



January 2025
FY 25 Quarter 2

Ashley National Forest QUARTERLY PROJECT PLANNING NEWSLETTER

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.

Photo: C. Wille, USDA FS, Red Canyon, Flaming Gorge Ranger District, 2024.

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

EIS = environmental impact statement

EA = environmental assessment

CE = categorical exclusion

★ = new in this issue

IN THIS ISSUE: 12 projects

EISs (2) - two ongoing

EAs (5) - four ongoing and one new

CEs (5) - four completed and one ongoing

On the Ashley and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forests:

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: After cooperating agency and tribal reviews, we will release the final EIS and draft record of decision for a 45-day objection period (anticipated spring 2025).

Contact: Charlie Condrat, 801-999-2173, charles.condrat@usda.gov

On the entire Ashley National Forest:

Forest-wide Prescribed Fire Restoration Project EA

IN PROGRESS

This project involves implementing up to 24,000 acres of **prescribed fire treatments** across the Forest each year. Treatment boundaries will be designed to meet objectives and move areas toward desired conditions.

Next step: After incorporation of additional roadless area information, we will release the final decision.

Contact: Lars Christensen, 435-781-5126, lars.christensen@usda.gov

D1 – Flaming Gorge Ranger District

Buckboard Marina Boundary Realignment EA

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL

We are proposing to **adjust the boundary of the Buckboard Marina’s special use permit** to remove water acreage and potentially add areas of land to the south and east.

Next step: We plan to have a 30-day comment period on the proposed action and alternatives this winter.

Contact: Jayson Roundy, 435-781-5281,
jayson.roundy@usda.gov

Dry Creek Trona Mine Project EIS

IN PROGRESS

The BLM is considering a **trona mine** proposal from Pacific and Atlantic Soda Company. A portion of the proposal involves construction of a **water pipeline** under Black’s Fork in the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (NRA) in Wyoming.

Next step: The 45-day comment period on the draft EIS ended 9/23/2024. After consideration of comments and additional analysis, we anticipate publication of the final EIS this winter (2025).

Contact: Rhett Burkman, 435-781-5133,
rhett.burkman@usda.gov

★ Burnt Beaver Forest Restoration Project EA

IN PROGRESS

This is a proposed **timber, fuels, forest health, and safety** project that would include approximately 3,458 acres of forested vegetation treatments.

Next step: The combined scoping and 30-day comment period ended 12/27/2024. We plan to release the EA and draft decision notice in the spring of 2025.

Contact: Sam Nielsen, 435-781-5148,
samuel.nielsen@usda.gov

Flaming Gorge NRA Management Plan EA

IN PROGRESS

This is a new **management plan for the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (NRA)**. We would incorporate this area management plan into our 2024 Forest Plan via a programmatic amendment under Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219.

Next step: There will be a 45-day objection period on the draft decision notice (anticipated to begin with a 1/8/2024 legal notice in the *Vernal Express*).

Contact: Ryan Buerkle, 435-781-5204,
ryan.buerkle@usda.gov



Photo: O. Riley, USDA FS, White-breasted nuthatch, Flaming Gorge Ranger District, 2024.

D2 - Vernal Ranger District

Vernal Ranger District CEs

UPCOMING

No current projects in planning. However, we expect to initiate several recreation, range, and fuels project CEs this quarter (Q2) and will include these in our next newsletter.

Next step: Proposal development, tribal outreach, and public scoping

Contact: Mairin Glenney, 801-695-5354,
mairin.glenney@usda.gov

"Perhaps the rebuilding of the body and spirit is the greatest service derivable from our forests, for what worth are material things if we lose the character and quality of people that are the soul of America."

*- Arthur Carhart, Forest Service
Landscape Architect, 1919*



Photo: V. Mortenson, USDA FS, Vernal Ranger District, 2024.

D3/4 - Duchesne-Roosevelt Ranger District

Duchesne-Roosevelt Ranger District CEs

COMPLETED

Highway 191 Pavement Preservation and Shoulder Widening CE. Planned Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) expansion of current highway easement to conduct roadway improvements along 2.5 miles of National Forest System (NFS) lands just north of Reservation Ridge. The remainder of the 8.9-mile-long project area is off NFS lands on the south side of Reservation Ridge. *Next step:* Letter of consent with conditions from the Forest Service Intermountain Region, then implementation (CE signed 10/31/2024).

Highway 191 Southbound Passing Lane CE. Planned UDOT expansion of current highway easement to construct a passing lane and other improvements along 3.2 miles of NFS lands on the north side of Reservation Ridge. *Next step:* Letter of consent with conditions from the Forest Service Intermountain Region, then implementation (CE signed 10/30/2024).

Strata Fiber Optic Cable - North Fork Duchesne River CE.

Special use permit for 5.1 miles of new fiber optic communications cables and ancillary facilities. *Next step:* Implementation (decision memo signed 10/31/2024).

Yellowstone Right-of-Way (ROW) CE. Right-of-way special use permit for an existing access road to private property in Yellowstone Canyon. *Next step:* Implementation (decision memo signed 10/19/2024).

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL

Anthro Reentry Loop and Scatter CE. Removal of conifer encroachment in 7,820 acres of previously treated areas to maintain shrub habitat.

Next step for Yellowstone ROW and Anthro Reentry CEs: Complete heritage reviews, then finalize CE review forms and decision memos.

Contact for D3/4 CEs: Emilia Sopranzi, 530-647-5373, emilia.sopranzi@usda.gov or Lesley Tullis, 435-781-5103, lesley.tullis@usda.gov

South Slope Fuels Reduction Project EA

IN PROGRESS

This is a cross-boundary **fuels management project** with the Ute Tribe on the south slope of the Uinta Mountains. The project area generally encompasses the zone from Yellowstone Canyon to Uinta Canyon.

Next step: After incorporation of additional roadless area information, we will release the final decision.

Contact: Emilia Sopranzi, 530-647-5373, emilia.sopranzi@usda.gov or Joseph Williams, 435-781-5212, joseph.l.williams@usda.gov

*Our motto: "Caring for the Land
and Serving People"*

*Our mission: The mission of the
Forest Service is to sustain the
health, diversity, and
productivity of the nation's
forests and grasslands to meet the
needs of present and future
generations.*

What does the Forest Service do?

*We help people share and enjoy
the forest, while conserving the
environment for generations to
come.*

*See more at [Meet the Forest
Service.](#)*



Ashley National Forest Projects

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/ashley/landmanagement/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.usda.gov/sopa/forest-level.php?110401>

The SOPA lists these as well as additional ongoing nationwide and multi-regionwide projects.



Photo: P. Walker. Northern lights, Flaming Gorge Ranger District, 2024.

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, Ashley National Forest 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 to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Ashley National Forest to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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Kristy Groves
FOREST SUPERVISOR