

## **Decision Memo**

### **Public Grove ATV Trail Realignment**

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

### **Decision**

I have decided to proceed with the proposed action of realigning up to 1 ½ miles of the Public Grove 4X4 road (20220) and the Public Hollow road (20092) to create a new alignment of the existing motorized trail. In the 2007 Record of Decision of the Ogden Travel Plan, the Public Grove 4X4 road and the Public Hollow road were designated as a motorized trail (Trail # 6620). The motorized trail will be relocated to the north of the existing route and placed in a manner to ensure better drainage and a more sustainable travel-way. The following activities and mitigation measures are approved:

- 1) Small portions of the existing route will be incorporated into this new motorized trail alignment where feasible to minimize the amount of disturbance during construction.
- 2) Construct a bridge for OHVs to cross an ephemeral stream. This crossing is to be constructed in Township: 8N; Range: 1E; SW ¼ of Section 21.
- 3) Rehabilitate the areas of the existing route to be closed to motorized use.
- 4) Construct buck and pole fence to close off the select areas that are to be reclaimed. Utilize barrier rock to reinforce areas of closure where needed.
- 5) Install traffic barriers (steel bollards) on each end of the motorized trail to ensure the proper vehicle width (60 inches) is adhered to.
- 6) Install signs explaining restoration efforts and the goals of the realigned trail.
- 7) Install informational kiosks at key locations to inform public of the privileges awarded them for responsible use of the motorized trail. Included with this kiosk are maps depicting the route that is open to motorized use and the season of use.

### **Rationale**

The Ogden Ranger District has an extensive history of investment in rehabilitation of the Public Grove Area. In 1992, the wetland just east across the South Canyon Rd (aka Avon-Liberty Rd) near the north gate of the Public Hollow Loop (20092) was barricaded to restrict motor vehicles from further damaging the resource. In 1995, an agreement was made between the Forest Service, Weber County, and Cache County for the installation of gates along the South Canyon Rd (2 in Cache County and 1 in Weber County). In 1999, a buck and pole fence was constructed around the previously barricaded wetland and surrounding hills to discourage damage occurring from 4X4 trucks. The area within the enclosure was then hydro-seeded to allow vegetation to return to the disturbed hillside. In 2003, the southern portion of the Public Hollow Loop (20092)

was closed off to motorized vehicles and rehabilitated to preserve portions of riparian areas surrounding several small ponds in the area and to preserve the archeological integrity of the area. In 2008, a buck and pole fence was constructed on the west side of the South Canyon Rd near the north gate (entrance of the motorized trail) to assist in the restriction of larger vehicles from accessing the project area. In 2009, the Ogden Ranger District will continue with its investment of protection to the watershed by installing width limiting barriers at both ends of the motorized trail to ensure that only authorized use may occur. In addition, areas unable to naturally recover will be rehabilitated and closed off to motor vehicles.

The realignment of the trail makes rehabilitation and closure of the mud-bog area possible which is consistent with the 2007 Record of Decision for the Ogden Travel Plan (ROD, pg 15). The realignment of the trail will include a bridge to be constructed to protect an ephemeral stream.

### **Public Involvement**

A scoping document was mailed out to 24 individuals, groups, and agencies on March 20, 2008. Comments were due by April 18, 2008. A legal notice was placed in the Ogden Standard Examiner on March 22, 2009 providing the public a 30-day opportunity for comment. The project was included in the spring 2009 Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). The following concerns came from respondents:

There was concern that the proposed action is a modification of the Record of Decision (ROD) of the 2007 Ogden Ranger District Travel Plan. The ROD designated the north section of the Public Hollow Loop Road (20092), the Public Grove 4X4 Road (20220) to the Honey Bee Mine, and the route from the Honey Bee Mine west to section 24 (T8N, R1W) as a motorized trail (see pg 15, Section B in ROD of 2007 Ogden Travel Plan). This proposed action does not change this decision. Thus a modification of the ROD is not occurring.

There was concern that the proposed action involves an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) and its potential wilderness attributes. As stated in the Wasatch-Cache Revised Forest Plan of 2003, "the Public Grove Hollow roadless area was originally mapped as roadless but later found to be less than the minimum 5,000 acre size requirement and is no longer considered within the roadless inventory." (See Chapter 4b, pg 4-145 of the Revised Forest Plan).

There was concern with the season of use of the motorized trail. The 2007 Ogden Ranger District Travel Plan addressed this issue by establishing a seasonal closure from November 15 to June 15.

### **Findings Required By Other Laws**

The Wasatch-Cache 2003 Revised Forest Plan has been reviewed and a determination has been made that the proposed action is consistent with its direction. The actions of this project comply fully with the objectives, goals, and Forest-wide standards and guidelines (See Chapter 4 of the 2003 Wasatch-Cache Revised Forest Plan).

### **Reason for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Action**

Based on public input, interdisciplinary team review, past experience, and consideration of the resource conditions listed below, I have determined the effects of implementing this action will

be of limited context and intensity and will result in little or no environmental effect to either the physical or biological components of the environment. As such, this is a decision that has been categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed action falls under 36 CFR 220.6 (e) (1) – Construction and Reconstruction of Trails. As described in the mitigation section above, all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts have been incorporated into the decision. The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action. There were no significant effects identified for the resource conditions listed below.

**a. Federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.** The wildlife biologist, fisheries biologist, and botanist have determined there will be “no effect” to any threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat and “no impact” to any Forest Service sensitive species because there is no suitable habitat present, the species are not found here, and/or the scope of the project is limited and within a previously disturbed environment and therefore will have no measurable effect on any TES species or critical habitat.

**b. Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.** The project is not located within any flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds, and therefore, will have no effect on any of these features. The project does have in its plan to improve the stream crossing by relocating the route away from existing eroded crossing and replace the crossing with a bridge to span the ephemeral stream that exists in the area. There will be no adverse effects to water quality as the trail relocation will improve eroded areas and erosion control structures or access restriction structures will be placed along the eroded trail.

**c. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas.** The trail project is not in a congressionally designated area.

**d. Inventoried roadless areas.** This project is not located within an inventoried roadless area. Therefore, it will not have any effect on roadless values or the roadless character of the area.

**e. Research Natural Areas.** The project is not in a Research Natural Area.

**f. American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites.** The Forest archaeologist has determined that no such religious or cultural sites will be significantly affected by this project.

**g. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.** The Forest archaeologist has determined that no archaeological sites or historic properties or areas will be significantly affected by this project.

#### **Findings Required by Other Laws**

This decision is consistent with the Revised Forest Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed in conformance with forest plan standards and

incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidelines. The project is within the Cache Box Elder Management Area (Forest Plan, pages 4-128 to 4-139).

### **Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

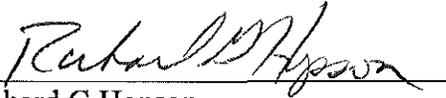
This decision (related to OHV routes and use) is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of the legal notice of decision in the Ogden Standard Examiner. Appeals must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden, Utah 84401; or by fax to 801-625-5277; or by email to: [appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us). Emailed appeals must be submitted in rich text (rtf) or Word (doc) and must include the project name in the subject line. Appeals may also be hand delivered to the above address, during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### **Implementation Date**

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days following the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15<sup>th</sup> business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

### **Contact Person**

For further information, contact Juan Barrientez at the Ogden Ranger District, 507 25<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 103, Ogden, UT 84401 or telephone (801) 625-5112 or email at [jbarrientez@fs.fed.us](mailto:jbarrientez@fs.fed.us).

  
Richard G Hopson  
Acting Ogden District Ranger

  
Date

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