Welcome to the Ashley National Forest’s latest project planning newsletter! Here are our current proposed projects and information on how to stay involved in the management of your National Forest System (NFS) lands.

**Note:** The levels of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis referred to below are:

- **EIS** = environmental impact statement
- **EA** = environmental assessment
- **CE** = categorical exclusion

**IN THIS ISSUE:** 23 projects

**EISs (4)** - one completed/challenged last quarter and three ongoing (including forest plan revision)

**EAs (8)** - two completed last quarter, five ongoing, and one EA cancelled (but continuing as an administrative plan)

**CEs (11)** - seven completed last quarter, two ongoing, one cancelled, and one new

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### High Uintas Wilderness Domestic Sheep Analysis EIS

**IN PROGRESS**

This is an evaluation of the effects of continued domestic sheep grazing in the High Uintas Wilderness.

Next step: We plan to conduct an official 45-day comment period on the amendment to the draft EIS (anticipated fall 2022).

**Contact:** Paul Cowley, 801-999-2177, paul.cowley@usda.gov

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### Soapstone Calcite Project EA

**DEVELOPING PROPOSAL**

This project would involve authorizing small-scale hardrock mining operations for decorative calcite near the headwaters of Iron Mine Creek on the Ashley NF. Approximately 1 mile of new access road would need to be constructed, which would cross both the Ashley and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests.

Next step: We plan to conduct a combined scoping and comment period in the fall of 2022.

**Contact:** David Herron, 435-781-5218, david.herron@usda.gov

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**On the Ashley and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests:**
We are **revising our 1986 Forest Plan** to update our management framework for current natural resource conditions.

**Next step:** We anticipate the final EIS, final revised plan, and draft record of decision will be released in early 2023. See [https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ashley/landmanagement/planning](https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ashley/landmanagement/planning) for more information.

**Contact:** Anastasia Allen, 406-270-9241, anastasia.allen@usda.gov

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**Ashley National Forest Aspen Restoration Project EA**

This is a programmatic evaluation of the **restoration of aspen stands** outside of designated wilderness.

**Next step:** Objection resolution (We received four objections during the 45-day objection period, which closed 7/25/22.)

**Contact:** Kristy Groves, 435-781-5203, kristy.groves@usda.gov

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**Forest-wide Prescribed Fire Restoration Project EA**

The proposed project would authorize up to 24,000 acres of **fuels reduction treatments** across the Forest each year. Treatment boundaries would be designed to meet objectives and move areas toward desired conditions.

**Next step:** We plan to release the environmental assessment for public comment in 10/2022.

**Contact:** Blaine Tarbell, 435-789-1181, blaine.tarbell@usda.gov

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**Did You Know?**

Created in 1944, the Smokey Bear public service ad campaign is the longest-running in U.S. history. In 1947, his slogan was “Remember ... Only, You Can Prevent Forest Fires.” In 2001, Smokey Bear’s message was officially updated to “Only, You Can Prevent Wildfires,” to clarify that fires also happen in vegetation types other than forests and that Smokey promotes the prevention of unplanned and unwanted wildfires, as opposed to all fires. Smokey loves prescribed fire! See [https://smokeybear.com/](https://smokeybear.com/).

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**Forest-wide Range Improvement Project EA (Duchesne-Roosevelt & Vernal Ranger Districts)**

This project would involve the reconstruction or installation of various **range improvements** on grazing allotments.

**Next step:** Implementation (decision notice signed 7/26/22)

**Contact:** Sandra Remund-Kaminski, 435-781-5221, sandra.remund-kaminski@usda.gov
### D1 - Flaming Gorge Ranger District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dry Creek Trona Mine Project EIS</strong></td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
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| The BLM is considering a trona mine proposal from Pacific and Atlantic Soda Company. A portion of the proposal involves construction of a water line across the northern end of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area.  
**Next step:** We anticipate the draft EIS will be released for comment in the winter of 2023.  
**Contact:** Rhett Burkman, 435-781-5133, rhett.burkman@usda.gov | |
| **Green River to Buckboard Fiber Optic Cable Project EA** | COMPLETED |
| All West Communications is seeking to install a fiber optic cable from Green River, WY to the Buckboard Marina and Campground. We are issuing them a special use permit for the Forest Service portion of the project (approximately 3 miles of the 24-mile project is on the Ashley National Forest).  
**Next step:** Implementation (decision notice for the Forest Service portion of the project signed 8/15/22) | |
| **Henry’s Fork Rock Art Interpretive Site EA** | IN PROGRESS |
| This project would involve the development of a recreation and interpretive site to provide for public education, enjoyment, and protection of the Henry’s Fork prehistoric rock art site.  
**Next step:** The 30-day scoping and comment period ends 10/24/22. We plan to release the combined environmental assessment and draft decision notice in early 2023.  
**Contact:** Jeffrey Rust, 435-781-5156, jeffrey.rust@usda.gov | |
| **Lowline Trailhead Parking Area CE** | COMPLETED |
| Seasonally opening an administrative use road and constructing a trailhead to offer safer parking for recreationists off of Highway 191.  
**Next step:** Implementation (decision memo signed 8/29/22)  
**Contact:** Lesley Tullis, lesley.tullis@usda.gov | |
| **Stateline Cove CG Improvements CE** | IN PROGRESS |
| Constructing a drivable path from the campground to the water area and installing a new loading dock in the water.  
**Next step:** CE review and decision memo - fall 2022  
**Contact:** Jayson Roundy, jayson.roundy@usda.gov | |
| **Eagle Creek Ranch Water Tank CE** | COMPLETED |
| Authorizing Eagle Creek Ranch to upgrade their water system, which is currently under special use permit.  
**Next step:** Implementation (decision memo signed 7/7/22)  
**Contact:** Jayson Roundy, jayson.roundy@usda.gov | |
| **Hideout Campground Host Site Cabin CE** | IN PROGRESS |
| Constructing a host site cabin and upgrading the water chlorination system at this boat-in only campground.  
**Next step:** CE review and decision memo - fall 2022  
**Contact:** Jayson Roundy, jayson.roundy@usda.gov | |
| **D1 Roadside Sanitation CE** | COMPLETED |
| Cutting dwarf mistletoe infected trees along roadways to improve forest health.  
**Next step:** Implementation (decision memo signed 9/2/22)  
**Contact:** Lesley Tullis, lesley.tullis@usda.gov | |
| **Dutch John Right-of-Way CE** | COMPLETED |
| Issuing a right-of-way special use permit to the town of Dutch John for the road in front of the Forest Service yard to access private land for a housing development.  
**Next step:** Implementation (decision memo signed 7/28/22)  
**Contact:** Rhett Burkman, rhett.burkman@usda.gov | |
| **Stateline Cove CG Improvements CE** | IN PROGRESS |
| This project would involve the development of a recreation and interpretive site to provide for public education, enjoyment, and protection of the Henry’s Fork prehistoric rock art site.  
**Next step:** The 30-day scoping and comment period ends 10/24/22. We plan to release the combined environmental assessment and draft decision notice in early 2023.  
**Contact:** Jeffrey Rust, 435-781-5156, jeffrey.rust@usda.gov | |
Ashley Karst National Recreation & Geologic Area (NRGA) Management Plan

EA CANCELLED (BUT PLAN STILL IN PROGRESS)

We are developing a management plan for the Congressionally designated Ashley Karst NRGA. Because no site-specific proposed actions are involved, we no longer need to complete an EA. This will be an administrative change to our Forest Plan.

Next step: Release of the final plan (expected fall 2022)

Contact: Don Jaques, 435-781-5119, donald.jaques@usda.gov

Red Cloud Loop Winter Parking CE

We plan to construct a winter parking area on the Red Cloud Loop Road (Forest Service Road 018). The purpose of this project is to enhance access to winter recreation opportunities on the Vernal Ranger District.

Next step: Implementation (decision memo signed 8/29/22)

Contact: Joseph Ellsworth, 435-781-5179, joseph.ellsworth@usda.gov

Marsh Peak Allotment Boundary Adjustment EA

We are proposing to adjust the boundaries surrounding the Marsh Peak grazing allotment to facilitate and improve livestock management on the neighboring Lake Mountain and Black Canyon allotments.

Next step: We plan to release the environmental assessment for public comment in late 2022.

Contact: Garry Brown, 435-781-5168, garry.brown@usda.gov

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is preparing to build a railroad along Highway 191 through Indian Canyon. The planned route is from Kyune to Myton, passing just south of Duchesne. See [link](http://uintabasinrailwayeis.com/). The STB approved the project on 12/15/2021. The Forest Service, following a review of and response to objections received on the project, issued a final record of decision on 7/14/2022.

**Next step:** Issuance of the right-of-way and judicial review of complaints (a petition for review was filed 9/8/2022 directly to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit)

**Contact:** Kristy Groves, 435-781-5203, kristy.groves@usda.gov

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**Uinta Basin Railway Project EIS**

**COMPLETED/CHALLENGED**

We are working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on some proposed emergency watershed protection actions in the Lake Fork and Rock Creek drainages in the 2020 East Fork Fire area.

**Next step:** CE review and decision memo - fall 2022

**Contact:** Emilia Sopranzi, emilia.sopranzi@usda.gov

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**Duchesne-Roosevelt Ranger District CEs, including:**

**Hells Canyon Intervisible Turnouts CE**

**COMPLETED**

Constructing safety turnouts along the narrow Hells Canyon Road by widening the road in select locations.

**Next step:** Implementation (decision memo signed 7/12/22)

**Contact:** Valton Mortenson, valton.mortenson@usda.gov

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**Reservation Ridge Snow Plowing CE**

**CANCELLED**

Evaluating a request from one landowner to plow snow in the winter on Reservation Ridge. Scoping revealed universal opposition to the project from neighbors.

**Next step:** N/A (cancellation decision made 7/27/22)

**Contact:** Rhett Burkman, rhett.burkman@usda.gov

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**Uinta Canyon & Lower Stillwater Ponds CE**

**COMPLETED**

Pond restoration activities to repair water control structures, improve fish habitat, and increase recreational access opportunities.

**Next step:** Implementation (decision memo signed 9/16/22)

**Contact:** Ron Brunson, ronald.brunson@usda.gov

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**Other upcoming projects on D3/4**

UPCOMING

We are currently working with the state of Utah and the USDI Bureau of Reclamation on a restoration proposal for the 2018 Dollar Ridge Fire area. We are also working with the Ute Tribe to develop a proposal for a fuels management project on the south slope of the Uinta Mountains generally encompassing the area from Yellowstone Canyon to Uinta Canyon.

**Contact:** Kristy Groves, 435-781-5203, kristy.groves@usda.gov

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Ashley National Forest Projects
Check out this webpage for more details on each of these projects!

Ashley National Forest Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA)
https://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/forest-level.php?110401
The SOPA lists the projects in this newsletter as well as additional ongoing nationwide and multi-regionwide projects.

What is NEPA? The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on January 1, 1970 after it received unanimous support in the U.S. Senate. After many years of environmental degradation and the public having very little say in federal actions, NEPA required agencies to consider the environmental impacts of proposed actions and to inform the public of those impacts. When Nixon announced the enactment of NEPA, he stated that these “must be the years when America pays its debt to the past by reclaiming the purity of its air, its waters, and our living environment.”

Please call or email any of the above contacts with questions on these projects! And if you have any general questions regarding this newsletter, feel free to contact Lesley Tullis, Environmental Coordinator, at 435-781-5103 or at lesley.tullis@usda.gov.

Thank you for your interest and input and we look forward to continuing to work together to plan good work on the ground that will help sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Ashley National Forest to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Susan R. Eickhoff
FOREST SUPERVISOR