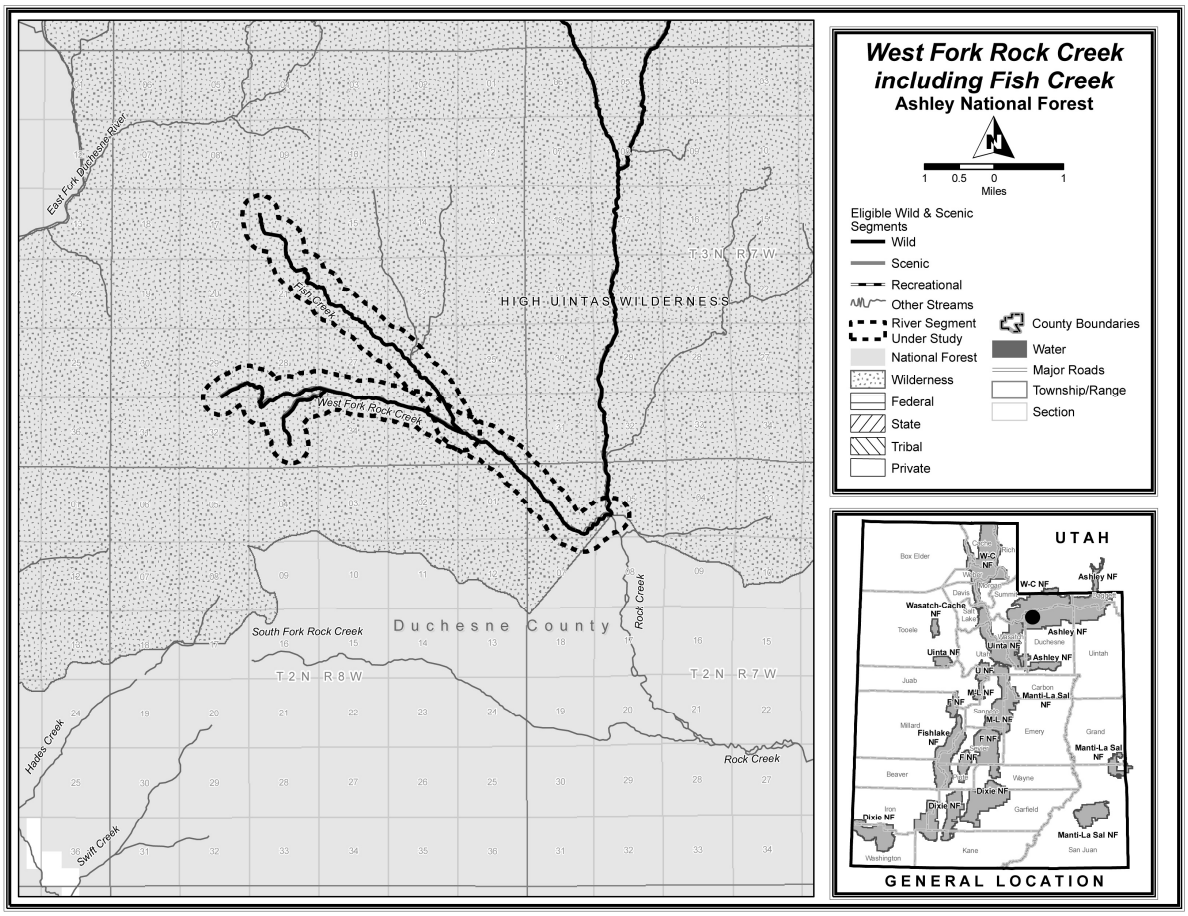
With respect to Wild and Scenic Rivers, County support will be withheld until:

- It is clearly demonstrated that water is present and flowing at all times;
- It is clearly demonstrated that the required water-related value is considered outstandingly remarkable within a region of comparison consisting of one of the three physiographic provinces in the state. The rationale and justification for the conclusions shall be disclosed;
- The effects of the addition on the local and state economies, private property rights, agricultural and industrial operations and interests, tourism, water rights, water quality, water resource planning, and access to and across river corridors in both upstream and downstream directions from the proposed river segment have been evaluated in detail by the relevant federal agency;
- It is clearly demonstrated that the provisions and terms of the process for review of potential additions have been applied in a consistent manner by all federal agencies; and
- The rationale and justification for the proposed addition, including a comparison with protections offered by other management tools, is clearly analyzed within the multiple-use mandate, and the results disclosed. All valid existing rights, including grazing leases and permits shall not be affected.

(5) **Contribution to river system or basin integrity**.
These segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, so designation would provide additional but similar protection. Basin integrity and ability to develop holistic protection strategies are excellent, given the existing management direction in wilderness. Basin or watershed integrity could also be improved by considering Upper Rock and Fall Creeks, together with West Fork Rock Creek and Fish Creek.

(6) **Demonstrated or potential commitment for public volunteers, partnerships, and/or stewardship commitments for management and/or funding of the river segment.**
There has not been a demonstrated interest or disinterest in public volunteers, partnerships or stewardship commitments.

West Fork Rock Creek, including Fish Creek
Suitability Evaluation Report (SER)



STUDY AREA SUMMARY

Name of River: West Fork Rock Creek, including Fish Creek.
River Mileage:

West Fork Rock Creek
Studied: 8.51 miles from the headwaters to the confluence with Upper Rock Creek.
Eligible: Same

Fish Creek
Studied: 4.91 miles from the headwaters to the confluence with West Fork Rock Creek.
Eligible: Same

Location:

	Ashley National Forest, Duchesne Ranger District, Duchesne County, Utah		Congressional District UT-2	
	Start (TRS)	End (TRS)	Classification	Miles
West Fork Rock Creek	SW ¼ SE ¼ Sect. 29, T 3 N, R 8 W, USM	NW ¼ SW ¼ Sect. 5, T 2 N, R 7 W, USM	Wild	8.51
Fish Creek	SW ¼ NW ¼ Sect. 16, T 3 N, R 8 W, USM	NW ¼ SW ¼ Sect. 36, T 3 N, R 8 W, USM	Wild	4.91

Physical Description of River: Both West Fork and Fish Creek flow through hummocky ground moraine located along glacial valley bottoms containing lakes, ponds wet depressions and forested knolls. Both these tributaries to the main Rock Creek lack the high elevation alpine basins above tree line. Gradients are typically 1 to 15 percent in the upper basins and drop into a moderately steep to steep glacial valley with subdued step topography due to glacial scour and veneer of till and boulder glacial lateral morainal material. Gradients are typically 30 percent to 65 percent in these steepened valleys. The headwaters of West Fork of Rock Creek & Fish Creek consist of numerous lakes, basins and meadows in the Granddaddy Lakes area of the High Uintas Wilderness. Two principal tributaries are included with the West Fork Rock Creek watercourse. Pinto Lake and Granddaddy Lake are located in the northwest and southwest corners of the headwaters, respectively.

ELIGIBILITY

Name and Date of Eligibility Document: Final Eligibility of Wild & Scenic Rivers - Ashley National Forest USDA Forest Service July 2005

Determination of Free-flowing Condition: There are no diversions in these segments and they are free of impoundments.

Summary of Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV):
Scenic – The watercourses serve as the corridor for primitive trails to the panoramic and strikingly beautiful lakes, meadows, cirque basins, and surrounding peaks and ridgelines in the headwaters. Wildflowers provide variation in color in the higher basins and meadows during mid- and late summer months. Seasonal variation in color occurs in the lower portions of the watercourses where small stands of Aspen and streamside riparian vegetation exist. Vegetation in the canyon bottoms has great diversity, is highly variable, and contributes to the outstanding scenery. The glacial bottoms in the main portion of the watercourses are in glacial canyon bottoms with wet meadows, springs and seeps with some inner gorges cut deep in the underlying quartzite bedrock. This unit type contains most of the larger glacial lakes in the Uinta Mountains, and the wet meadows resulted from the filling of former lakes. Backpackers and horse packers are attracted to this outstandingly beautiful scenery, with the season of use from late June to mid-October.

Historic – The historic Rhodes Cabin and Mine exist within the corridor of West Fork Rock Creek. Although the cabin walls have been vandalized, the mine dump and mine adits remain in good condition.

CLASSIFICATION

Basis for the Classification of River: Both rivers are classified as Wild.
All segments of this watercourse are in a designated Wilderness area and have no modifications of the waterway or shoreline. The segments are generally inaccessible except by trail and essentially primitive with little or no sign of human activity. Developments are limited to trails, trail signs and foot bridges.

SUITABILITY REPORT

Landownership and Land Uses – These segments are located on the Ashley National Forest, Roosevelt/Duchesne Ranger District, and are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area.

West Fork Rock Creek

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0 – 8.51	Ashley National Forest	2723.2

Fish Creek

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0 – 4.91	Ashley National Forest	1571.2

In Duchesne County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as A-10, agricultural 10 acre minimum lot size. Purposes related to Forest management in this zone include the protection of the economic base of the county for such uses as forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution and the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat, and range livestock (Zoning Ordinance 05-240). http://www.duchesnegov.net/planning/05240zoningordfinal.pdf

Mineral and Energy Resource Activities – There are no large past or currently active minerals or energy development activities, mining claims, or minerals leases located adjacent to this river segment (www.geocommunicator.gov). Because this river segment is located entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness, where minerals and energy development activities are prohibited, no future mineral or energy extraction activities would be expected.

Water Resources Development – There are no existing water developments (dams, diversions or channel modifications) on these segments. As these segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, no future water developments are expected. Designation into the Wild and Scenic river system does not affect existing, valid water rights.

There are no known Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands on these segments. Bureau of Reclamation lands withdrawn for the purposes of water development are located downstream, associated with Upper Stillwater Reservoir. Upper Stillwater Reservoir provides water to downstream communities in the Uintah Basin, as well as the Wasatch Front via a pipeline built by the Central Utah Project.

None of the proposed water development projects in the Utah State Water Plan for the Uintah Basin are on eligible Wild and Scenic river segments. All of these proposed projects are downstream of the Ashley National Forest, and are not expected to alter (or be altered by) potential Wild and Scenic designation.

Transportation, Facilities, and Other Developments – Transportation routes and facilities are limited to trails, trail signs, and foot bridges. Trails are along both the West Fork Rock Creek and Fish Creek segments.

Grazing Activities – There are no permitted grazing allotments in Fish Creek or West Fork Rock Creek. A minor amount of use occurs at the confluence of West Fork Rock Creek and Upper Rock Creek, but this is from the Rock Creek grazing allotment.

Recreation Activities – Recreation visits and use is moderate to heavy in headwaters. Much of this use originates from trailheads located east of the headwaters on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Most wilderness users access this area from either the Grandview Trailhead in Hades Canyon or the Granddaddy Lakes Trailhead at Mirror Lake. Fifteen large lakes are located in the headwater areas.

Most use is concentrated in the headwater areas and consists of backpacking, recreation stock use and dispersed camping. Some deer and elk hunting occur in the lower portion of the segment. The season of use is about four to five months, from late June to mid-October.

Other Resource Activities – As these segments are within designated wilderness, no additional resource activities such as timber harvest are planned in the area.

Special Designations – These segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, which was created by the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. The establishing legislation for the High Uintas Wilderness Area specified that the purpose was to, "designate certain national forest system lands in Utah as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System in order to preserve the wilderness character

of the land and to protect watersheds and wildlife habitat, preserve scenic and historic resources, and promote scientific research, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration for the benefit of all of the American people."

The specific management direction for the High Uintas Wilderness was developed as amendments to the 1985 Wasatch-Cache and 1986 Ashley National Forest Plans through an EIS completed in 1997. This amendment directs land managers to maintain a wilderness where ecosystems are influenced primarily by the forces of nature, provide diverse opportunities for public use, enjoyment and understanding of wilderness, and preserve a high quality wilderness resource for present and future generations. The overall management goals for the High Uintas Wilderness are to:

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Recreation:	Manage recreation to sustain the wilderness resource.
Minerals:	Protect the wilderness resource by limiting mineral development and exploration activities to that necessary to exercise valid existing rights.

Socio-Economic Environment – West Fork Rock Creek and Fish Creek drain into the Upper Stillwater Reservoir, which provides water to downstream communities in the Uintah Basin, as well as the Wasatch Front via a pipeline built by the Central Utah Project.

The Duchesne County General Plan (1997, amended 1998 and 2005) identifies the importance of water resources to downstream communities. The communities of Duchesne County are dependent on water that flows to them from watersheds located on public lands. The rivers and streams flowing from these watersheds supply water for municipal, industrial, livestock, irrigation, and recreation use. As set forth in Utah Code 63-38d-401 (5) (c), "The waters of the state are the property of the citizens of the state, subject to appropriation for beneficial use, and are essential to the future prosperity of the state and the quality of life within the state."

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manufacturing, and construction are important growth industries. In recent years, oil and gas activities have increased dramatically. Oil and gas operations are evident in many areas of the county, consisting of well sites, gathering lines and distribution sites. The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation lies within and adjacent to the county boundaries, which provides an important social and economic context to the Uintah Basin (http://duchesne.net/demo/)

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Travel and tourism in the area is generally related to the abundant outdoor opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized recreation, camping, hunting, fishing etc.

Current Administration and Funding Needs if Designated – The current administering agency is the USFS.

The following information is based on 2001 data, which doesn't account for inflation over the past six years, but is the best available data. If a river is designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational, the actual cost of preparing the comprehensive river management plan would average $200,000 per plan for 86 segments, which would cost approximately $17.2 million the first two to three years following designation. It was estimated that annual management costs for a high complexity river would be $200,000; a moderate complexity river would be $50,000; and a low complexity river at $25,000. Using an average of complexity costs, it would cost the Forest Service around $7.8 million annually for 86 segments. (Estimated Costs of Wild and Scenic Rivers Program - V. 091104)

SUITABILITY FACTOR ASSESSMENT:

(1) **The extent to which the State or its political subdivisions might participate in the shared preservation and administration of the river, including costs, should it be proposed for inclusion in the National System.**

The State of Utah has not shown interest or disinterest in the designation of these segments. Local county officials do not support Wild and Scenic designation, and would not share in the costs.

(2) **The state/local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-federal lands. Include any local zoning and/or land use controls that appear to conflict with protection of river values.**

In Duchesne County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as A-10, agricultural 10 acre minimum lot size. Purposes related to Forest management in this zone include the protection of the economic base of the county for such uses as forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution and the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat, and range livestock (Zoning Ordinance 05-240).
http://www.duchesnegov.net/planning/05240zoningordfinal.pdf

Wild and Scenic designation would be inconsistent with the stated purposes of forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution. Designation would be consistent with the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat.

(3) **Support or opposition to designation.**

Comments received during the eligibility study

Duchesne County officials, the Duchesne Water Conservancy District, the Ute Indian Tribe, and various members of the public were opposed to designation. Some reasons for opposition to designation were

that these segments are already protected by the High Uintas Wilderness, potential effects to water rights and management of reservoirs, human structures and development should preclude rivers from being classified as free flowing, and interference with grazing, hunting, and fishing rights.

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The Central Utah Water Conservancy District specifically addressed Rock Creek in its comment letter. They noted that a small section of the stream just above Stillwater Reservoir might be impacted by dam maintenance activities. However, the stream reach in question is below the eligible segments so this shouldn't create a conflict with suitability.

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The State of Utah, Central Utah Project Completion Act office, and various water users and water conservancy districts had general concerns about designation of stream segments adjacent to high mountain lakes currently used for water storage. These concerns involve potential impacts to water storage rights and the ability to operate reservoirs as needed to deliver water to downstream users. They also discussed the potential for additional management restrictions to impede high lakes stabilization work. Although no reservoirs have been targeted for stabilization in the Rock Creek drainage at this time, new proposals may developed as part of ongoing work in the Uinta Basin.

Comments received concerning the draft EIS

Some individuals, local government officials and water user representatives commented that Wilderness protections are adequate and additional designation under the WSRA would be burdensome and unnecessary. Others specifically stated that WSRA and Wilderness protections are not duplicative, since they address different factors. Moreover, a number of respondents supported designating all segments within existing Wilderness on the basis of their pristine character and the complementary nature of WSR and Wilderness management practices.

Local governments and water conservancy districts have the following specific concerns about rivers in the High Uintas Wilderness:

- Designation may affect operation and maintenance of existing facilities, especially if it means that reservoir releases must be altered to ensure year-round flow in downstream segments or prevent releases that artificially augment flow. This would restrict the exercise of existing water rights and harm water users.
- Some high elevation reservoirs are or may be considered for stabilization in the future. WSR designation could restrict such work. (See, however, CUPCA letter #95 stating that stabilization work appears compatible and could still be completed with WSR designation).
- Since existing reservoirs alter the natural flows, no downstream segments should be considered free-flowing. Shale Creek is frequently cited as an example of this.
- Future projects downstream of eligible segments may be negatively affected, either by management restrictions or by loss of federal funding opportunities, if a segment is designated upstream. This concern is based on language in Sec. 7a of the WSRA. The greatest concern is on the **Uinta River**, where a reservoir is being discussed on FS land below the Wilderness boundary. There is also some concern that the option of expanding Moon Lake (on the Lake Fork River) would be lost if Lake Fork were designated.

Of the three organized campaigns none supported a positive finding of suitability for this segment.

(4) **The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional objectives**.
Designation may conflict with some elements of downstream zoning and land use, but would be completely consistent with the management direction in the High Uintas Wilderness. Since these segments are within the Wilderness boundary, designation is not expected to impede other socioeconomic goals downstream, or change the existing situation.

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- No special designations shall be proposed until the need has been determined and substantiated by verifiable scientific data available to the public. Furthermore, it must be demonstrated that protection cannot be provided by other means and that the area in question is truly unique compared to other area lands.
- Special designations can be detrimental to the County's economy, life style, culture, and heritage. Therefore special designations must be made in accordance with the spirit and direction of the laws and regulations that created them.

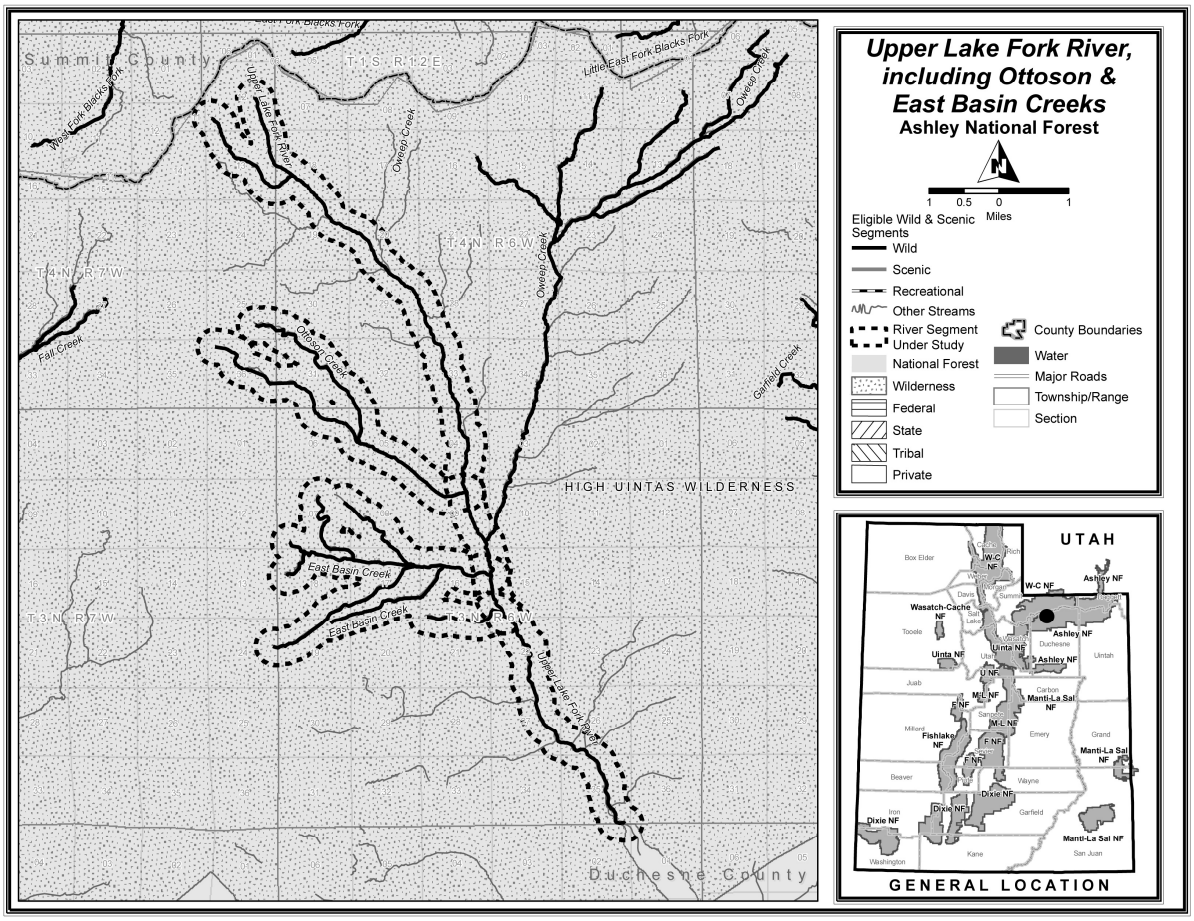
With respect to Wild and Scenic Rivers, County support will be withheld until:

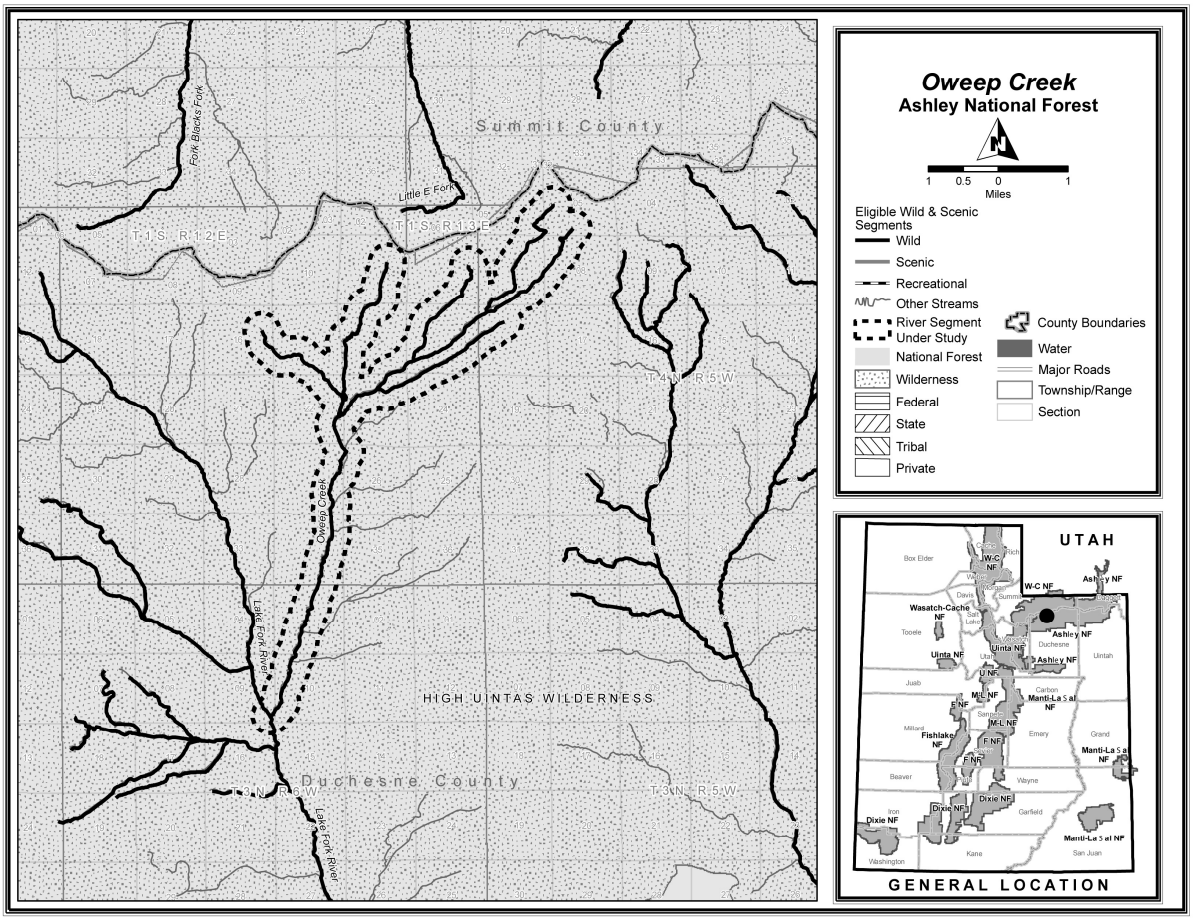
- It is clearly demonstrated that water is present and flowing at all times;
- It is clearly demonstrated that the required water-related value is considered outstandingly remarkable within a region of comparison consisting of one of the three physiographic provinces in the state. The rationale and justification for the conclusions shall be disclosed;
- The effects of the addition on the local and state economies, private property rights, agricultural and industrial operations and interests, tourism, water rights, water quality, water resource planning, and access to and across river corridors in both upstream and downstream directions from the proposed river segment have been evaluated in detail by the relevant federal agency;
- It is clearly demonstrated that the provisions and terms of the process for review of potential additions have been applied in a consistent manner by all federal agencies; and
- The rationale and justification for the proposed addition, including a comparison with protections offered by other management tools, is clearly analyzed within the multiple-use mandate, and the results disclosed. All valid existing rights, including grazing leases and permits shall not be affected.

(5) **Contribution to river system or basin integrity**.
These segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, so designation would provide additional but similar protection. Basin integrity and ability to develop holistic protection strategies are excellent, given the existing management direction in wilderness. Basin or watershed integrity could also be improved by considering West Fork Rock Creek and Fish Creek together with Upper Rock and Fall Creeks.

(6) **Demonstrated or potential commitment for public volunteers, partnerships, and/or stewardship commitments for management and/or funding of the river segment.**
There has not been a demonstrated interest or disinterest in public volunteers, partnerships or stewardship commitments.

Upper Lake Fork River (including Ottoson and East Basin Creeks) and Oweep Creek Suitability Evaluation Report (SER)





STUDY AREA SUMMARY

Name of River: Upper Lake Fork and Oweep Creek

River Mileage:

Upper Lake Fork River, including Ottoson and East Basin Creeks
Studied: 34.88 miles from the headwaters to the southern boundary of the High Uintas Wilderness
Eligible: Same

Oweep Creek
Studied: 20.32 miles, from headwaters to junction with Lake Fork River
Eligible: Same

Location:

	Ashley National Forest, Duchesne Ranger District, Duchesne County, Utah		Congressional District UT- 2	
	Start (TRS)	End (TRS)	Classification	Miles
Oweep Creek	SE ¼, NE ¼ Sect 12, T 4 N, R 6 W, USM	SE ¼ SE ¼ Sect. 9 T 3 N, R 6 W, USM	Wild	20.32
Upper Lake Fork including Ottoson and East Basin Creeks	NW ¼ SE ¼ Sect. 12, T 4 N, R 7 W, USM	SE ¼ SE ¼ Sect. 35, T 3 N, R 6 W, USM	Wild	34.88

Physical Description of River:
Upper Lake Fork River, Ottoson Creek, East Basin Creek and Oweep Creek have the headwaters above tree line in a scoured cirque basin with ground moraine and drift. The segments enter a broad glacial valley basins consisting of hummocky ground moraine along the glacial valley bottom below tree-line. The valley bottom below tree line contains lakes, ponds, wet depressions and forested knolls. The segment then enters a mid portion of the drainage consisting of a V-shaped valley of moderately steep to steep canyon sides slopes covered with a thin veneer of boulder glacial moraine. The segment then descends the main drainage which is characterized by a relatively broad glacial canyon bottom covered by a thin veneer of hummocky ground moraine and outwash. A few wet meadows, seeps and springs are located in the main drainages, and there are thin hummocky ground moraines and outwash with gorges cut deep into the underlying quartzite bedrock. In many places the segment flows over bedrock with gradients of 3 percent to 15 percent.

ELIGIBILITY

Name and Date of Eligibility Document: Final Eligibility of Wild & Scenic Rivers - Ashley National Forest USDA Forest Service July 2005

Determination of Free-flowing Condition: There are no diversions in these segments and they are free of impoundments. The segment is free flowing.

Summary of Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV):
Scenic – Cirque basins, broad glacial valleys, lakes, numerous meadows and V-shaped canyons are the principal scenic attractions in the corridors of these watercourses. The "Scenic" value is well known, due to the popularity of the Moon Lake Reservoir area, and heavily used trails leading to the High Uintas Wilderness. The watercourses exhibit striking scenic views, especially in the upper headwaters where numerous alpine lakes, glaciated cirques and basins, and meadows are found. Seasonal variation in color is limited to the lower portion of the watercourses where large stands of Aspen and streamside riparian vegetation exist. Wildflowers provide some variation in color in the higher basins and meadows during mid- and late summer months. Similar to other wilderness areas, the streams serve as the corridors for primitive trails to the outstandingly scenic lakes, basins and meadows in the headwaters. Diversity of view and scenic attractions rate high and cultural modifications are highly appropriate.

CLASSIFICATION

Basis for the Classification of River: Wild
All segments of these watercourses are in a designated wilderness area and have no modifications of the waterway or shoreline. The segments are generally inaccessible except by trail and essentially primitive with little or no sign of human activity. The well known Highline Trail crosses the headwaters of the watercourses. Trail signs and foot bridges are located at various places on the trail.

SUITABILITY REPORT

Landownership and Land Uses – Both segments are located on the Ashley National Forest, Roosevelt/Duchesne Ranger District, and are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area.

Oweep Creek

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0 – 20.32	Ashley National Forest	6502.4

Upper Lake Fork River, including Ottoson and East Basin Creeks

River Mile	Ownership	Acres
0 – 34.88	Ashley National Forest	11161.6

In Duchesne County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as A-10, agricultural 10 acre minimum lot size. Purposes related to Forest management in this zone include the protection of the economic base of the county for such uses as forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution and the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat, and range livestock (Zoning Ordinance 05-240). http://www.duchesnegov.net/planning/05240zoningordfinal.pdf

Mineral and Energy Resource Activities – There are no large past or currently active minerals or energy development activities, mining claims, or minerals leases located adjacent to these river segments (www.geocommunicator.gov). Because this river segment is located entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness, where minerals and energy development activities are prohibited, no future mineral or energy extraction activities would be expected.

Water Resources Development – There are no existing water developments (dams, diversions or channel modifications) on these segments. As these segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, no future water developments are expected.

Clements Lake reservoir is not on any of these eligible segments, but drains into Upper Lake Fork about 3 miles upstream of Moon Lake. As part of the High Lakes stabilization project, Clements Lake Reservoir is scheduled to be stabilized in 2007, which would restore a stable lake level and natural flows. The water storage capacity of Clements Lake will be transferred downstream to Big Sand Wash reservoir.

There are no known Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands on these segments. Bureau of Reclamation lands withdrawn for the purposes of water developments are located downstream, associated with Moon Lake Reservoir, which provides water to downstream communities and hydroelectric power generation.

None of the proposed water development projects in the Utah State Water Plan for the Uintah Basin are on eligible Wild and Scenic river segments. All of these proposed projects are downstream of the Ashley National Forest, and are not expected to alter (or be altered by) potential Wild and Scenic designation.

Transportation, Facilities, and Other Developments – Transportation routes and facilities are limited to trails, trail signs, and foot bridges. A trail runs along the entire length of Upper Lake Fork, and trails go through portions Ottoson, East Basin, and Oweep Creeks. The well known Highline Trail crosses the headwaters of Upper Lake Fork and Oweep Creeks.

Grazing Activities – Upper Lake Fork River from Moon Lake to the confluence with Oweep Creek is within the Lake Fork Cattle allotment, which permits 183 cow/calf pairs from June 21-September 13, but this allotment has not been used for approximately 15 years. There are no grazing allotments in East Basin Creek. Ottoson Creek and the headwaters of Upper Lake Fork River are within the Ottoson sheep allotment, which permits 1300 ewe/lamb pairs from July 15 – September 10. Oweep Creek is within the Oweep sheep allotment which permits 1400 ewe/lamb pairs from July 15 – September 10. Allotments are managed under allotment management plans and annual operating procedures.

Recreation Activities – Recreation use is light to moderate in the headwaters. Some deer and elk hunting occurs in the lower portions of the drainage. The season of use is about four to five months, from late June to mid-October.

Other Resource Activities – As these segments are within designated wilderness, no additional resource activities such as timber harvest are planned in the area.

Special Designations – These segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, which was

created by the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. The establishing legislation for the High Uintas Wilderness Area specified that the purpose was to, "designate certain national forest system lands in Utah as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System in order to preserve the wilderness character of the land and to protect watersheds and wildlife habitat, preserve scenic and historic resources, and promote scientific research, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration for the benefit of all of the American people."

The specific management direction for the High Uintas Wilderness was developed as amendments to the 1985 Wasatch-Cache and 1986 Ashley National Forest Plans through an EIS completed in 1997. This amendment directs land managers to maintain a wilderness where ecosystems are influenced primarily by the forces of nature, provide diverse opportunities for public use, enjoyment and understanding of wilderness, and preserve a high quality wilderness resource for present and future generations. The overall management goals for the High Uintas Wilderness are to:

Wilderness:	Manage the wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. Allow ecosystems to function naturally.
Air:	Protect air quality to wilderness standards.
Water and Soil:	Protect soil and water resources. Allow development, protection, and monitoring of water resources as provided for in Title III of the Utah Wilderness Act.
Wildlife and Fish habitats:	Allow natural processes to shape terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Cooperate with Utah DWR in managing fish and wildlife resources. (FSM 2323.3)
Vegetation:	Protect the wilderness resource while allowing established livestock grazing to continue, including maintenance of improvements and predator control, as provided for in Title III of the Utah Wilderness Act. Allow fire to play, as nearly as possible, its natural role in maintaining wilderness values and natural processes.
Recreation:	Manage recreation to sustain the wilderness resource.
Minerals:	Protect the wilderness resource by limiting mineral development and exploration activities to that necessary to exercise valid existing rights.

Socio-Economic Environment – All of these segments drain into Moon Lake Reservoir, which provides water and hydro-electric power to communities in the Uintah Basin. The Duchesne County General Plan (1997, amended 1998 and 2005) identifies the importance of water resources to downstream communities. The plan the infrastructure and communities of Duchesne County are dependent on water that flows to them from watersheds located on public lands. The rivers and streams flowing from these watersheds supply water for municipal, industrial, livestock, irrigation, and recreation use. As set forth in Utah Code 63-38d-401 (5) (c), "The waters of the state are the property of the citizens of the state, subject to appropriation for beneficial use, and are essential to the future prosperity of the state and the quality of life within the state."

Some of the downstream communities in Duchesne County include Mountain Home, Talmage, Altonah, Altamont, Boneta, Mt. Emmons, Upalco, Bluebell, Cedar View Neola, and Roosevelt. The largest community in the county is Roosevelt, with an estimated population of 4,333 in 2007. These local communities are set in a picturesque rural environment, where traditional land uses such as agriculture, timber harvest and grazing have been important over time.

The economy relies largely on agriculture, industry, traditional land uses, and tourism. Oil and gas, manufacturing, and construction are important growth industries. In recent years, oil and gas activities have increased dramatically. Oil and gas operations are evident in many areas of the county, consisting of well sites, gathering lines and distribution sites. The Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation lies within and adjacent to the county boundaries, which provides an important social and economic context to the Uintah Basin (http://duchesne.net/demo/)

The Uintah Basin has been affected by the boom and bust cycles related to the oil and gas industry over the years, but in spite of these cycles the population and economy are expected to grow. The long term outlook for the economy in the Uintah Basin is positive, with growth in oil and gas, minerals, and tourism (http://www.water.utah.gov/planning/SWP/Unitah/swp_ub02.pdf).

Travel and tourism in the area is generally related to the abundant outdoor opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized recreation, camping, hunting, fishing etc.

Current Administration and Funding Needs if Designated – The current administering agency is the USFS.

The following information is based on 2001 data, which doesn't account for inflation over the past six years, but is the best available data. If a river is designated as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational, the actual cost of preparing the comprehensive river management plan would average $200,000 per plan for 86 segments, which would cost approximately $17.2 million the first two to three years following designation. It was estimated that annual management costs for a high complexity river would be $200,000; a moderate complexity river would be $50,000; and a low complexity river at $25,000. Using an average of complexity costs, it would cost the Forest Service around $7.8 million annually for 86 segments. (Estimated Costs of Wild and Scenic Rivers Program - V. 091104)

SUITABILITY FACTOR ASSESSMENT:

(1) **The extent to which the State or its political subdivisions might participate in the shared preservation and administration of the river, including costs, should it be proposed for inclusion in the National System.**

The State of Utah has not shown interest or disinterest in the designation of these segments. Local county officials do not support Wild and Scenic designation, and would not share in the costs.

(2) **The state/local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-federal lands. Include any local zoning and/or land use controls that appear to conflict with protection of river values.**

In Duchesne County, National Forest System Lands are zoned as A-10, agricultural 10 acre minimum lot size. Purposes related to Forest management in this zone include the protection of the economic base of the county for such uses as forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution and the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat, and range livestock (Zoning Ordinance 05-240).
http://www.duchesnegov.net/planning/05240zoningordfinal.pdf

Wild and Scenic designation would be inconsistent with the stated purposes of forestry, oil and gas drilling, pipelines, petroleum storage and distribution. Designation would be consistent with the protection of significant natural features of land, creeks, lakes, wetlands, air and the preservation of open areas for wildlife habitat.

(3) **Support or opposition to designation.**

Comments received during the eligibility study

Duchesne County officials, the Duchesne Water Conservancy District, the Ute Indian Tribe, and various members of the public were opposed to designation. Some reasons for opposition to designation were

that these segments are already protected by the High Uintas Wilderness, potential effects to water rights and management of reservoirs, human structures and development should preclude rivers from being classified as free flowing, and interference with grazing, hunting, and fishing rights.

The High Uintas Preservation Council, the Uinta Mountain Club, the Utah Rivers Council, and various members of the public were in support of designation. Some reasons in support of designation were the preservation of various outstandingly remarkable values and the prevention of further development and modification of river segments.

Comments received during scoping for the suitability study
There were no comments specifically recommending Upper Lake Fork and Oweep Creeks for designation. However, several supported designation for all eligible segments within the High Uintas Wilderness, which would include these two segments.

Water users, water conservancy districts, the State of Utah and the Central Utah Project Completion Act office raised concerns about the effect of designation on management of existing reservoirs that drain into Upper Lake Fork. One concern is that designation would result in a year-round flow requirement, which would negatively impact holders of existing water rights. Some letters also described plans to stabilize some reservoirs that drain into Upper Lake Fork in the future, which might be more difficult if additional management restrictions were in place. They recommended that no designation be made until stabilization is completed and there is no possibility of water rights being affected. Furthermore, some letters stated that there is no need for additional protection through Wild and Scenic River designation since Upper Lake Fork and Oweep Creek are already protected by wilderness management policies.

Comments on the DEIS
Some individuals, local government officials and water user representatives commented that Wilderness protections are adequate and additional designation under the WSRA would be burdensome and unnecessary. Others specifically stated that WSRA and Wilderness protections are not duplicative, since they address different factors. Moreover, a number of respondents supported designating all segments within existing Wilderness on the basis of their pristine character and the complementary nature of WSR and Wilderness management practices.

Local governments and water conservancy districts have the following specific concerns about rivers in the High Uintas Wilderness:

- Designation may affect operation and maintenance of existing facilities, especially if it means that reservoir releases must be altered to ensure year-round flow in downstream segments or prevent releases that artificially augment flow. This would restrict the exercise of existing water rights and harm water users.
- Some high elevation reservoirs are or may be considered for stabilization in the future. WSR designation could restrict such work. (See, however, CUPCA letter #95 stating that stabilization work appears compatible and could still be completed with WSR designation).
- Since existing reservoirs alter the natural flows, no downstream segments should be considered free-flowing. Shale Creek is frequently cited as an example of this.
- Future projects downstream of eligible segments may be negatively affected, either by management restrictions or by loss of federal funding opportunities, if a segment is designated upstream. This concern is based on language in Sec. 7a of the WSRA. There is some concern that the option of expanding Moon Lake (on the Lake Fork River) would be lost if Lake Fork were designated.

Of the three organized campaigns none supported a positive finding of suitability for this segment.

(4) **The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs or policies and in meeting regional objectives**.
Designation may conflict with some elements of downstream zoning and land use, but would be

completely consistent with the management direction in the High Uintas Wilderness. Since these segments are within the Wilderness boundary, designation is not expected to impede other socioeconomic goals downstream, or change the existing situation.

The Duchesne County General Plan states that special designations, including wild and scenic rivers, "may result in non-use, restricted use, or environmental impacts on public and private lands. Special designations dictate practices that restrict access or use of the land that impact other resources or their use. Such designations cause resource waste, serious impacts to other important resources and actions, and are inconsistent with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield." The County's position is that:

- The objectives of special designations can be met by well-planned and managed development of natural resources.
- No special designations shall be proposed until the need has been determined and substantiated by verifiable scientific data available to the public. Furthermore, it must be demonstrated that protection cannot be provided by other means and that the area in question is truly unique compared to other area lands.
- Special designations can be detrimental to the County's economy, life style, culture, and heritage. Therefore special designations must be made in accordance with the spirit and direction of the laws and regulations that created them.

With respect to Wild and Scenic Rivers, County support will be withheld until:

- It is clearly demonstrated that water is present and flowing at all times;
- It is clearly demonstrated that the required water-related value is considered outstandingly remarkable within a region of comparison consisting of one of the three physiographic provinces in the state. The rationale and justification for the conclusions shall be disclosed;
- The effects of the addition on the local and state economies, private property rights, agricultural and industrial operations and interests, tourism, water rights, water quality, water resource planning, and access to and across river corridors in both upstream and downstream directions from the proposed river segment have been evaluated in detail by the relevant federal agency;
- It is clearly demonstrated that the provisions and terms of the process for review of potential additions have been applied in a consistent manner by all federal agencies; and
- The rationale and justification for the proposed addition, including a comparison with protections offered by other management tools, is clearly analyzed within the multiple-use mandate, and the results disclosed. All valid existing rights, including grazing leases and permits shall not be affected.

(5) **Contribution to river system or basin integrity**.
This factor reflects the benefits of a "systems" approach, i.e., expanding the designated portion of a river in the National System or developing a legislative proposal for an entire river system (headwaters to mouth) or watershed. Numerous benefits are likely to result from managing an entire river or watershed, including the ability to design a holistic protection strategy in partnership with other agencies and the public.

These segments are entirely within the High Uintas Wilderness Area, so designation would provide additional but similar protection. Basin integrity and ability to develop holistic protection strategies are excellent, given the existing management direction in wilderness. Grouping Upper Lake Fork and Oweep Creek together improves basin integrity.

(6) **Demonstrated or potential commitment for public volunteers, partnerships, and/or stewardship commitments for management and/or funding of the river segment.**
There has not been a demonstrated interest or disinterest in public volunteers, partnerships or stewardship commitments.