



Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests

Issue Update, October 2012

New Forest Supervisor- Scott Armentrout began his service as the Forest Supervisor for the GMUG on September 10. Scott comes from the Sierra National Forest where he was the Forest Supervisor. No stranger to the Rocky Mountain Region, Scott was formerly a District Ranger in Wyoming. Since his arrival, he has been busy learning about the GMUG and the work that is accomplished here with our partners and taking opportunities to meet with local citizens, interest groups and government representatives.

Forest Headquarters-At the Forest's recent Open House in Delta, one of the popular topics was the status of the Supervisor's Office. The Forest Headquarters is a leased building and the current lease expires in 2014. Efforts to acquire land and finances to build a new, "green-certified" office are ongoing. The Forest Service has worked with local partners to identify options for land and other considerations. In the event that funding is not provided, the Forest will utilize the building planning that has occurred to date in any subsequent bid prospectus and/or lease agreement.

Montrose Forest Products, LLC-Is the new name of the former Intermountain Forest Products mill in Montrose, CO. Neiman Enterprises, Inc. out of Hulett, Wyoming purchased the mill as part of their holdings and began operating the mill in early September. Jim Neiman has been working to get the mill operating and so far, at least three national forest timber sale offerings have been successfully bid by the Mill and are under contract to supply wood.



Mount Emmons Molybdenum Mine-On October 10, U.S. Energy submitted a Plan of Operation (PoO) for full mine development to the Forest Service. The Mt. Emmons Mine is located near Crested Butte, CO and lies within the viewshed and watershed for the town. Under the 1872 Mining Law, federal lands are available for mining claim and development. The Forest is reviewing the PoO and coordinating the review with other offices (the State, Forest Service regional and Washington offices) and resource specialists to determine if sufficient information and clarity has been provided in the information, to formally "accept" the Plan of Operations. The review is an iterative process with the Company and may take 30 days or longer to conclude.



Job Corps-The GMUG is the Host Forest for the Collbran Job Corps Center. The Center is rated #1 in the Nation and focuses on leadership and excellence in training enrollees. In October, staff from the Ouray Ranger District and Collbran Job Corps, along with student welders and masons, installed a Centennial Commemorative Marker at Na-Gash Day Use area, located above Ouray, CO. Welding instructor Russ Sibert

designed and supervised welders in creating a steel "old growth" tree stump with the brass commemorative plate mounted as the "face cut" of the tree.

Secure Rural Schools Projects-In June, Congress extended the Secure Rural Schools Act and associated funding for another year. Counties who elect to receive Title II funds participate in the GMUG Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). Beginning with 2008 funds, the RAC has reviewed and recommended 30 projects for funding, totaling over \$1,000,000. These projects must provide watershed protection, soil protection, habitat restoration or improvement and/or support improved water quality on, or effecting, National Forest System lands. Proposals to treat noxious weeds, install open-bottom culverts for fish passage, reconstruct and move trails, provide/replace toilets and road reconstruction have been implemented. All projects must be completed or funding obligated by September 30, 2013.



Federal Lands in Gunnison County-On July 5, Senator Bennett launched a website to gather public "thoughts, ideas and comments on the long term management of public lands in Gunnison County." Both BLM and National Forest System lands are included and "Wilderness" and "Special Area" management designations are being considered. The Senator has requested mapping services from the Forest. The Forest Service is in the process of identifying ongoing uses and outstanding rights that may exist in these areas.

Wilderness: "An area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." 1964 Wilderness Act

West Elk Coal Lease Modifications-In August, the GMUG completed a final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for Federal Coal Lease Modifications COC-1362 and COC-67232. The Decision made was to “Consent to Lease” to the BLM and associated requirements to provide protection to surface resources under management of the Forest Service. The ROD was appealed and is under administrative review, in accordance with Forest Service Policy.



Uncompahgre Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP)-The Uncompahgre CFLRP continues to be a high-accomplishing project and is in its fourth year of implementation. The efforts and accomplishments of this group were selected this year as one of the Chief’s Honor Awards. The Chief’s award will be presented in December to representatives in Washington, DC. In fiscal year 2012, some of the accomplishments include the implementation of: three stewardship contracts, 1000 acres of prescribed fire to reduce the risk of catastrophic

wildfire, improvement of about 4,000 acres of wildlife habitat, treatment of over 500 acres of noxious weeds, work on planning for a 150,000 acre restoration project, continued citizen monitoring efforts, providing work/education opportunities for several local high school youth and teachers (Delta and Montrose).

Travel Management Implementation-Travel management and planning is a system that is continually being refined to be responsive to both public and environmental needs. The goal is to establish a sustainable system of travel. The Forest is in the second year of implementation of the Gunnison Basin Travel Management Plan and continues to refine and implement the Grand Mesa and Uncompahgre Plans. Forestwide, 1,716 miles of motorized trails are open for use and 951 miles of trails are open to mountain bike use. Fourteen information kiosks and numerous route signs were installed to advise citizens about travel management and provide recreation information. Forest staff continue to perform law enforcement and provide information and education contacts to forest recreationists. Over the past year, approximately 10,160 staff hours involved making these contacts in the field.





Capital Christmas Tree-The Christmas tree for the Capital building in Washington, DC is being provided by the White River National Forest this year. Over the past few months, the Forest Service has been coordinating with teachers, youth groups and hosting activities to afford Colorado's youth the opportunity to create ornaments to use on the tree from recycled materials and promote Colorado! In addition to the Capital Tree, approximately 60 smaller trees will be provided to place in offices throughout D.C. and the decorations will be used on these trees as well. Our kids are very creative and the ornaments we are seeing look GREAT! The Capitol Christmas Tree will make a stop in Grand Junction and Montrose on November 8 (Thursday). It will be in GJ from 1-3 PM and in Montrose from 4-6 PM. The tree will be on a semi-truck and trailer. The tree itself will be protected with plywood on three sides and one side will have



plexi-glass for viewing. The activities associated with the tree stops are being coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce and Cabelas in GJ (the tree will be located in their parking lot). In Montrose, the Chamber of Commerce and downtown merchants association are working on activities.

← Forest Service Booth at Cabelas' Fall Great Outdoor Days. Forest staff helped provide information to hunters and outdoor enthusiasts in coordination with the Cabelas' event. In addition, children were encouraged to use their creative talents to decorate ornaments for the tree.

Veteran's Green Corps- Provides purposeful service and training opportunities for current era veterans interested in gaining experience in natural resource and wildland fire careers. The program engages veterans to work together on crews completing natural resource management projects, fuel reduction, fire mitigation and other fire-related projects on public lands.

In association with the Southwest Conservation Corps, Durango, the GMUG provided fuels project work for training to the Veteran's Green Corps Crew this summer. In fact, the program has been such a success and of interest to the public, that CNN Reporter Martin Savage, Senior Producer Tristan Smith and their cameraman made a trip to the GMUG to interview the enrollees. Here they are on a fuels treatment work site on the Grand Valley Ranger District.

