



April 2025
FY 25 Quarter 3

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: L. Tullis, USDA FS, Brownie Lake area, Flaming Gorge Ranger District, June 2020.

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: 20 projects

EISs (2) - two ongoing

EAs (5) - five ongoing

CEs (13) - one ongoing and twelve new

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 summer 2025). *Contact:* Bethany Nickison, 801-999-2103, bethany.nickison@usda.gov

On the entire Ashley National Forest:

Forest-wide Prescribed Fire Restoration Project EA

IN PROGRESS

This project would involve implementing up to 24,000 acres of **prescribed fire treatments** across the Forest each year. *Next step:* After incorporation of additional roadless area information and compliance with recent regulatory and executive order changes, we will release the final decision.

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

★ Moon Lake Electric Permit Consolidation CE

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL

We are proposing to consolidate various powerline special use permits into a single permit.

Next step: CE review form and decision memo. *Contact:* Rhett Burkman, 435-781-5133, rhett.burkman@usda.gov or Emilia Sopranzi, 530-647-5373, emilia.sopranzi@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 spring.

Contact: Jayson Roundy, 435-781-5281,
jayson.roundy@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 45-day objection period on the combined EA and draft decision notice ends May 5, 2025.

Contact: Sam Nielsen, 435-781-5148,
samuel.nielsen@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 notice of availability of the final EIS published in the Federal Register on 2/28/2025. The preferred Alternative D, if selected, would not include any Forest Service administered lands.

Contact: Rhett Burkman, 435-781-5133,
rhett.burkman@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: The 45-day objection period on the draft decision notice ended 2/24/2025. We are currently working on objection resolution.

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

Flaming Gorge Ranger District CEs

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL/IN PROGRESS

- ★ **Half Moon Park Solar Project CE.** Authorization of a solar panel installation on a cabin at lot #3 in the Half Moon Park recreation residence tract. The purpose is to respond to the permittee's request to improve the energy efficiency of the cabin, lower electricity costs, and provide a stable power supply during potential outages.
- ★ **Ross Waterline Replacement CE.** Replacement of less than 1 mile (approximately 4,500 feet) of waterline in the Red Canyon recreation corridor. The purpose is to continue providing safe and reliable drinking water to the recreating public in this area.
- ★ **Upper Greendale Waterline Replacement CE.** Replacement of approximately 6 miles of waterline in the Upper Greendale water system. The purpose is to continue providing safe and reliable drinking water to the recreating public in this area.
- ★ **Wirick Special Use Road CE.** Special use permit for approximately 1,000 feet of road across National Forest System land to access private property. The purpose is to align use of the road with Forest Service regulations and to allow for safe and reliable access to the Wirick property.

Next step for D1 CEs: CE review forms and decision memos. *Contact for D1 CEs:* Lesley Tullis, 435-781-5123,
lesley.tullis@usda.gov

D2 - Vernal Ranger District

Vernal Ranger District CEs

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL/IN PROGRESS

- ★ **Ashley Karst Shaded Fuel Break – White Cloud Loop CE.** Establishment of an approximately 2,500-acre linear fuel break (300 feet on each side of centerline) along existing linear features, primarily the White Cloud Loop. The purpose is to help protect the watersheds of the project area by reducing severe impacts from wildland fire.
- ★ **Deer Lodge Slash Collection Site CE.** Designation of a slash pile site in the Deer Lodge recreation residence permit area to give permittees a place to pile natural slash that Forest Service employees would burn. The purpose is to encourage firewise practices that would reduce the risk to the resources and infrastructure in the community.
- ★ **Deer Lodge Well CE.** Special use permit to drill a fresh water well on Cabin Lot #10 in the Deer Lodge recreation residence area. The purpose is to respond to the permittee's request to provide fresh water to Cabin Lot #10 at Deer Lodge.
- ★ **Forest Road (FR) 52 Realignment CE.** Realignment of FR 52 so that it would branch off FR 50, south of the Barker Spring Loop cattleguard and eliminate the need for a gate that is frequently left open, allowing cattle to access an area closed to grazing and wander into the heavy vehicle traffic of US Highway 191. The purpose is to increase visitor safety, ease recreational access, improve grazing management, and reduce the impacts of the longer redundant road.
- ★ **Yurt Replacement Project CE.** Replacement of the Limber Flag and Grizzly Ridge Yurts, including associated structures and restrooms. The purpose is to improve the facilities to continue providing a quality experience to visitors.

Next step for D2 CEs: CE review forms and decision memos. *Contact for D2 CEs:* Lesley Tullis, 435-781-5123, lesley.tullis@usda.gov



Photo: L. Tullis. Milbert's tortoiseshell butterfly, Leidy Peak Trailhead, Vernal Ranger District, July 2024.

D3/4 - Duchesne-Roosevelt Ranger District

Duchesne-Roosevelt Ranger District CEs

DEVELOPING PROPOSAL

Anthro Reentry Lop and Scatter CE. Removal of conifer encroachment in 7,820 acres of previously treated areas to maintain shrub habitat. *Next step:* Finish heritage review, then complete CE review form and decision memo.

★ **Brown Duck Trail Reroute CE.** Reroute of two sections of the Brown Duck Trail and one section of the Lake Fork Trail. The purpose is to address damage from severe erosion events and to provide safe trail access in this area. *Next step:* CE review form and decision memo.

★ **Reservation Ridge Fuel Break CE.** Establishment of an approximately 721-acre linear fuel break (up to 200 feet on each side of centerline) along existing linear features, primarily the Reservation Ridge Road. The purpose is to decrease fire behavior and severe impacts from wildland fire in this area. *Next step:* CE review form and decision memo.

Contact for D3/4 CEs: Emilia Sopranzi, 530-647-5373, emilia.sopranzi@usda.gov

*"We don't reach the mountaintop
from the mountaintop. We start at
the bottom and climb up."*

- Cheryl Strayed, 2015

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 and compliance with recent regulatory and executive order changes, 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



Photo: K. Reed, USDA FS. Mule pack string, High Uintas Wilderness, Ashley National Forest, 2024.



Ashley National Forest Projects

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/ashley/
landmanagement/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](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: B. Tarbell. USDA FS. Pulaski and paintbrush, Ashley National Forest, 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.

Kristy Groves
FOREST SUPERVISOR

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