

# Errata to Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area Environmental Assessment

## Objection Summary

The FGNRA Management Plan and Environmental Assessment were published on January 8, 2025. Following publication, an objection period was held following 36 Code of Federal Regulations 219. Changes as a result of this objection period are detailed in the FGNRA management plan decision notice and summarized here below.

This project was subject to the pre-decisional administrative review process, also known as the objection process, as outlined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations 219. The 45-day objection period was initiated with the publication of the notice of the opportunity to object in the newspaper of record (the *Vernal Express*). The objection filing period ended on February 24, 2025.

The Forest Service received two eligible objection letters. Interested parties and objectors had the option to attend a virtual objection response meeting on June 12, 2025, to discuss objection issues. On July 7, 2025, the Deputy Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region, Christopher Carlson, issued a written response to the objection issues. This written response outlined the rationale for each response and contained instructions to the responsible official, as appropriate. The written response is the final decision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding the objections.

The Deputy Regional Forester found that the final Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (FGNRA) Environmental Assessment (EA), and associated planning record sufficiently addressed most issues raised through objection. For those issues that required additional clarification or modifications, the reviewing officer issued instructions to the ANF staff. These instructions remedied any concerns over potential violations of law, regulation, or policy raised during the objection period and are detailed here under **Modifications Made in Response to Instructions and Recommendations**.

The final decision notice and updated FGNRA management plan incorporating input from the objection period have been published. Edits made to the final EA and associated appendices are provided in this errata, with edits shown in context and highlighted.

## Modifications Made in Response to Instructions and Recommendations

As instructed by the reviewing officer, modifications to the final EA (issued as an errata), FGNRA Management Plan, and the planning record have been completed as indicated below. The instructions are organized by topic and include a summary of the issue, the reviewing officer's conclusion, if needed to provide additional background on the instructions, the instruction, and a response with how the instruction was followed and where changes were made to documents. Some instructions required review of new information; others required clarifications in the final EA or modifications to plan components. In addition to instructions, the reviewing officer recommended other clarifications be completed; these are summarized below. All modifications fall within the effects considered across the range of alternatives and are responsive to issues identified in previous comment periods and during objections.

The following changes were incorporated based on objection instructions and recommendations:

### ***Technical Issues for Correction or Clarification***

Issue Summary 1: The plan does not identify all general resource areas on maps (Utah Public Land Policy Coordination Office [UT PLPCO]).

Instructions: Verify data from table 7 and correct coloring error in the map (figure 5, page 18 in Final FGNRA Management Plan). Issue an errata with any corrections necessary for all instructions and make publicly available 508-compatible final versions of the ANF LMP and FGNRA Management Plan.

Response: Figure 5 in the final FGNRA Management Plan has been updated to correct the color error.

Issue Summary 2: There is no discussion on how the FGNRA Management Plan ties into the management direction from the ANF LMP or otherwise enhances what is already in place (Wyoming Coalition of Local Governments [WY CLG]).

Conclusion: There is a lack of documentation in the EA analysis as to how the 2024 ANF LMP and the FGNRA Management Plan are interrelated. There is a need to clarify the comparable direction in the 2024 ANF LMP with the FGNRA Management Plan. There is also a need to further clarify how the proposed programmatic amendment will modify the 2024 ANF LMP.

Instructions:

- Update table 2-1 in the EA to reflect the current plan direction in the 2024 ANF LMP.
- Clarify in the decision notice how the 2024 ANF LMP will be amended to reflect the adoption of the FGNRA Management Plan by the addition of a standard into the LMP's FGNRA Designated Area section and an edit to table 16 of the LMP. These clarifications will address the regulatory requirements at 36 CFR 219.15(e). The proposed standard would direct ANF land managers to follow both the 2024 ANF LMP and the FGNRA Management Plan. For example:  
Management direction for the FGNRA will follow both the FGNRA Management Plan and LMP direction to meet the missions and management goals established under Public Law 90-540, where applicable.
- In the errata, update table 16, Designated Areas on the Ashley National Forest (LMP page 70) in the Designated Areas section to reflect the adoption of the 2024 FGNRA Management Plan.
- Revise the decision notice (page 2, paragraph 4) discussing the no-action alternative not being chosen because the LMP doesn't "provide area-specific direction." The 2024 ANF LMP does provide area-specific direction (2024 ANF LMP, chapter 3, pages 71–74).

Response: Footnotes have been added to table 2-1 in the EA to note current direction in the 2024 ANF LMP. Language has been added to this decision notice (pages 1–2) clarifying that the 2024 ANF LMP will be amended through the addition of a new standard, as specified above, and a note that the management for the FGNRA will follow both the FGNRA Management Plan and ANF LMP direction. The LMP amendment also includes an update to table 16 to reflect the adoption of the FGNRA Management Plan. Language on page 2 of the decision notice has been updated per instructions.

### ***Recreation and Facilities***

Issue Summary 1: The plan must address impacts of solid waste generated within FGNRA on the City of Manila and other affected localities (UT PLPCO).

Conclusion: Terms such as "sanitation facilities" are not consistently defined for the purposes of utilizing plan components, such as management approaches, guidelines, etc. While the local government desires to have solid waste management specifically addressed for a single community, the scope of the plan

involves more than one community, and plan components need to address the entire area as a whole. There is sufficient specific guidance (such as management approaches General 01, Public Safety 02, and Recreation and Facilities 05–06 and 15, and Recreation and Facilities Goals 01 and 02) in the plan to facilitate collaborative management of supporting infrastructure, in accordance with 36 CFR 219.4(b) (coordination with other public planning efforts), 36 CFR 219.7(c)(2)(iv) (conditions, trends, and stressors), and 36 CFR 219.8(b) (social and economic sustainability) for solid waste and other cross-boundary issues as they arise. A later assessment of this particular issue could be implemented at the responsible official’s discretion.

**Instruction:** Define in the glossary the term “sanitation facilities” as used in the management approach Recreation and Facilities 06 (FGNRA Management Plan, page 54) to maintain a clear understanding with local stakeholders.

**Response:** The requested addition was made to the EA’s glossary; the EA and FGNRA Management Plan were updated to include a glossary definition for “sanitation facilities.”

**Issue Summary 2:** The plan does not contain sufficient guidance for aggressively seeking funding from a variety of sources for recreation and facilities (UT PLPCO and WY CLG).

**Conclusion:** There are desired conditions and goals included in both the FGNRA Management Plan and the 2024 ANF LMP that broadly address management for recreational facilities forest-wide and within the FGNRA. Specifically, both include several management approaches. Concerns about the level of funding are outside the scope of the planning effort, as the requirement is not to identify funding sources for FGNRA but to plan within the scope of the expected budget. Management approaches are optional plan content but can be used to “indicate the future course or direction of change, recognizing budget trends, program demands and accomplishments” (Forest Service Handbook [FSH] 1909.12, section 22.4). The current management approaches meet this guidance; however, the definition in the FGNRA Management Plan should be consistent with 36 CFR 219.7(f)(2) and FSH 1909.12 chapter 20, section 22.4.

**Instruction:** Management approaches should be described and defined in the FGNRA Management Plan with a single definition that is consistent with 36 CFR 219.7(f)(2) and FSH 1909.12, chapter 20, section 22.4.

**Response:** Language has been added to the decision notice related to use of management approaches, noting that these are not required but rather potential approaches. “Management approach” has been added to the EA glossary, and text has been revised for consistency.

**Recommendation:** Revise the decision notice to provide clarity regarding management approaches.

**Issue Summary 3:** The plan should add a mountain bike area near the Little Hole boat ramp as an additional mountain biking area due to existing use (UT PLPCO).

**Conclusion:** The objector requests an addition to the Recreation and Facilities objective 03, to include the addition of “hill north of Little Hole” in the list of locations where this objective could occur. However, 36 CFR 219.7(e)(1)(ii) does not require an exhaustive list of examples where an objective applies.

**Instruction:** Revise Recreation and Facilities objective 03 by removing theoretical examples. This objective is not the appropriate place to list all possible mountain biking complex areas. The objective to develop a complex over the life of the plan in collaboration with stakeholders allows the flexibility to prioritize and collaborate in accordance with other plan content.

Response: The objective (page 51) has been revised to remove examples following the instruction.

Issue Summary 4: Neither the EA nor the FGNRA Management Plan indicates why there is a difference in dispersed camping allowances between the states of Wyoming and Utah (UT PLPCO).

Conclusion: The 2005 Ashley National Forest Motorized Travel Plan decision for dispersed camping distances was followed in the FGNRA Management Plan. However, documentation of this compliance is lacking within the record.

Instruction: Add the 2009 Ashley National Forest Motorized Travel Plan Record of Decision to the project record.

Recommendation: In the errata, edit the sentence on page 26 in the FGNRA Management Plan to reflect compliance with the existing, approved travel plan, as follows: “Motorized dispersed camping is allowed only within 150 feet of designated roads and trails in Utah and 300 feet in Wyoming consistent with the 2009 Ashley National Forest Motorized Travel Plan (USFS 2009) and is limited to designated sections that are shown on the Motorized Vehicle Use Map where significant impact to other resources is not likely to occur.”

Response: The 2009 Ashley National Forest Motorized Travel Plan’s Record of Decision was added to the project record. Text in the FGNRA Management Plan was revised on page 26 to cite Forest Service 2009, as suggested in the recommendation above.

### ***Fire and Fuels and Vegetation Management***

Issue Summary 1: The Forest Service should amend the FGNRA Management Plan to identify management approaches encouraging fuel breaks other than along new and existing National Forest System routes (such as fuel breaks connecting with such routes), reducing tree densities, and encouraging the removal of biomass to reduce fuel loads and the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire (UT PLPCO).

Conclusion: The FGNRA Management Plan EA does explain in each alternative description that fire and fuels management direction from the ANF LMP (pages 29–33) applies to the FGNRA.

Recommendation: State in the decision notice more clearly that the FGNRA Management Plan tiers to the ANF LMP (see theme 1, issue 2). Specifically, regarding this objection, the ANF LMP (pages 29–33) describes fire and fuels management direction, which applies to the FGNRA.

Response: Language has been added to this decision notice (page 1) clarifying that the 2024 ANF LMP will be amended, through the addition of a new standard as specified above. Language has also been added to note that the management for the FGNRA will follow both the FGNRA Management Plan and ANF LMP direction.

### ***Range Management and Interagency Coordination***

Issue Summary 1: The Forest Service should clarify how grazing will be managed between adjacent land management agencies (UT PLPCO and WY CLG).

Conclusion: Currently, interagency agreements between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Forest Service, and the State of Utah help define the adaptive management approach that is implemented per the Forest Service grazing regulations at 36 CFR 222. Specific annual implementation is developed and documented in the Allotment Management Plan and Annual Operating Instructions.

Instruction: Ensure all grazing interagency agreements and memoranda of understanding are included in the project record.

Recommendation: Clarify that grazing will be managed for the protection and best utilization of the resource. Grazing uses an adaptive management approach, considering monitoring data and feedback from permittees. More specific grazing plans and practices will be addressed in the individual allotment management plans or annual operating instructions, or both, as appropriate, on an annual basis.

Response: Grazing interagency agreements and memoranda of understanding have been added to the project record. A footnote has been added to the FGNRA Management Plan (page 54) to clarify that for the portion of BLM allotments in the FGNRA, the BLM would follow the grazing plan direction in the 2024 ANF LMP.

### ***Additional Changes***

In addition, changes were incorporated as a result of changes to regulation or policy that have occurred in the time period between publication of the pre-decisional decision notice and this final decision notice, as follows:

The environmental justice section was removed from the EA. Executive Order 14154, Unleashing American Energy (January 20, 2025), and a Presidential memorandum, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (January 21, 2025), require the Department of Agriculture to strictly adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act (42 United States Code 4321 et seq.). Further, such order and memorandum repeal Executive Orders 12898 (February 11, 1994) and 14096 (April 21, 2023). Because Executive Orders 12898 and 14096 have been repealed, complying with such orders is a legal impossibility.

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# Appendix A

Modifications – FGNRA EA



United States Department of Agriculture

# Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area Management Plan

## Final Environmental Assessment



Cover photo: Flaming Gorge Reservoir in July by Val Stanson.



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direction for the management area to help the Forest Service achieve the purpose of the legislative language that established the FGNRA. **Under both action alternatives, the ANF LMP would be amended to include an additional standard as follows in the Designated Area section:**

***Standard (DA-ST-FGNRA)-02- Management direction for the FGNRA will follow both the FGNRA Management Plan and LMP direction to meet the missions and management goals established under Public Law 90-540, where applicable.***

To address the management challenges outlined in the Issues Used for Alternatives Development section, the Forest Service would implement the proposed FGNRA Management Plan through a variety of management actions, including:

- Prioritization of infrastructure to support recreation and tourism
- Development to support recreational opportunities, such as improved hiking trails and boat launches
- Working with partners to protect sensitive resources including water quality in the reservoir and Green River.

Desired conditions and goals developed under alternative B (the proposed action) would be consistent across all action alternatives, see table 2-1 for details.

### **Alternative B: FGNRA Management Plan (Proposed Action)**

Alternative B would include the management direction from the ANF LMP, as well as the management area-specific direction outlined in the FGNRA Management Plan, as detailed in table 2-1.

Alternative B would focus on both recreation and conservation, with a goal of balancing the two. Several plan components would include more specific direction for recreation, given the increased recreational use that has occurred across the planning area. Additional plan components, such as objectives and goals that address developing and constructing new interpretive sites, designating new paddle trails, coordinating with other agencies in water-oriented recreation activity management and public safety requirements and needs, and collaborating with state and local stakeholders and agencies to upgrade existing infrastructure, would be included to address changes to current conditions, emphasize collaboration with stakeholders, and more closely align with the congressional direction establishing the FGNRA (see appendix C).

### **Alternative B Modified: FGNRA Management Plan (Proposed Action)**

Alternative B was modified was added to the final EA following the public comment period. Alternative B modified would include all management direction from alternative B and two additional objectives listed in alternative C, recreation objective 05 Construct three group sites within the national recreation area within the next 10 years of plan approval and recreation objective 06 Pave Antelope Flat Road within 10 years

### **Alternative C: FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis**

Alternative C would include the management direction from the ANF LMP, as well as management-area specific direction for the FGNRA, as detailed in table 2-1. Most plan components would be the same as those outlined in alternative B, with the addition or modification of select components to provide additional direction to focus on new and improved recreational opportunities in the FGNRA. This direction would include developing campgrounds, and boat launches.

**Table 2-1. Alternatives Matrix**

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Cultural Resources	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Interpretative opportunities are provided in a variety of locations for the public to view and appreciate the prehistoric and historic resources of the FGNRA, including the unique attributes of the Flaming Gorge Reservoir.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Cultural Resource	No comparable plan direction	GO 01 The Forest Service works collaboratively with Wyoming and Utah Historic Preservation Offices and indigenous Tribes to identify, maintain, and conserve historic/prehistoric sites within the FGNRA.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Cultural Resources	No comparable plan direction	OB 01 Within 5 years of the completion of the Management Plan, develop and construct an interpretive site for the public to learn about the indigenous and native people who lived in the area now designated as the Flaming Gorge NRA. Utilize partnerships for the construction, interpretation, and maintenance of interpretive resources.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fire and Fuels	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Wildfire affected areas and other disturbed areas are managed to control the spread of cheatgrass, Halogeton, and other invasive species throughout the FGNRA.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Resilient landscapes are improved, maintained, enhanced, and created for big game species in collaboration with partners, including development and updates to habitat management plans.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	DC 02 Where appropriate, maintain, enhance, restore and protect critical avian habitat in order to protect avian species during critical periods of their lifecycle and to provide opportunities for public viewing and appreciation of native bird species.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	DC 03 Non-consumptive use of wildlife is promoted through educational outreach or kiosks, enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities, research, photography and filming when and where appropriate.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	DC 04 Bare Top Mountain is managed for the protection and benefit of wildlife and their habitats in coordination with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 01 Develop and implement effective conservation actions, habitat management strategies, research, and monitoring in collaboration with partners to provide for the maximum diversity, abundance, and population stability or enhancement of game and non-game wildlife species within the FGNRA.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 02 Coordinate with and utilize partnerships with other agencies and governments, tribal governments, and the community to help elevate conservation, habitat management, monitoring, inventory, and scientific research efforts for wildlife species, especially threatened and endangered species and species of greatest conservation concern.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 03 Maintain or improve the world-class sport fisheries, including fish and riparian habitat, in collaboration with partners (that is, state wildlife agencies, tribal governments, other entities and agencies, and the community).	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 04 As appropriate, coordinate with partners when monitoring western monarchs, bumble bees, hummingbirds, and other pollinator species' populations and their habitats. Use this information to enhance, conserve, and protect habitat areas identified in the FGNRA that are important to pollinator life cycles (such as Linwood Bay and the Green River corridor for monarchs).	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 05 Assist state wildlife agencies with greater sage-grouse conservation and habitat management.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 06 Work collaboratively with Utah and Wyoming wildlife agencies and other partners to identify, maintain, enhance, restore, research, and protect unique wildlife habitats.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Fish and Wildlife	No comparable plan direction	GO 07 Coordinate with state wildlife agencies regarding big game management plans and unit management plans.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Interpretation	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Interpretive sites inform visitors of the unique characteristics of roads, trails, water attractions, other resources, and management activities, such as fuels reduction. These sites inform visitors through personal experience and illustrative media including but not limited to graphic or video displays, audio tours, visitor guides, and road maps. By engaging with these sites, visitors gain a deeper understanding of the land. Vegetation around interpretive sites is maintained.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Interpretation	No comparable plan direction	DC 02 Interpretive sites meet Forest Service interpretive design standards and fit well within area settings. They are well maintained and draw visitors to them.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Minerals	DA-ST-FGNRA-01 Follow the intent of the legislation that established the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area with regard to mineral exploration and no surface occupancy for land within the designated area.	STD 01 Commercial sale of non-leasable common variety minerals (such as gravel, rock, or sand) within the FGNRA shall be prohibited because such developments are not compatible with and could impair the recreation, scenic, and historic values of the FGNRA.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Public Safety	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Flaming Gorge Reservoir no wake zones are identified, implemented, and adjusted based on nearby developed recreation facilities and reservoir levels.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Public Safety	No comparable plan direction	GO 01 Coordinate with Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Wyoming Department of Health, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Utah Department of Water Resources, Utah State Parks and Recreation, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Marina Special Use Permit holders in water-oriented recreation activity management and public safety requirements and needs. Maintain close cooperation with all groups and agencies involved with water-oriented activities.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Public Safety	No comparable plan direction	GO 02 Assist local, county, and State agencies to maintain a quality law enforcement program in coordination with Forest Service efforts through a cooperative law enforcement agreement. Explore opportunities to increase enforcement presence and education of laws and proper use.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Developed boat ramps and day use areas are safe and well maintained. Boat ramps and day use areas have adequate parking and amenities for current use, anticipated future use, and changes to reservoir elevation.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 02 There are many opportunities for water recreation, including but not limited to powerboating, waterskiing, paddle sports, and fishing. The Green River below the Flaming Gorge Dam provides fishing, floating, and rafting opportunities. These water recreation sites provide a high level of visitor satisfaction and user conflicts are managed.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 03 Facilities are designed to accommodate year-round use where appropriate.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 04 Large public recreational developments or complexes are concentrated. Smaller satellite campgrounds, boating camps, rest stops, and observation sites are suited for and can be developed, when practical, to provide for developed and dispersed use. Adequate buffers between developments are provided. Where feasible, recreation areas are interconnected with motorized or nonmotorized trails.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 05 Facilities and improvements are constructed and maintained to meet public need. Outdated or obsolete infrastructure is replaced with appropriate facilities that meet current and future recreation needs. They should be aesthetically pleasing and blend with or complement the surrounding area and include defensible space for wildfire.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 06 Designated paddle trails provide unique opportunities for visitors to see and experience the FGNRA by kayak, paddleboard, or canoe. Beginner to advanced paddle trails are available. Paddle trails are designated to minimize conflicts between powerboaters and paddle users.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 07 A wide range of mountain biking opportunities are available in the FGNRA for both novice and experienced users and there is a range of ride lengths.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 08 Recreation facilities and periods of operation accommodate demands of visitors on the FGNRA. Tours and interpretation are available at least between Memorial Day and Labor Day and extended into shoulder seasons as need dictates and funding allows.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 09 Motorboat launching only occurs at established boat ramps. Shoreline launching does not occur.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 10 Shorelines maintain a natural appearance to the extent possible. Areas disturbed by motorized boat recreation use or littering are minimal.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 11 Aquatic invasive species are mitigated through boat inspections and decontamination procedures in accordance with state law.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 12 High use areas around boat launches are adequately identified and managed to avoid type of use conflicts for motorized and non-motorized activities, including shore fishing opportunities.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 13 Developed recreation facilities and sites meet accessibility needs for visitors.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 14 Dispersed camping opportunities are available throughout the FGNRA, and resource impacts are limited from these activities.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	DC 15 Scenic byway and backway day use sites within the FGNRA are developed and maintained through partnerships and provide interpretation information.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GO 01 In coordination with local governments, stakeholders, user groups, and state wildlife, parks, and recreation agencies, evaluate opportunities to expand parking areas and recreation infrastructure at reservoir boat ramps, and trails access points. With these entities, identify opportunities to expand developed facility capacity, infrastructure, and services at existing developed recreation facilities and collaborate with state wildlife, parks, and recreation agencies in consideration of infrastructure funding opportunities.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GO 02 Collaborate with state and local stakeholders and agencies to upgrade existing infrastructure. Prioritize upgrades in areas where safety is a concern and user density is overwhelming the recreation resource; assess low priority or unused sites for decommissioning, removal, or conversion to other recreation use.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GO 03 In coordination with state and local stakeholders and agencies, explore additional options for managing capacity and distribution of demand/use at the Spillway boat launch site.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GO 04 Examine opportunities for expanding winter recreation activities within the FGNRA through coordination with local user groups, stakeholders, and governments.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GO 05 Continue collaboration with adjacent landowners, including Federal and state agencies regarding recreational opportunities that expand beyond FGNRA and Forest Service boundaries.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GO 06 In coordination with affected agencies and stakeholders, including BOR, develop a reservoir operation action plan identifying jurisdiction and mitigation steps to be taken at points in reduced water level elevations.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	OB 01 Designate 10miles of new paddle trails within five years of plan approval, considering potential conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	OB 02 Assess the feasibility of converting the South Buckboard Play Area to a designated campground within 5 years of plan approval.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

Resource Area Direction	Alternative A (ANF LMP)	Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)	Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)	Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	OB 03 Over the life of the plan, develop a mountain bike complex (for example, on Dowd Mountain, Greendale Junction, Buckboard recreation complex or Firehole Canyon), in collaboration with stakeholders.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	OB 04 The Green River Management Plan is updated through collaboration with stakeholders and partners within 5 years of completion of the FGNRA management plan.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	No comparable plan direction	Same as alternative C	OB 05 Construct three group sites within the national recreation area within the next 10 years of plan approval.
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	No comparable plan direction	Same as alternative C	OB 06 Pave Antelope Flat Road within 10 years.
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	No comparable plan direction	No comparable plan direction	OB 07 Install a wave attenuator at Antelope Flat within 10 years.
Recreation and Facilities	No comparable plan direction	GL 01 New overnight campgrounds neighboring the Flaming Gorge Reservoir should be near but not <del>be</del> directly adjacent to the high-water mark (6040 contour line) to reduce impacts and effects to water quality.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Scenery	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Management activities across all disciplines consider the scenic attributes associated with the FGNRA. Scenic values are protected and opportunities for scenic viewing are abundant.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Scenery	No comparable plan direction	DC 02 Scenic attributes along the Red Canyon corridor are maintained and protected.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Special Land Uses	No comparable plan direction ( <i>However, 36 CFR 251.54 (e)(1) applies to the area which requires a two-level screening process on all requests for occupancy and use of NFS lands</i> )	ST 01 Land use permit renewals shall only be authorized if they are compatible with and do not significantly impair the recreation, scenic, scientific, and historic values of the FGNRA. Operation and maintenance plans of existing permits must be compatible with and do not significantly impair the recreation, scenic, scientific, and historic values of the FGNRA.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B
Special Land Uses	No comparable plan direction ( <i>However, 36 CFR 251.54 (e)(1) applies to the area which requires a two-level screening process on all requests for occupancy and use of NFS lands</i> )	GL 01 Special land uses should be authorized based on a demonstrated public need where the need cannot be met outside the FGNRA and where the foreseeable effects on other existing or potential uses are acceptable.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Special Land Uses	FW-GD-LANDSU-02 Utilities should be buried instead of overhead to avoid potential conflicts with resources such as scenic integrity, wildlife, or wildfire. FW-DC-LANDSU-04 Utility corridors and communication sites are located primarily in existing facilities or on existing administrative sites. New sites and corridors are established only to achieve social, economic, and ecological benefits. Local distribution lines and smaller pipelines occur within existing road rights-of-way or other previously disturbed areas, where technically feasible.	GL 02 New utility transmission infrastructure in the FGNRA are suitable only within the designated corridors. Buried transmission, utilities, and telecommunications lines are suitable along existing or new Forest Service System roads.	Same as alternative B	GL 02 New utility transmission infrastructure in the FGNRA should only be allowed in areas where infrastructure does not detract from the purposes for which the FGNRA was designated.

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	DC 01 Motorized and non-motorized trails are present throughout the FGNRA and are maintained and constructed in a sustainable manner and are located to minimize user conflicts.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	DC 02 Communities surrounding the FGNRA are connected through designation of motorized routes where feasible.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	DC 03 Adequate access to the Flaming Gorge Reservoir shoreline is available through Forest Service System Roads and Trails.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	GO 01 Evaluate opportunities to design and construct new trails to connect with existing trails in coordination with local user groups and in consideration of local trails master plans.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	GO 02 In coordination with state and local agencies, private landowners, and adjacent Federal land management agencies, address continuity of motorized routes within and adjacent to the FGNRA.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	GO 03 In coordination with user groups, evaluate opportunities to widen motorized trails in areas where doing so would enhance trail sustainability.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.
Transportation	No comparable plan direction	GO 04 In collaboration with state and local stakeholders, identify opportunities for e-bike use on existing nonmotorized designated trails.	Same as alternative B.	Same as alternative B.

<b>Resource Area Direction</b>	<b>Alternative A (ANF LMP)</b>	<b>Alternative B (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative B Modified (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan)</b>	<b>Alternative C (ANF LMP and Proposed Action/FGNRA Management Plan with Recreation Emphasis)</b>
Water	No comparable plan direction <sup>1</sup>	GO 01 Cooperate with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and Utah Department of Environmental Quality, the Sweetwater County Health Department, and the Tri-County Health Department to conduct water quality monitoring for harmful cyanobacterial blooms, waterborne pathogens, and other water quality issues. In the event of a harmful cyanobacterial bloom in the Wyoming portion of Flaming Gorge Reservoir, follow procedures prescribed to resource management agencies in the Harmful Cyanobacterial Bloom Action Plan for Publicly Accessible Waterbodies in Wyoming, including cooperating with the Wyoming Department of Health and Sweetwater County Health Department to notify the public when a Bloom Advisory or a Toxin Advisory is issued for Flaming Gorge Reservoir by the Wyoming Department of Health. In the event of a harmful algal bloom in Utah, coordinate with Utah Department of Water Quality and Tri-County Health Department to notify the public.	Same as alternative B	Same as alternative B

<sup>1</sup> There is no comparable plan direction that is site-specific for the FGNRA; however, the ANF LMP contains general resource direction that applies to the entire ANF, including the FGNRA.

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## Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

### Introduction

In this chapter, the Forest Service identifies the potential environmental impacts of the FGNRA Management Plan alternatives. The environmental assessment contains natural and cultural resources, including the physical and biological environment, cultural and historic resources, socioeconomic factors, **considerations of environmental justice** and scenery.

As required by the NEPA regulations at Section 102 in Title I of the Act, Federal agencies are required to identify the environmental consequences of their proposed actions prior to reaching a decision.

This chapter details the possible impacts on resources based on the proposed management actions in the FGNRA Management Plan alternatives. The analysis considered both direct and indirect impacts, cumulative impacts, mitigation strategies, and the potential timeframes for those impacts.

The Forest Service provides an analysis of the potential direct and indirect impacts on recreation, grazing, vegetation, fire management, water resources, scenery, socioeconomic dimensions, **environmental justice**, cultural resources, land usage, realty, and fish and wildlife. The following sections also discuss these effects' magnitude, scope, duration, and overall impact.

Under all alternatives, the Forest Service would follow direction as outlined in the ANF LMP, in effect on February 26, 2024. This direction includes applicable Forest-wide direction as well as management area direction outlined in the FGNRA section of the plan. This document tiers to the analysis provided in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the ANF LMP (Forest Service 2024). Where appropriate, the sections below incorporate the ANF LMP by reference when discussing the affected environment or nature and type of impacts.

This environmental assessment also analyzes the cumulative effects. These cumulative effects are a combination of the effects of the prior, current, and reasonably foreseeable future actions and the alternatives.

The Forest Service considered the following cumulative effects for the FGNRA Management Plan:

- Increased traffic and pollution due to elevated tourism resulting in heightened traffic and pollution
- Degradation of water quality from the rise in recreational activities
- Habitat loss and the consequences of cumulative impacts, including the loss of habitats for special status species

### Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions and Reasonably Foreseeable Trends

In addition to the FGNRA Management Plan, a number of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions could have an impact on the FGNRA. These actions include:

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## Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

### Affected Environment

#### Socioeconomics<sup>11</sup>

##### Existing Condition

Various factors shape recreation and the corresponding economic activity in the FGNRA, including population characteristics, employment in recreation sectors, area demographics, and unique amenities. As a steward of recreational opportunities, the FGNRA plays a principal role in the community, fostering social and economic connections. A brief overview of baseline social and economic conditions is included below. Additional information is available in the socioeconomic affected environment section for the ANF LMP Final Environmental Impact Statement (Forest Service 2024).

##### Demographics

The FGNRA lies within Daggett County, Utah, and Sweetwater County, Wyoming. The population for both areas counties has decreased over the past decade. Daggett County's population decreased from 839 in 2000 to 638 in 2022. Sweetwater County's decreased from 42,266 in 2000 to 42,079 in 2022 (U.S. Census Bureau 2022b). Despite local population declines, an overall increase in Utah's population is predicted to result in an estimated 15–30 percent growth in visitation to the Forest over the next 15 years, with increasing demands on the resources and infrastructure within the FGNRA (Forest Service 2017).

##### Recreation Economy

Tourism is an important economic sector in the region, generating millions of dollars annually. A study by the BOR in 2000 indicated that the average visitor to the FGNRA spends between \$65 and \$282 in direct recreational expenditures per visit, depending on type of recreational activity they participate in (BOR 2000). The economic impact of this spending extends to additional indirect spending and economic contributions to various businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and other service industries.

The FGNRA's special use permit program, with over 50 holders, enhances the visitor experience and contributes to the local economy (see the Recreation and Facilities section for additional details).

The level of current recreation spending is influenced by available opportunities and user experiences. Recreation conflicts and recreation demands that are not met by the current level of facilities may impact the level of associated recreation spending if these factors result in alternative recreation outside the local area.

##### *Social and Nonmarket Values and Ecosystem Services*

The FGNRA provides values contributing to the community's sense of place, including recreational opportunities, untouched outdoors, and benefits to adjacent communities. Recreational activities can

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<sup>11</sup> The environmental justice section has been removed following Executive Order 14154, Unleashing American Energy (Jan. 20, 2025), and a Presidential Memorandum, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity (Jan. 21, 2025). These EOs require the Department to strictly adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq. Further, such Order and Memorandum repeal Executive Orders 12898 (Feb. 11, 1994) and 14096 (Apr. 21, 2023). Because Executive Orders 12898 and 14096 have been repealed, complying with such Orders is a legal impossibility. The US Forest Service verifies that it has complied with the requirements of NEPA, including regulations and procedures implementing NEPA at 40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508, consistent with the President's January 2025 Order and Memorandum.

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support nonmarket benefits for locals and visitors, including but not limited to mental and physical health benefits.

Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food, water, timber, and fiber; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; cultural services that provide recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling (MEA 2005). Ecosystem services in the Ashley National Forest as a whole and the FGNRA contribute to social and economic sustainability. Local economies benefit from the availability of ecosystem goods and services, such as recreation and grazing lands, as well as other natural resources. Individuals in local communities have benefited from a host of services such as recreation, scenery, employment, and opportunities to connect with nature. For further discussion of ecosystem services related to recreation and the importance for the Ashley National Forest, see the ANF LMP Final Environmental Impact Statement (Forest Service 2024).

### Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations" (1994), mandates Federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low income populations in the United States.

Additionally, Executive Order 14096, "Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All," enacted on April 21, 2023, complements Executive Order 12898. Until further guidance is issued on how to implement Executive Order 14096, the Forest Service continues to implement Executive Order 12898.

To identify communities of potential environmental justice concern within the planning area, the Forest Service conducted an environmental justice screen of the counties overlapping the planning area (Sweetwater County, Wyoming, and Daggett County, Utah). The screen consisted of using U.S. Census Bureau data<sup>12</sup> to determine whether the populations in each county met at least one of the following criteria:

- A minority<sup>13</sup> population of concern is present if the percentage of the population identified as belonging to a minority group in a study area is (1) equal to or greater than 50 percent of the population or (2) meets the "meaningfully greater" threshold (CEQ 1997). For the purpose of this analysis, meaningfully greater is calculated by comparing the minority group population percentage with 110 percent of the reference area minority population.
- A low-income community of concern is present if the population in the study area experiencing income levels at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty threshold is (1) equal to or greater

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<sup>12</sup>Data were collected directly from the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure that they were the most recent available. The EPA also calculates and reports data on minority and low income populations based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau; however, due to timing of the reports published by the EPA, the data that are used often lag behind the data from the U.S. Census Bureau by one year.

<sup>13</sup>Total minority population is defined as the total population minus that portion that is listed in U.S. Census Bureau data as white, of non-Hispanic origin. This method includes all individuals who identify as a racial or ethnic minority, or both, without double counting these populations.

than 50 percent of the population or (2) greater than or equal to the population in the reference area experiencing income levels at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty threshold.

For the purpose of this analysis, the reference population is the respective state average.

As shown in table 3-2, Environmental Justice Screening, Sweetwater County and many of the census tracts within the county meet one or both criteria as defined above. They, therefore, should be examined for potential environmental justice considerations.

**Table 3-2. Environmental Justice Screening**

Geography	Total Population	Percent Minority Population <sup>1</sup>	Percent Low Income <sup>2</sup>	Geography Meets One or More Criteria to Qualify as an Environmental Justice Population?
Daggett County, Utah	638	7.5%	20.2%	N
Census tract 9601	638	7.5%	20.2%	N
Sweetwater County, Wyoming	42,079	18.6%	22.4%	Y
Census tract 9705	2,863	23.5%	29.4%	Y
Census tract 9706.01	3,870	22.3%	18.4%	Y
Census tract 9706.02	3,245	15.3%	12.9%	N
Census tract 9707	3,585	15.1%	15.8%	N
Census tract 9708	3,672	22.4%	26.9%	Y
Census tract 9709.02	5,274	22.1%	18.0%	Y
Census tract 9709.03	2,972	41.7%	32.3%	Y
Census tract 9709.04	2,529	23.3%	23.5%	Y
Census tract 9709.05	4,823	32.2%	21.2%	Y
Census tract 9710	1,572	22.3%	18.5%	Y
Census tract 9711	3,479	16.5%	37.6%	Y
Census tract 9712	2,497	11.5%	20.3%	Y
Census tract 9716	1,698	10.2%	18.0%	N
Utah	3,283,809	23.2%	24.7%	N/A
Wyoming	577,929	17.5%	26.5%	N/A

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2022, 2021

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Minority population is defined as total population minus those identifying as white of non-Hispanic descent.

<sup>2</sup> Low-income population is defined as all individuals with income at 200 percent of the poverty level or below.

## Environmental Consequences

The following indicators provide a nuanced perspective, focusing on economic, demographic, and land use dimensions.

### Indicators for Analysis

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### *Economic Impact Indicators*

- **Job Numbers:** Assess how changes in management might influence jobs particularly related to tourism-related businesses. While the Forest contributes to a wide variety of industries, the tourism industry is the focus of this analysis due to the importance of the recreation tourism industry for the FGNRA and the lack of management changes for other key sections (that is, timber, livestock grazing) in the FGNRA proposed management and alternatives.
- **Economic Contributions:** Evaluate the potential financial outcomes, considering the impact on tourism-related revenue. Analyze the broader economic contributions, considering the influence on businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and guide services.

### *Nonmarket Indicators*

- **Recreational Benefits:** Assess the impacts of modifications and additions to recreational activities on the nonmarket recreational benefits provided in the FGNRA **environmental justice indicators below**. While the FGNRA supports nonmarket values associated with a variety of resources and resources uses, this analysis focuses primarily on those associated with recreation, due to the recreation focus of this proposed management and alternatives.

### **Environmental Justice Indicators**

- **Potential for disproportionate adverse impacts on identified low income or minority populations: Assess the impacts of management activities on identified populations.**

### **Anticipated Environmental Consequences**

Anticipated environmental consequences are predominantly indirect effects, given the absence of implementation level projects outlined in the EA. The recreation economy is poised to grow, irrespective of Forest Service management actions, leading to an upswing in employment and income within recreation-related sectors. This dynamic sets the stage for a nuanced exploration of the potential environmental, social, and economic consequences associated with each management alternative.

### **Alternative A (No Action)**

The no-action alternative would include management direction for the FGNRA, following the guidelines set forth in the ANF LMP.

### **Economic Impacts**

Management under the ANF LMP would support ongoing contributions from Forest activities. In the long term, limited management area-specific direction could impact the visitor experience and thereby impact recreation visitation levels and associated spending and employment in local communities in the region.

### **Nonmarket Impacts**

As noted under Economic Impacts, alternative A would sustain current recreational activities; however, without specific enhancements, the variety and quality of activities may not expand and the recreational experience would potentially be impacted by the lack of management area-specific direction. This could impact the value that locals and visitors receive from recreation in the area.

### **Environmental Justice Impacts**

**As discussed in the**

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Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice, communities in Sweetwater County have been identified as populations for further environmental justice consideration. Under alternative A, Forest-wide management would support collaboration and enhance communication with local communities. Management includes a goal to work with partners to review socioeconomic contributions relevant to environmental justice communities, where residents are more vulnerable to shifts in social and economic conditions. In addition, plan language provides for increased coordination with local Tribes to support their continued traditional and cultural uses and to consult with them regarding their perspectives, needs, and concerns as well as traditional ecological knowledge.

Forest-wide vegetation treatment objectives related to prescribed fire would result in emissions and potentially have more short-term impacts for local communities. Smoke can cause health problems in humans and wildlife, and it can adversely affect visibility, all of which can adversely affect the quality of life. In the long term, however, vegetation treatments would move vegetation toward desired conditions and historical fire regimes. This would support a reduction in the risk of high-intensity fires with impacts on air quality and human health for all populations, including environmental justice communities.

### Alternative B

Under alternative B, the Forest Service would implement the Forest-wide management direction under the no-action alternative and provide further management direction under the FGNRA Management Plan. Management plan components include but are not limited to more specific direction for recreation, given the increased recreational use that has occurred across the planning area, with impacts as described below.

#### *Economic Impacts*

Management under alternative B would support ongoing and expanded contributions from Forest activities.

Management includes exploration of opportunities for new recreational activities along with enhancement of current activities (for example, paddleboat trails) and development of a mountain bike complex. If these resulted in additional visitation from outside the region, there would be additional economic contributions to support the local and regional economy.

Increased development of infrastructure would also support short-term jobs and economic contributions, with the level dependent on the nature and type of facilities developed.

#### *Nonmarket Impacts*

As noted under Economic Impacts, alternative B would provide for additional recreation opportunities and reduce identified conflicts to existing recreation opportunities. Together this management should result in enhanced visitor experiences and increase the nonmarket value of recreation for locals and visitors who participate in recreation activities.

#### *Environmental Justice Impacts*

As discussed in the Affected Environment section of

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice, communities in Sweetwater County have been identified as populations for environmental justice consideration. Impacts of additional management direction under alternative B could support reduced potential for impacts on environmental justice communities. For example, the additional management area specific desired condition to reduce fuel loads, including management for cheatgrass and other invasive species, may reduce the potential for unplanned wildfire and associated emissions and impacts on environmental justice communities as discussed under alternative A.

## Alternative B Modified

Alternative B modified would focus on providing new and improved recreational opportunities in the FGNRA, including developing campgrounds, and boat launches. Management would include the ANF LMP, as discussed under alternative A, as well as the management area-specific direction as detailed in chapter 2 and the FGNRA Management Plan.

### *Economic Impacts*

Management under alternative B modified would support more developed recreation use, due to additional direction for development of facilities and recreational opportunities. As a result, this alternative may result in increased visitation over time, supporting increased visitation spending in the region and related jobs and economic contributions. The level of support derived from these contributions would depend on the level to which recreation levels and types of visitation changed. Development of infrastructure, emphasized under this alternative, would also support short-term jobs and economic contributions, with the level dependent on the nature and type of facilities developed.

### *Nonmarket Impacts*

As noted under Economic Impacts, alternative B modified would support a large range of recreational opportunities and would be likely to enhance the recreational experience. This could increase the value that locals and visitors receive from recreation in the area.

### *Environmental Justice Impacts*

Impacts would be as described under alternative B.

## Alternative C

Alternative C would focus on providing new and improved recreational opportunities in the FGNRA, including developing campgrounds, and boat launches. Management would include the ANF LMP, as discussed under alternative A, as well as the management area-specific direction as detailed in chapter 2 and the FGNRA Management Plan.

### *Economic Impacts*

Management under alternative C would support the highest level of developed recreation use, due to additional direction for development of facilities and recreational opportunities. As a result, this alternative may result in increased visitation over time, supporting increased visitation spending in the region and related jobs and economic contributions. The level of support derived from these contributions would depend on the level to which recreation levels and types of visitation changed. Development of infrastructure, emphasized under this alternative, would also support short-term jobs and economic contributions, with the level dependent on the nature and type of facilities developed.

*Nonmarket Impacts*

As noted under Economic Impacts, alternative C would support a large range of recreational opportunities and would be likely to enhance the recreational experience. This could increase the value that locals and visitors receive from recreation in the area.

*Environmental Justice Impacts*

*Impacts would be as described under alternative B.*

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## List of Preparers

The following Forest Service and non-Forest Service individuals contributed to the development of the FGNRA Management Plan and EA.

**Table 4-1. Core Interdisciplinary Team Members – Forest Service**

Name	Contribution/Role
Dan Abeyta	Fish and Wildlife Program Manager
Allen Huber	Ecologist
Blaine Tarbell	Fuels Planner
Bryan Wilson	District Ranger
Cherette Bonomo	Rangeland Management Specialist
Chris Plunkett	Hydrologist
Dan Abeyta	Biological Scientist
Don Jaques	Recreation Program Manager
Dustin Bambrough	Ecosystems and Planning Staff Officer
Jeff Rust	Forest Archaeologist
Joe Flores	Forest Fire Management Officer
Kevin Clegg	District Recreation Manager
Kevin Faucher	Hydrologist
Natasha Hadden	Wildlife Biologist
Sam Nielson	Silviculturist
Sarah Leahy	Soil Scientist
Chris Plunkett	Soil, Water, and Air Program Manager
Rhett Burkman	Realty Specialist
Ryan Buerkle	Project Manager
Valton Mortenson	Civil Engineer

**Table 4-2. Core Interdisciplinary Team Member – AECOM**

Name	Contribution/Role
Andrew Wilkins	Cultural and Archaeological Specialist; Soil Specialist; Transportation Specialist
Andy Spellmeyer	Rangeland Management Specialist
Bronson Pace	Project Management Support; Air Quality and Climate Change Specialist; Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice Specialist; Water Resources Specialist
David Jaeger	Interpretation Specialist; Recreation and Facilities Specialist; Special Land Use Specialist
Derek Holmgren	Scenery Specialist
Eddie Sanchez	Interpretation Specialist; Recreation and Facilities Specialist; Special Land Use Specialist
Kirsti Davis	Soils Specialist; Transportation Specialist
Lindsay Chipman	Biologist
Nikki Morris	Biologist; Fire and Fuels Specialist; Timber Specialist
Noelle Crowley	Interpretation Specialist; Recreation and Facilities Specialist; Special Land Use Specialist
Val Stanson	Deputy Project Manager; Scenery Specialist
Zoe Ghali	Project Manager; Rangeland Management Specialist; Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice Specialist

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# Glossary

**303(d)-listed waters**—Waters listed under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act as impaired, requiring the development of total maximum daily load strategies.

**Aquatic habitat restoration**—Activities focused on improving habitats for aquatic species and enhancing waterbody and floodplain connectivity.

**Beneficial use classifications**—Designations indicating the purposes for which waterbodies can be used while maintaining water quality.

**Best management practices**—Practices designed to mitigate the impact of human activities on the environment, specifically water resources in this context.

**Blue ribbon**—Waters that provide highly satisfying fishing and outdoor experiences for diverse groups of anglers and enthusiasts.

**Cultural resources**—The present expressions of human culture and the physical remains of past activities, such as historic buildings, structures, objects, districts, landscapes, and archaeological sites. These resources can be significant in the context of national, regional, or local history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. They may also include sacred sites and natural features of landscapes that are significant to living communities.

**Harmful cyanobacteria blooms**—Dense concentrations of photosynthetic cyanobacteria that can pose risks to humans, pets, and livestock.

**National Register of Historic Places**—A listing of resources that are considered significant at the national, state, or local level and that have been found to meet specific criteria of historic significance, integrity, and age.

**Management approach**-Optional plan content proving potential management direction or strategies and partnership opportunities or coordination activities.

**Prescribed fire**—Controlled burning of vegetation to achieve specific management objectives, such as reducing the risk of high-severity wildfires.

**Sanitation facilities**-Public facilities providing toilets.

**Scenic integrity objective**—Indicates the maximum acceptable degree of alteration to landscapes. In scenic management, there are five scenic integrity objectives ranging from very high to very low.

**Vegetation management**—Practices aimed at maintaining or achieving desired conditions in vegetation, particularly in riparian areas.

**Wild and scenic rivers**—Designation for rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values, preserving their free-flowing condition.

# Appendix D. Evaluation of the Forest Plan Amendment

## Evaluation of the Forest Plan Amendment

As discussed previously in this environmental assessment, the Forest Service has identified a need to amend the Ashley National Forest 2024 Land Management Plan (ANF LMP) to adopt and implement the proposed Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (FGNRA) Management Plan.

The 2024 ANF LMP would be amended with adoption of the updated FGNRA Management Plan. The scope of the proposed programmatic amendment applies to management direction for the FGNRA, as outlined in the updated FGNRA management plan, and as consistent with the 2024 ANF LMP. The scale of the proposed amendment is the land management allocation for the FGNRA designated area, as mapped in the 2024 Ashley NF LMP, consisting of 207,363 acres and 91 reservoir water miles within northeastern Utah and southwestern Wyoming (Forest Service 2024).

The scope of this plan amendment is the management of the FGNRA. The scale of this plan amendment is the planning area of the FGNRA, which is 207,363 acres and located in Daggett County in northeastern Utah and Sweetwater County in southwestern Wyoming and includes the Flaming Gorge Reservoir and 91 reservoir water miles of the Green River.

Based on the direction provided in 36 CFR 219.13(b)(5), the Responsible Official must determine the appropriate scope and scale of forest plan amendments and which substantive provisions of 36 CFR 219.8 through 219.11 apply to the project. Based on the purpose and need and the relevant forest-specific information and data, the following substantive requirements of 36 CFR § 219.8 through 219.11 apply to the proposed amendment.

### Planning Rule Requirements

The Forest Plan would be amended under the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219). The purpose of this amendment is to adopt the updated FGNRA Management Plan to satisfy the objective in the 2024 ANF LMP to develop a management plan within two years of plan approval: "To develop a management plan for the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area within 2 years of plan approval that is separate from the forest plan and ensure it provides area-specific direction that fulfills legislative direction" (forest plan, page 73). Relevant plan direction is listed in Appendix A of this Environmental Assessment.

The 2012 Planning Rule requires the Forest Service to identify which substantive rule provisions within 36 CFR 219.8 through 219.11 that are directly related to the amendment must be applied to the amendment. The applicable substantive provisions apply only within the scope and scale of the amendment (36 CFR 219.13(b)(5)). The substantive requirements that are directly related to this amendment include the following:

36 CFR 219.8(b)(1), (5), and (6) –The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to provide for social and economic sustainability.

36 CFR 219.9 Diversity of plant and animal communities, including ecosystem plan components (219.9(a)) and additional, species-specific plan components (219.9(b)).

36 CFR 219.10(a)(1), (4), (5), (7), (8), and (10) – The plan must include plan components, including standards and guidelines, for integrated resource management to provide for ecosystem

services and multiple uses, including outdoor recreation, as well as consider the following: aesthetic values, air quality, cultural and heritage resources, ecosystem services, fish and wildlife species, forage, geologic features, grazing and rangelands, habitat and habitat connectivity, recreation settings and opportunities, riparian areas, scenery, soil, surface and subsurface water quality, timber, trails, vegetation, viewsheds, wilderness, and other relevant resources and uses.

36 CFR 219.10(b)(1)(ii), (iii), and (vi) – The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to provide for cultural and historic resources, areas of tribal importance, and management of designated areas.

36 CFR 219.11(d) – The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to provide for timber requirements based on the NFMA including limitations on timber harvest.

The amendment is modest in scope, because it implements what Congress has already legislated by the enactment in 1968 of Public Law 90-540 and what has been managed since then through the previous ANF 1986 Land and Resource Management Plan which has now been replaced with the designated area FGNRA plan direction in the 2024 ANF LMP.

## Substantive Requirements

The resource-specific analyses in the “Chapter 3 Affected Environment and Environmental Effects” and in Appendix A: Alternatives Matrix sections of this environmental assessment provide more detail and analysis on the proposed forest plan amendment and the following substantive requirements.

**36 CFR 219.8(b)(1), (5), and (6) – *Social and economic sustainability. The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to guide the plan area’s contribution to social and economic sustainability, taking into account: social, cultural and economic conditions relevant to the area influenced by the plan; cultural and historic resources and uses; and opportunities to connect people with nature. provide for social and economic sustainability.***

Socioeconomic conditions, cultural and historic resources and uses, and opportunities to connect people with nature were considered in the development of the proposed FGNRA Management Plan, as identified in alternatives B, alternative B modified, and C. In tandem with the ANF LMP, the FGNRA Management Plan would support the local and regional economy through increased jobs, wages, economic output, nonmarket values, and ecosystem services from its multiple uses, particularly recreational opportunities.

Additionally, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan would be tiered to the ANF LMP which provides additional plan components, to provide for social and economic sustainability and would meet this substantive requirement per the analysis associated with the ANF LMP.

**36 CFR 219.9 Diversity of plant and animal communities, including ecosystem plan components (219.9(a)) and additional, species-specific plan components (219.9(b)).**

Where the diversity of plant and animal communities resources contribute to public enjoyment, as part of the FGNRA’s enabling legislation, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan, tiered to the ANF LMP, meets the purpose of ecosystem diversity as related to the diversity of plant and animal communities.

The proposed FGNRA Management Plan includes plan components which improve, maintain, enhance and create resilient landscapes for big game species in collaboration with partners. Additionally, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan would be tiered to the ANF LMP, which provides additional plan components which were determined under that planning process to contribute to the diversity of plant and animal communities, including ecosystem plan components, which would also be applied in the management of the FGNRA under all alternatives.

**36 CFR 219.10(a)(1), (4), (5), (7), (8), and (10) – The plan must include plan components, including standards and guidelines, for integrated resource management to provide for ecosystem services and multiple uses in the plan area, including outdoor recreation, as well as consider/considering the following: aesthetic values, air quality, cultural and heritage resources, ecosystem services, fish and wildlife species, forage, geologic features, grazing and rangelands, habitat and habitat connectivity, recreation settings and opportunities, riparian areas, scenery, soil, surface and subsurface water quality, timber, trails, vegetation, viewsheds, wilderness, and other relevant resources and uses. The responsible official shall also consider opportunities to coordinate with neighboring landowners to link open spaces and take into account joint management objectives where feasible; habitat conditions for wildlife, fish and plants commonly enjoyed and used by the public; reasonably foreseeable risks to ecological, social and economic sustainability; system drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors; and opportunities to connect people with nature.**

Integrated resource management for multiple use was considered in the development of the proposed FGNRA Management Plan, as identified in Alternative B and B modified. Management direction contributes to public outdoor recreation benefits enjoyment, and management, utilization, and disposal of natural resources are compatible with, and do not significantly impair the purposes for which the recreation area was established. As such, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan, tiered to the ANF LMP, meets the purpose of integrated resources management.

The proposed FGNRA Management Plan includes plan components which support continued and improved access to recreational opportunities, while minimizing impacts on other resources. Additionally, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan would be tiered to the ANF LMP, which provides additional plan components which were determined under that planning process to contribute to the integrated resource management to provide for ecosystem services and multiple uses, which would also be applied in the management of the FGNRA under all alternatives.

Habitat conditions, social and economic sustainability such as the local and regional economy, and reasonably foreseeable risks to ecological, social and economic sustainability such as fire and invasive species, were considered in the development of the FGNRA Management Plan, as identified in alternatives B, alternative B modified, and C.

**36 CFR 219.10(b)(1)(ii), (iii), and (vi) – The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to provide for protection of cultural and historic resources, management of areas of tribal importance, and protection of congressionally designated wilderness areas as well as management of areas recommended for wilderness designation to protect and maintain the ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for their suitability for wilderness designation/management of designated areas.**

Cultural and historic resources, tribal importance, and other designated or recommended areas were considered in the development of the proposed FGNRA Management Plan, as identified in Alternative B.

The proposed FGNRA Management Plan includes plan components to support cultural and historic resources including a Desired Condition to provide for interpretative opportunities for the public to view and appreciate the prehistoric and historic resources of the FGNRA; a goal for the Forest Service to work collaboratively with Wyoming and Utah Historic Preservation Offices and indigenous Tribes to identify, maintain, and conserve historic/prehistoric sites within the FGNRA; and an objective to develop and construct an interpretive site for the public to learn about the indigenous and native people who lived in the area now designated as the Flaming Gorge NRA within 5 years of plan completion.

Additionally, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan would be tiered to the ANF LMP, which provides additional plan components which were determined under that planning process to provide for cultural and historic resources, areas of tribal importance, which would also be applied in the management of the FGNRA under all alternatives. No additional special designation areas or related management are relevant under the FGNRA planning area.

***36 CFR 219.11(d) – The plan must include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to provide for timber requirements based on the National Forest Management Act, including the requirement that timber harvest would be carried out in a manner consistent with the protection of soil, watershed, fish, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetic resources (§ 219.11(d)(3)).***

As discussed under alternative A, the proposed FGNRA Management Plan would follow the ANF LMP, which includes adequate management direction that does not need specific management-area direction for the FGNRA. Since the proposed FGNRA Management Plan would be tiered to the ANF LMP, plan components for timber requirements were not included in the proposed FGNRA Management Plan under the action alternatives.