



**Scoping Document
and Notice of
Proposed Action**

**Comments Due: 30 days from
the legal notice publication in
the Uinta County Herald**

**Small Project
Proposals**

**USDA Forest Service
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache
National Forest**

**Evanston-Mountain View
Ranger District**

**Uinta County, Wyoming
Summit County, Utah**

CLARIFICATION OF SCOPING COMMENT DUE DATE FOR BLACKS FORK SALVAGE PROJECT

On May 18, 2009 the District mailed you a copy of the Blacks Fork Salvage Project Scoping Document. In that document, it stated that scoping comments were due 30 days following publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in the *Federal Register*. The NOI was published in the *Federal Register* on May 28, 2009. Scoping comments are due June 29, 2009. If you have any questions contact Amy Barker at 307-789-3194. The scoping document is available on the Web at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/uwc/projects/wcnf/proposed/index.shtml>.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS SCOPING DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Scoping Document is to inform you of three new individual small projects we are proposing for the Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District. The environmental effects of the proposed projects are being analyzed by Forest resource specialists (including water, soils, wildlife, cultural resources, scenery/visuals, recreation, and fisheries) individually and cumulatively in relation to one another. However, there will be a separate decision made on each individual proposal. We welcome your comments, concerns, and suggestions regarding these proposals.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE BEING PROPOSED?

Three projects are proposed for implementation on the Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District. The information provided gives you the general location, a brief summary of the project, and proposed documentation of the project. If you have questions or need more information please contact the project manager listed, at the Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District Office.

1. FISH CREEK CULVERT AND ROAD REALIGNMENT

Project Manager: Amy Barker or Steve Ryberg

Location: Located where the outlet to Fish Lake crosses the West Fork Blacks Fork Road on the Evanston portion of the Ranger District in Summit County, Utah.

Legal Description: NW ¼ of Section 7 T2N R12E

Proposed Document: Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action: The Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District proposes to relocate approximately 300 feet of the West Fork Blacks Fork Road to allow the installation of a culvert where the outlet to Fish Lake crosses the road in the northwest quarter of Section 7 T2N R12E. The West Fork of the Blacks Fork Road is a Forest System road that is heavily used to access dispersed camping, a trailhead, and other areas

of the Forest. In the 1980s, a breach of the Fish Lake Dam rerouted the creek through the road. This proposed project will eliminate a ford on the road and reduce sediment entering the creek.

We anticipate that the effects for the Fish Creek Culvert Project will be minor and/or beneficial. We plan to document the project in an Environmental Assessment. The notice and comment period is being held concurrently with the scoping period. Anyone providing comments or otherwise expressing interest in the proposed action by the close of the comment period specified in 36 CFR 215.6 will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations. The comment period will end 30 days following publication of the legal notice in the *Uinta County Herald*. Additional information about where to send comments is provided at the end of this document.

2. MILL CITY CREEK TRAILHEAD AND VAULT TOILET

Project Manager: Amy Barker or Steve Ryberg

Location: Lower Mill City Creek Area, north of the Whitney Road (032) near the junction with the Mill City Creek Road (109)

Legal Description: NE ¼ Section 1 R9E T1N SLM

Proposed Document: Environmental Assessment

Proposed Action: The Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District proposes to develop a trailhead in an area that has been used for dispersed camping for many years. The general area already has many existing dispersed recreation sites consisting of parking spurs, camp fire pits, and camping areas. The new development would consist of a vault toilet, bulletin boards, and a system of designed dispersed camping locations including graveled roads and parking spurs.

We anticipate that the effects for the Mill City Creek Trailhead and Vault Toilet Project will be minor. We plan to document the project in an Environmental Assessment. The notice and comment period is being held concurrently with the scoping period. Anyone providing comments or otherwise expressing interest in the proposed action by the close of the comment period specified in 36 CFR 215.6 will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations. The comment period will end 30 days following publication of the legal notice in the *Uinta County Herald*. Additional information about where to send comments is provided at the end of this document.

3. HOOP LAKE SAGE WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT FUELS PROJECT

Project Manager: Dan Garcia de la Cadena

Location: Located on the Mountain View portion of the Ranger District, approximately 26 miles southeast of Mountain View, Wyoming in Summit County, Utah.

Legal Description: SLC meridian, T 2N, R 16E, within portions of sections 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, and 11.

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6)

Proposed Action: The Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District is proposing a wildlife habitat improvement project that involves burning sagebrush dominated plant communities in order to maintain wildlife habitat and reduce fuel loads in areas adjacent to forest campground infrastructure and renewable forest resources. The proposed project is an approximately 3.0-mile long (700 acre) vegetation treatment project which would occur in sagebrush dominated plant communities adjacent to Hoop Lake, primarily on south facing aspects of the East Beaver Creek drainage. See attached map.

The overriding goal of the prescribed fire treatments will be to create a patchy mosaic of mixed age class diversity within the sagebrush/forb community. Small patches of young low-density conifer will be targeted to prevent long-term conifer encroachment in the open meadows. Areas where young sagebrush stands already exist will be avoided. Throughout the three burn units identified, 25 to 50% of the surface area will be treated with fire. Fire would be applied during the fall in order to mitigate direct effects to wildlife including nesting and migrating birds.

The entire project area occurs within the Beaver Creek grazing allotment. The allotment had been rested for three seasons prior to the 2009 grazing season. Arrangements for resting this small portion of the allotment during the 2009 season of use, and for one to two seasons after implementation will need to be considered. Portions of the burn Unit B area are fenced, additional temporary fencing may be needed in other burn units.

Units A and B

Thinning and limbing of conifer along the southern ridgeline (1.5 miles) will be conducted by hand crews where needed prior to burn implementation. Cut materials may be bucked up and left in place. This action will serve to strengthen the existing two track road as an immediate fire break for the prescribed burn operations and decrease the hazardous fuels on the ridgeline for long-term fire break improvement.

The proposed burn will be implemented in fall. After black-lining the ridgeline, fire will be applied to the willows along the riparian area and fire will be monitored and allowed to move into the aspen towards the black-line.

Unit C

Pretreatment of Unit C will include felling in place 50% to 70% of the young conifer encroaching on the northwestern portion of the unit. The overriding goal of the prescribed treatments will be to create a patchy mosaic of mixed age class diversity within the sagebrush/forb community. Small patches of young low-density conifer will be targeted to prevent long term conifer encroachment in the open meadows. The areas where young sagebrush stands already exist will be avoided. Fire will be applied to 50% (+/- 20%) of the remaining area. Fire treatment will be applied during the fall in order to mitigate direct effects to wildlife including nesting and migrating birds.

Unit D (Sagebrush Mechanical)

Mechanical treatment within this unit will include hand thinning and brush hogging (where slope is less than 30%). The overriding goal will be to masticate 30 to 50% of the sagebrush via brush hog (tracked bobcat with brush cutting head). The operator will work closely with the landscape architect to create the appearance of a natural mosaic. On the slopes greater than 30% hand crews will lop and scatter trees smaller than 6 inches in diameter and limb up large diameter trees to 6 feet.

The Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within a category of action listed in 36 CFR Part 220 (and Forest Service NEPA Handbook 1909.15) that can be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the category. We anticipate that this project falls within the 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6) category "Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile low standard road construction."

Pursuant to *Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck*, No. CIV F-03-6386 JKS (E.D. Cal., October 19, 2005), and pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215 the decision for this project will be subject to appeal. The notice and comment period is being held concurrently with the scoping period. Anyone providing comments or otherwise expressing interest in the proposed action by the close of the comment period specified in 36 CFR 215.6 will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations. The comment period will end 30 days following publication of the legal notice in the *Uinta County Herald*. Additional information about where to send comments is provided at the end of this document.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

1. Effects to the human environment including water, soils, wildlife, cultural resources, scenery/visuals, recreation, and fisheries.
2. Effects on threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant, fish, and wildlife species.

WHAT IS THE DECISION TO BE MADE?

The decision to be made is whether or not to implement the proposed projects and if so, to what specifications, level or degree.

WHO WILL MAKE THE DECISION?

The District Ranger is the official responsible for making the decisions. The projects would be implemented beginning in summer/fall 2009.

COMMENTS

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments on any of the above projects should be received by 30 days from the legal notice publication in the Uinta County Herald. Scoping comments can be sent the following ways:

- *By mail:* Stephen Ryberg, Evanston-Mountain View District Ranger, P.O. Box 1880, Evanston, WY 82931.
- *By e-mail:* Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) comments-intermtn-wasatch-cache-evanston-mtnview@fs.fed.us
- *Hand delivery:* Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm to the District Office located at 1565 Highway 150, Suite A in Evanston, Wyoming.
- *Oral comments:* Oral comments must be provided at the Evanston office during normal business hours via telephone (307) 789-3194 or in person.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

For additional information concerning these projects contact Amy Barker, Environmental Coordinator or Steve Ryberg, District Ranger at 307-789-3194.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Ryberg

June 4, 2009

STEPHEN M. RYBERG
Evanston-Mountain View District Ranger

Date

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