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Biennial Monitoring Evaluation Report for the Uinta National Forest



Forest Service Uinta National Forest September 2026

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About our Plan Monitoring Program

Purpose

The purpose of the biennial monitoring evaluation report is to help the responsible official (Forest Supervisor) determine whether a change is needed in forest plan direction, such as plan components or other plan content that guide management of resources in the plan area. The biennial monitoring evaluation report represents one part of the Forest Service's overall monitoring program for this national forest unit. The biennial monitoring evaluation report is not a decision document—it evaluates monitoring questions and indicators presented in the Plan Monitoring Program chapter of the forest plan, in relation to management actions carried out in the plan area.

Our monitoring plan covers these eight topics required under FSH 1909.12, in addition to social, economic and cultural sustainability. You'll find each of these topics addressed in this report, with a cross-reference to the Uinta NF Monitoring Questions provided on page 7.

1. The status of select watershed conditions.
2. The status of select ecological conditions including key characteristics of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
3. The status of focal species to assess the ecological conditions required under § 219.9.
4. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions required under § 219.9 to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain a viable population of each species of conservation concern.
5. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.
6. Measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.
7. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.
8. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(C)). (36 CFR 219.12(a))

How Our Plan Monitoring Program Works

Monitoring and evaluation requirements have been established through the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) at 36 CFR 219. Additional direction is provided by the Forest Service in Chapter 30 – Monitoring – of the Land Management Handbook (FSH 1909.12). The Uinta National Forest monitoring program was updated on November 20, 2015 for consistency with the 2012 planning regulations [36 CFR 219.12 (c)(1)]. The Uinta National Forest Plan was administratively changed to include the updated monitoring program (Chapter 6: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan). For a copy of the current monitoring program go to https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/uinta-wasatch-cache/planning. Monitoring questions and indicators were selected to inform the management of resources on the plan area and not every plan component was determined necessary to track [36 CFR 219.12(a)(2)].

The monitoring evaluation implementation guide (monitoring guide) is part of the overall plan monitoring program and provides more specific direction for implementing the more strategic plan monitoring program and details monitoring methods, protocols, and roles and responsibilities. The Monitoring Guide is not part of the plan decision and is subject to change as new science and methods emerge. The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest monitoring guide is available upon request. Please contact Paul Cowley at the address on Page 2. Providing timely, accurate monitoring information to the responsible official and the public is a key requirement of the plan monitoring program. This biennial monitoring evaluation report is the vehicle for disseminating this information and identifying updates to the plan to keep it current.

Monitoring Objectives

The objectives of our plan monitoring plan include:

- Assess the current condition and trend of selected forest resources.
- Document implementation of the Plan Monitoring Program
- Evaluate relevant assumptions, changed conditions, management effectiveness, and progress towards achieving the selected desired conditions, objectives, and goals described in the Forest Plan.
- Assess the status of previous recommended options for change based on previous monitoring & evaluation reports.
- Document scheduled monitoring actions that have not been completed and the reasons and rationale why.
- Present any new information not outlined in the current plan monitoring program that is relevant to the evaluation of the selected monitoring questions.
- Present recommended change opportunities to the responsible officia

Monitoring Results Summary

Tables 1 and 2 below summarize current adaptation recommendations for line officer consideration. Table 1 shows that at this time, no monitoring items have been identified as needing change. Table 2 shows that two monitoring questions have the plan intent and recommendations as uncertain and the reason for a plan change may be under consideration in the future.

Table 1. Quantitative summary of adaptive management recommendations for all monitoring questions addressed in this report (3 total)

Recommendation	Yes, need for change	Unsure	No
Results inconsistent with Forest Plan direction	0	0	16
Change to Forest Plan warranted	0	0	16
Change to management activities warranted	0	0	16
Change to Plan monitoring program warranted	0	0	16
Focused assessment needed	0	0	16

Table 2. Summary of findings for each plan monitoring item (questions and indicators).				
Monitoring Item	**Last Year Updated**	**Consistency with Plan Intent[1]** *Do results demonstrate intended progress of the plan components associated with this monitoring item?*	**Recommendation[2]** *Based on the evaluation of monitoring results, may changes be warranted?*	**Type of Change(s) under consideration[2]** *Where may the change be needed?*
Monitoring Question #4, Are vegetation conditions stable or moving toward desired future conditions?	2021	B-Uncertain	B-Uncertain	More time needed to understand effect of woolly adelgid
Monitoring Question #12 Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting watershed conditions? Indicator #2 Air Quality - Trends of lichen biomonitoring sites.	2021	A – Uncertain	A - Uncertain	The lichen monitoring interval is 10 years. Next lichen station monitoring expected to be 2026
All Other Monitoring Questions and Indicators	2021	Yes	None	N/A

[1]Plan intent:

(A) Uncertain – Interval of data collection beyond this reporting cycle (indicate date of next time this monitoring item will be evaluated);

(B) Uncertain – More time/data are needed to understand status or progress of the Plan Component(s);

[2]Refer to pages below for more details regarding any specific recommendations for change.

Past Monitoring Recommendation and Status Summary

The 2020-2021 monitoring report listed Monitoring Question #11 Indicators #2 and #3, the need to revisit flood-scoured stream channels in Nebo Creek, Bennie Creek, Summit Creek, and Peteetneet Creek drainages in 5 to 10 years to validate expected recovery of stream side vegetation to provide shade and stability. In 2022-2023, monitoring of Nebo Creek and Peteetneet Creek drainages shows that riparian and upland areas are recovering well from the 2018 Bald Mountain/ Pole Canyon Fire and most areas have dense willows and cottonwood trees that protect the soil resource.

Monitoring from 2020-2021 identified two issues in the UNF Forest Plan. The first one was that management direction was lacking on many acquired land parcels and on Forest Service lands that were inaccurately delineated during the 2003 UNF revision. The second one was the need to allow vegetation/fuels treatments in undeveloped areas (Management Prescription 2.6) such as in pinion/juniper areas of the Forest. The first issue was resolved in 2023 through a Forest Plan update for land acquired and/or were adjusted and moved into or

out of wilderness designation. The second issue was resolved through a Forest Leadership decision that Management Prescription 2.6 areas would be dealt with on a project-by-project basis.

Other Considerations for Adaptive Management

No other considerations not related to the monitoring program have been identified.

Forest Supervisor's Certification

This report documents the results of monitoring activities that occurred through Fiscal Year 2025 on the Uinta Planning Area of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. Monitoring for some topics is long-term, and evaluation of those data will occur later in time.

I have considered the monitoring and evaluation results presented in this report. Based on the monitoring, I find no need to change the 2003 Land Management Plan, as amended, at this time and, therefore, consider it sufficient to continue to guide land and resource management of the Uinta Planning Area for the near future. I also find no need to change the plan monitoring program or to conduct an assessment to determine if there exists a preliminary need to change the plan.

I will further examine the identified changes to the plan in response to non-monitoring related issues. If changes are needed, appropriate analysis and public engagement will occur.

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_____ _____

Kelly Orr Date
Forest Supervisor
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Cross-Walk between Eight Requirements and Uinta NF Monitoring Questions

This section of the report presents a cross-walk between the eight requirements which are noted at 36 CFR 219.12(a)(5) and the Uinta Forest Plan monitoring questions

Monitoring Question #1, Education-Information:

Are we delivering key education/ enforcement messages to Forest employees and users? Addresses Requirement v. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.

Monitoring Question #2, Visitor Satisfaction:

What is visitor satisfaction on Forest Service lands? Addresses Requirement v. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives.

Monitoring Question #3, Access:

Is adequate access to and across the Forest being provided? Addresses Requirement v. The status of visitor use, visitor satisfaction, and progress toward meeting recreation objectives and Requirement vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.

Monitoring Question #4, Vegetation Conditions:

Are vegetation conditions stable or moving toward desired future conditions? Addresses Requirement vi. Measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.

Monitoring Question #5, Fuels Reduction:

Are fuels reduction projects protecting property, human health and safety, and reducing the potential for unwanted fire effects (in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and non-WUI)? Addresses Requirement vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.

Monitoring Question #6, Fire Management:

Are natural ignitions being managed to accomplish resource management objectives? Addresses Requirement vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.

Monitoring Question #7, Rangeland Management:

What is the extent of the change of ecological conditions due to invasive species? Do rangeland plant communities have desired species composition and is ground cover adequate? Addresses Requirement i. The status of select watershed conditions.

Monitoring Question #8, Focal species and Ecological Conditions:

Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting the ecological conditions indicated by the status of Focal species? Addresses Requirement iii. The status of focal species to assess the ecological conditions required under § 219.9.

Monitoring Question #9, Species Distribution:

Is there a change in species distribution across the Forest? Addresses Requirement vi. Measurable changes on the plan area related to climate change and other stressors that may be affecting the plan area.

Monitoring Question #10, Endangered Species Act Protected Species:

Are Forest management activities and/or natural events affecting ecological conditions that contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain a viable population of each species of concern? Addresses Requirement iv. The status of a select set of the ecological conditions required under § 219.9 to contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed

and candidate species, and maintain a viable population of each species of conservation concern.

Monitoring Question #11, Ecosystem Conditions:

Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting the ecological conditions of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems? Addresses Requirement ii. The status of select ecological conditions including key characteristics of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Monitoring Question #12, Watershed Conditions:

Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting watershed conditions? Addresses Requirement i. The status of select watershed conditions.

Monitoring Question #13, NFMA compliance:

Are we complying with appropriate NFMA requirements? Addresses Requirement vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities and Requirement viii. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(C)).

Monitoring Question #14, Timber and Soil Productivity:

Are timber management activities impairing soil productivity of the land? Addresses Requirement viii. The effects of each management system to determine that they do not substantially and permanently impair the productivity of the land (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(C)).

Monitoring Question #15, Goods and Services:

Are goods and services being provided in accordance with Forest Plan goals and objectives? Addresses Requirement vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.

Monitoring Question #16, National Historic Preservation Act as amended:

Are cultural resources being protected as the Forest Plan is implemented and are mitigation measures sufficient prevent damage to cultural resources from project activities? Are *Historic Properties* receiving adverse effects from project implementation, vandalism, looting, and/or neglect? Addresses Requirement vii. Progress toward meeting the desired conditions and objectives in the plan, including for providing multiple use opportunities.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE FOREST PLAN

No changes to the Uinta Forest Plan.

Summary of Vegetative Changes

One of the largest areas of vegetative changes on the Uinta Planning Area (UNF) are from timber harvest and fuels treatments. In 2024-2025, natural events have caused change in ecosystem conditions due to the Yellow Lake fire (33,174 acres). Monitoring in 2022 shows that there are very dense extensive willow and cottonwood stands in Nebo Creek riparian area and recovery of the riparian area from the 2018 Bald Mountain/ Pole Creek Fire is in a positive trend. In 2023, a deep record snowpack fell on northern Utah and the spring runoff occurred at a good rate and there were very few problems for the streams on the UNF. In 2024-2025, many vegetation treatment activities have been accomplished on the UNF. These treatments are primarily the result of management actions taken to move toward desired future conditions. These activities include are calculated in combination with the Wasatch-Cache and Uinta for a total of 37,953 acres of fuel treatments (broadcast burning, burning of piled materials, rearrangement of fuels, compaction/ crushing of fuels, thinning), and 915 acres of commercial timber sales (commercial thinning, overstory removal, clearcut, seed tree cut). This accounts for a total 55,051 acres that were treated on the UNF and WCNF.

INFORMATION ON MONITORING QUESTIONS AND INDICATORS

Monitoring Question #1 Education-Information: Are we delivering key education/ enforcement messages to Forest employees and users? (Key Focus Areas are OHV use, recreation user ethics, fire's role/hazardous fuels, noxious weeds, watershed health).

Finding: *No changes are needed. The UNF delivers key education/enforcement messages to the Forest employees and users.*

Indicator #1 - Number of key messages.
Data source: Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF Public Affairs Officer, information gathered during the National Visitor Use Monitoring surveys, responses from Forest visitors during field personnel interactions regarding effectiveness of messaging on kiosks, and Forest website and social media.
Monitoring result: Forest-wide messaging campaigns, Recreate Responsibly and Know Before You Go continued to be implemented in 2024-2025. Key messages were delivered through the Forest website and social media, employee interactions with visitors, partners amplifying through their social media, inclusion of messages on kiosks throughout Forest recreation sites, publications including visitor guides, media interviews, and State and local tourism centers. The primary audience for the messaging campaigns is the 9 million visitors the Forest receives annually.

Monitoring Question #2 What is visitor satisfaction on Forest Service lands?

Finding: *No changes are needed.*

Indicator #1 - Level of visitor satisfaction.
Data source: The UNF is currently collecting NVUM data every five years. Last data collected in 2022.
Monitoring result: A search of the NVUM database confirmed no new data has been collected since 2022. 2022 NVUM data indicate the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache had 9,378 estimated visits reported. Of those visits, 79.2 % were very satisfied. 16.3 % were somewhat satisfied, 2.6% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 1.9% were either somewhat or very dissatisfied. See Figure 1 below.

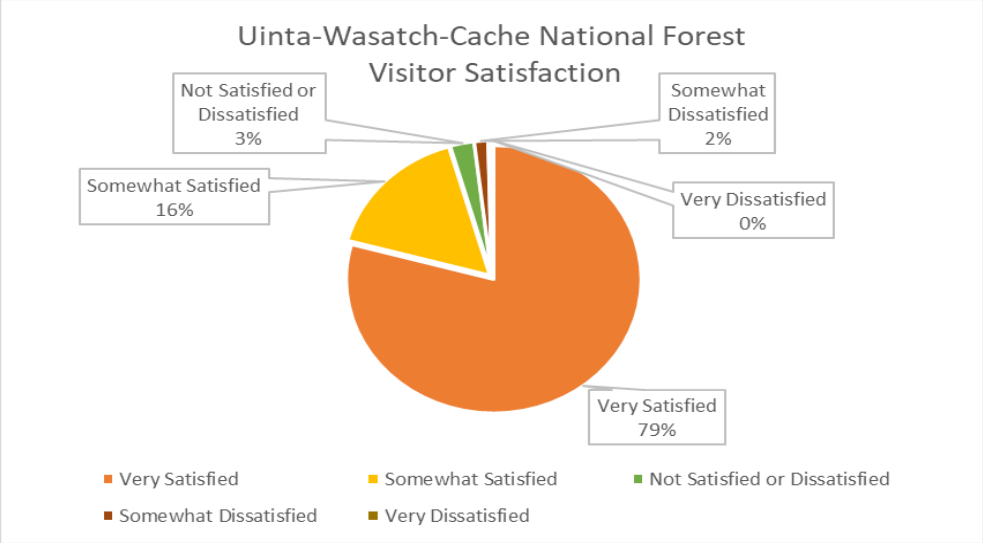


Figure 1: Visitor Satisfaction on Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

<u>Monitoring Question #3</u> Is adequate access to and across the Forest being provided?

Finding: *No changes are needed. Access is adequate.*

Indicator #1 - Miles of classified road open for public use, miles of motorized trail, miles of non-motorized trail.
Data source: Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF Motor Vehicle Use Map.
Monitoring result: At the end of FY 2025, there was a small decrease in miles of classified roads open for public use this was due to improved mapping and mapping corrections. There were no changes to motorized trails, snowmobile trails, and non-motorized trails. There was a 14 mile (52%) increase in identified ski/ snowshoe trails but this increase is due to reclassification of existing non-motorized trails to also have skiing and snowshoeing. New ski and/or snowshoe trails were developed.

Table 3. Forest Access for selected features in miles.

Year	*Classified roads open for public use[1]*	*Motorized trails*	*Snowmobile trails*	*Non-motorized trails*	*Ski/ snowshoe trails*
2019	*886*	*No data[2]*	*No data[2]*	*No data[2]*	*No data[2]*
2021	*888*	*313*	*295*	*299*	*29*
2023	*892*	*314*	*295*	*302*	*29*
2025	*889[3]*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*43[4]*
Change from 2023 to 2025	*-3*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*+14*

[1] These are Forest Service public roads only and does not include State highways, administrative roads, or private roads.
[2] Data for the miles of motorized trails and non-motorized trails is not available in 2019 because of data review and re-digitizing in GIS.
[3] Change due to improved mapping and mapping corrections
[4] Change due to existing trails being re-classified to also have skiing/snowshoeing but additional ski and snowshoes trails outside of existing non-motorized were not developed.

<u>Monitoring Question #4</u> Are vegetation conditions stable or moving toward desired future conditions?

Finding: *No changes are needed.*

Indicator #1 Forested Vegetation –Extent of insect/disease infestations.
Data source: Ryan Davis of Forest Health Protection Annual Aerial Detection Survey, FACTS Database, and recorded accomplishments.

Monitoring result:
In 2024, the forest collected seed on 35 acres of Engelmann Spruce to increase inventory of seed on hand for reforestation if necessary. Also, in the spring 2025, in cooperation with Brighton Ski Resort, 40 acres of Engelmann Spruce, infested with spruce beetle were felled, debarked, and burned to prevent spruce beetle build-up. All other treatments were primarily to mitigate hazardous fuel build-up and improve wildlife habitat.

Information on Forest Health is consolidated by forest administrative unit and are not separated by Uinta or Wasatch-Cache Planning Areas. Below are two tables that include hazard ratings (i.e., potential susceptibility and/or mortality should an insect outbreak occur) for the UWC based on insect hazard models calculated using VCMQ data. The hazard ratings are broken into three categories: hazard more likely, hazard less likely,

and no host (no hazard) and are broad estimates of moderate-to-high hazard for specific host types across the UWC. These numbers are intended to get a broad understanding of potential hazard but are not concrete estimates due to the limitations of the underlying geospatial data resolution, rating methodologies employed, and data age. The data are intended for broadscale, mid-level planning, not site-specific planning.

The data below were generated in 2019 and are almost 7 years old, so some of the areas/acres for the various insects may already be dead due to insect activity. In particular, spruce beetle activity on the Mountain View killing Engelman spruce, mountain pine beetle activity on the Mountain View killing lodgepole pine and limber pine across the Forest, and fir engraver beetle across the white fir distribution within the UWC has killed many trees which would no longer be considered susceptible. The data in the tool used to produce the output in Table 1 has not been updated and are the same as they were in 2024.

Table 4. Hazard ratings of more likely, less likely, and non-host acres for key insect damage agents on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Utah, 2019.

Agent	***Hazard***		
	More Likely	***Less Likely***	***No Host***
Douglas-fir Beetle	*27,534*	*184,637*	*2,335,565*
Spruce Beetle	*3,462*	*238,757*	*2,305,516*
Mountain Beetle	*5,946*	*271,119*	*2,270,671*
Fir Engraver	*12,032*	*11,110*	*2,524,594*
Pine Engraver	*110*	*75,736*	*2,471,890*
Western Spruce Budworm	*635,450*	*0*	*1,912,286*
Balsam Woolly Adelgid	*648,026*	*1,805,414*	*94,296*

To illustrate the recent extent of tree mortality or defoliation caused by the key damage agents, aerial detection survey (ADS) data from 2024 and 2025 are presented below (Table 5; Figure 2). Damage acres represent the density of tree mortality or defoliation. Most damage agents are associated with a specific host tree while some have a broader host range.

As trees become larger, older, and denser unmanaged stands will become more susceptible to the primary mortality-causing bark beetles including spruce beetle, mountain pine beetle, Douglas-fir beetle, and fir engraver in their respective host types. Environmental conditions such as dry, hot weather can interact with conducive stand conditions fueling bark beetle outbreaks at varying scales. Of additional concern are high-elevation limber pine forests. While ADS-mapped damage acres in this forest type don't typically reach alarming levels, these forests are valuable to high-elevation systems and contain limited numbers of trees. Small-scale mortality in limber pine can have large impacts over time.

Most damage caused by balsam woolly adelgid (BWA) on the UWC is occurring on the Logan, Ogden, Salt Lake, and Heber-Kamas Ranger Districts. Through time, this invasive insect will become a more prevalent mortality agent on subalpine fir across the Forest. Western spruce budworm (WSB) occurs across the UWC but is most prevalent on the Logan Ranger District. This defoliating insect is typically cyclic but can fester in some locations for a decade or more. Mortality most frequently occurs to understory host trees. Overstory trees may die from prolonged, repeated defoliation, but stress from continued defoliation may lead to subsequent mortality from

bark beetles or other damage agents. Subalpine fir can also succumb to a variety of other insect and disease agents acting alone or in conjunction with each other (i.e., subalpine fir decline).

Table 5. 2024-2025 ADS Summary for Key Pests - Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Utah.			
Survey Year		***2024***	***2025***
Total Acres Surveyed		***2,850,063***	***2,563,032***
% of Forest Surveyed		***98%***	***88%***
Agent	***Tree Species Affected***	***Damage Area (ac)***	
Balsam Woolly Adelgid	*Subalpine fir*	*2,500*	*1,400*
Fir Engraver	*White fir*	*1,200*	*630*
Subalpine Fir Decline	*Subalpine fir*	*710*	*950*
Western Spruce Budworm	*Subalpine fir, white fir, Douglas-fir, spruce*	*750*	*240*
Douglas-fir Beetle	*Douglas-fir*	*550*	*370*
Spruce Beetle	*Engelmann spruce*	*20*	*60*
Mountain Pine Beetle	*Lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, limber pine*	*80*	*50*
Sums*		***5,810***	***3,700***

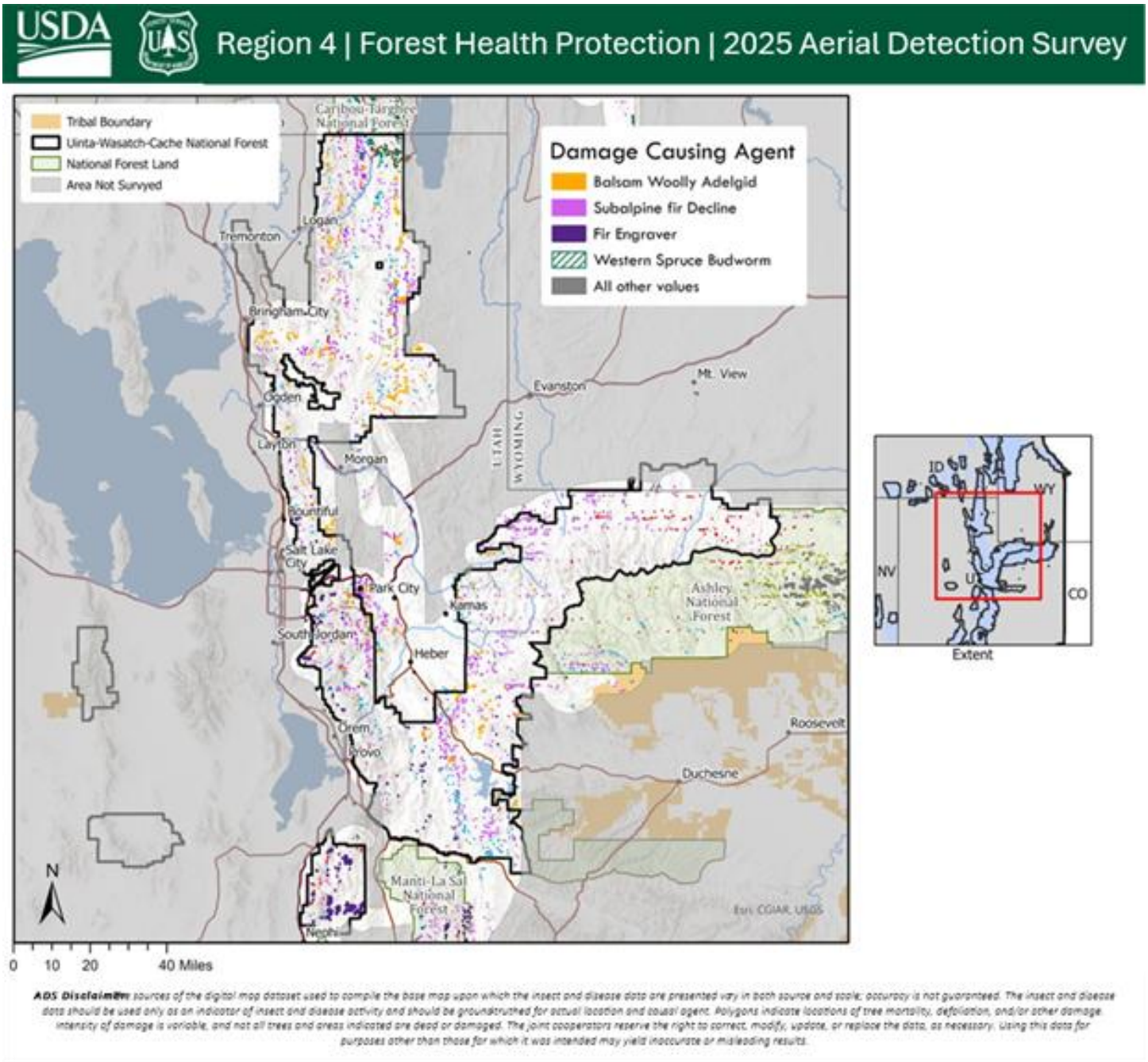


*Figure 2: Aerial Detection Survey map of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest for key damage agents. *Excluded from the legend is mountain pine beetle but is indicated in red on the map*

<u>Monitoring Question #5</u> Fuels Reduction: Are fuels reduction projects protecting property, human health and safety, and reducing the potential for unwanted fire effects (in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and non-WUI)?

Finding: *No changes are needed.*

The Wasatch-Cache National Forest was selected as a Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS) landscape in 2022. While all fuels projects are designed to alter fire behavior to meet one or more objectives, including protecting

property, human health and safety, being selected as a priority landscape has given renewed emphasis to fuel reduction projects on the forest. In 2024 and 2025, the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache implemented 37,953 acres of fuels reduction (Table 6).

Fuel treatments in general combined with past fire footprints, have been successful at altering fire behavior in a way that reduced unwanted fire effects, increased firefighter safety, and allowed for more fire management options (which makes it easier to protect property and life). When a wildfire burns through a fuel treatment, we assess if the treatment was effective. In the last two years on the Wasatch-Cache, three fires have started in or burned into fuels treatments. Fuels treatments have been consistently effective at altering fire behavior, increasing safety for firefighters, increasing suppression opportunities, and contributing to the control and management of a fire. Exceptions to this include times when there are extreme fire weather conditions, enough time has passed that vegetation has regrown, exceeding the "lifespan" of the treatment, or conditions are such that the fire would have remained small regardless of the fuel treatment. We have made a commitment to continually treat past fuels projects to maintain the "lifespan" of treatment effectiveness.

Since being selected a WCS priority landscape, The UWC has been able to get much more accomplished with additional funding and support. Towards the end of 2024 most of the WCS (BIL IRA) funding was exhausted. This is reflected in the large drop of acres accomplished in 2025. If WCS funding was made available, I have no doubt we could continue to exceed target. Along with the WCNF being identified as a priority landscape we simultaneously undertook the effort to finalize maps of Potential Operation Delineations (PODs). This was an all-lands approach, working with state and local governments, to identified potential fire breaks across the landscape. While PODs and the WCS are separate efforts, each supports the other. The increase in acres treated under WCS is re-enforcing POD boundaries, while PODs are helping direct priorities for WCS funded projects. WCS will continue through 2024, and while there is a lot of work still to be done, the impacts are already quantifiable. These two initiatives have the potential to reduce fire effects as well as increase management options during a wildfire.

Indicator #1 Acres of hazardous fuels reduction in WUI and non-WUI.
Data source: Forest Service Activity Tracking System database
Monitoring result: The table below shows that between 2024 and 2025, more treatment was conducted in WUI areas than in non-WUI areas. These numbers are for both Wasatch Cache and Uinta Forest Plans.

Table 6. Total number of acres of fuels treatments implemented on both the Wasatch-Cache and Uinta Planning Area from 2024-2025.

	2024	2025	Total
WUI	19,455	6,197	26,652
Non-WUI	6,412	5,889	12,301
Total Acres	25,867	12,086	37,953

Indicator #2 Fire behavior and opportunities for suppression. Measure when a wildfire enters a fuels treatment that is less than 10 years old. Report every 2 years.

Data source: Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring database
Monitoring result*:* As shown in Table 7 below, in 2024 and 2025, one fire resulted in fire behavior changing due to vegetation treatments and on three fires, vegetation treatments contributed to the control and/or management of fire.

Table 7. *Fires on the Wasatch-Cache that started in or burned into fuels treatments from 2024-2025.*						
Fire	***Fire Year***	***Treatment***	***Treatment Date***	***Treatment Acres Burned***	***Did fire behavior change as a result of treatment?***	***Did treatment contribute to the control and/or management of fire?***
Rick Springs	2025	N. Zone Aspen Lop Scatter	*7/30/2024*	*26*	*yes*	*yes*

<u>Monitoring Question #6</u> Fire Management: Are natural ignitions being managed to accomplish resource management objectives?

Finding: *No changes are needed.*

Conditions must be favorable to manage fires for resource objectives, many of which are outside of our control (such as weather, available resources, and fire location). Therefore, the percentage of natural ignitions that can be managed for resource objectives can vary significantly from year to year. The goal, however, is to see a long-term trend of natural ignition fires managed to meet resource objectives. However, this year in the Forest Service Chiefs' letter of intent he stated, "Every unplanned ignition on National Forest System lands is managed under a full suppression strategy". We will not actively look to achieve resource benefit through wildfire although we may see benefits of natural ignitions on certain wildfires where conditions allow.

In the last two years, there have been natural ignitions that have accomplished resource management objectives. As we continue to increase fuel reduction efforts on the forest, we increase wildfire management options. As we reduce fuel loading in future wildfire footprints, fire managers have more latitude in their decisions.

In addition to managing wildfires for resource benefit, we hope to see a trend of increasing percentages of acres with resource benefits from natural ignitions. As we continue to reduce the potential for unwanted fire effects, we are hopefully increasing the potential size of these fires, meaning they are allowed to burn naturally as severity and intensity maybe checked through vegetation management efforts.

Indicator #1 Percent of natural ignitions with identified resource management objective.
Data source: Wildland Fire Decision Support System database
Monitoring results: In 2024-2025, 0% of natural ignitions were managed with a resource management objective.

Indicator #2 Percent of natural ignition acres with resource benefit.
Data source: Forest Service Activity Tracking System database, UWC fire perimeter GIS data
Monitoring results: In 2024-2025, 0% of natural ignitions contributed to resource benefit as an objective on the Wasatch-Cache NF.

<u>Monitoring Question #7</u> Rangeland Management: What is the extent of the change of ecological conditions due to invasive species? Do rangeland plant communities have desired species composition and is ground cover adequate?

Finding: No changes needed. The Forest has been making efforts to control noxious weeds in the planning

area but existing populations are spreading, and new populations are constantly discovered. Some areas of the Uinta National Forest are more susceptible to infestation, these include high visitor use areas, roadsides, timber sales, fire scars and sections in the wildland urban interface. These areas have seen increasing cover of noxious weeds over time. There are currently noxious species present on the Uinta NF that can invade nearly all upland and riparian habitats, apart from the highest elevation alpine and subalpine zones.

Non-native plants that are considered invasive but not on the noxious weed list, such as non-native annual grasses, are also increasing in cover across the Forest. This can have a long-term impact on ecological condition and desired species composition, primarily in dry meadows and shrublands. Climate change, wildfire, and soil disturbance seem to be the primary drivers of spread, though vectors include vehicles, animals, wind, water, and fire. Increased survey, mapping and monitoring of invasive annual grasses are likely warranted to ensure that desired conditions continue to be met, and ecological conditions remain steady or trend in a positive direction.

Conditions in range allotments and for livestock are considered satisfactory, as ground cover and forage availability are within the prescribed range. Satisfactory condition is defined as meeting desired conditions or trending towards desired condition. Desired condition is defined as the 2003 Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and having the desired plant communities.

Data sources: Field data and mapping available in the Invasive Species database as reported in Natural Resource Manager FACTS, visual observations, photo points and measurements collected by botany, ecology and range management staff, long-term range monitoring site data, online tools such as the Rangeland Analysis Platform, EDDMapS, and Inhabit (USGS).

Indicator #1 Estimated acres infested with noxious weeds.

Inventories of noxious and invasive species are in progress but incomplete, as populations continue to change over time and treatment of infestations continues to be prioritized over mapping exercises. Table 8 gives treatment acres by Ranger District for districts that fall within the Uinta portion of the administrative unit. More acres were treated each year than what are shown below, treatments that were conducted by cooperators and other partners are often reported to the USFS without enough information to be properly entered into the database. Of the 55 species of noxious weeds listed by the State of Utah, it is estimated that approximately 30 have been discovered on the Uinta and are currently targeted for treatment.

Table 8. Weed treatment acres on the Uinta NF by Ranger District in 2021-2025 as reported by the USFS NRM FACTS database.

Ranger District	***Weed Treatment Acres[1]***				
	2021	***2022***	***2023***	***2024***	***2025***
Pleasant Grove	*448*	*0*	*0*	*0.5*	*0*
Heber/Kamas[2]	*Not Rpt[3]*	*960*	*807*	*72*	*77.5*
Spanish Fork	*434*	*412*	*711*	*442.7*	*465.5*
Totals	*882*	*1,372*	*1,518*	*515.2*	*542.9*

[1] From USFS FACTS database.
[2] The value includes Heber and Kamas Ranger Districts because they are reported as one District in FACTS.
[3] Not Rpt - Data not reported because of personnel change.

Rangeland monitoring results for indicator #1:
On the Wolf Creek and Strawberry Valley corridor of the Uinta NF, current noxious weeds infestations are being controlled, and new noxious weed infestations are found almost on an annual basis. Strawberry corridor is a high use recreation area and noxious weeds are increasing in the area. These new noxious weed infestations are aggressively treated to keep infestations controlled and small. Musk Thistle, Canadian Thistle, and Whitetop are the three top invasive weeds found on the Uinta NF.

However, long-term monitoring studies indicative vegetative and ground cover conditions are in overall satisfactory condition and noxious weed infestations account for approximately 10% of the district. Satisfactory condition is defined as meeting desired conditions or trending towards desired condition. Desired condition is defined as the 2003 Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and having the desired plant communities.

Indicator #2 Riparian and upland condition and trend.
Online ecological analysis tools can be used to examine forest-wide ecological trends that inform assumptions on riparian and upland conditions. The distribution and spread of non-native annual grasses such as cheatgrass, cereal rye, jointed goatgrass, and medusahead is one such indicator that can be examined, as these ecological invaders can permanently alter and degrade upland habitats. Other metrics that can be studied include native vegetation distribution and cover. The Rangeland Analysis Platform analysis of 10m satellite imagery was used to generate vegetation cover information, including estimated levels of non-native annual grass invasion for 2018-2025 on the entire Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows a relatively stable trend in perennial forb and grass, shrub, sagebrush, tree and invasive annual grass cover forest-wide over the last 8 years, with slight variability by year. Despite steady trends in vegetation cover given by the satellite imagery analysis, anecdotal observations and perceptions are that non-native annual grasses are increasing in cover in recent years, most notably after fire. In response, the Forest Service initiated a more robust non-native annual grass mapping program with Weber State University in 2025, the results from which will be forthcoming in future monitoring reports.

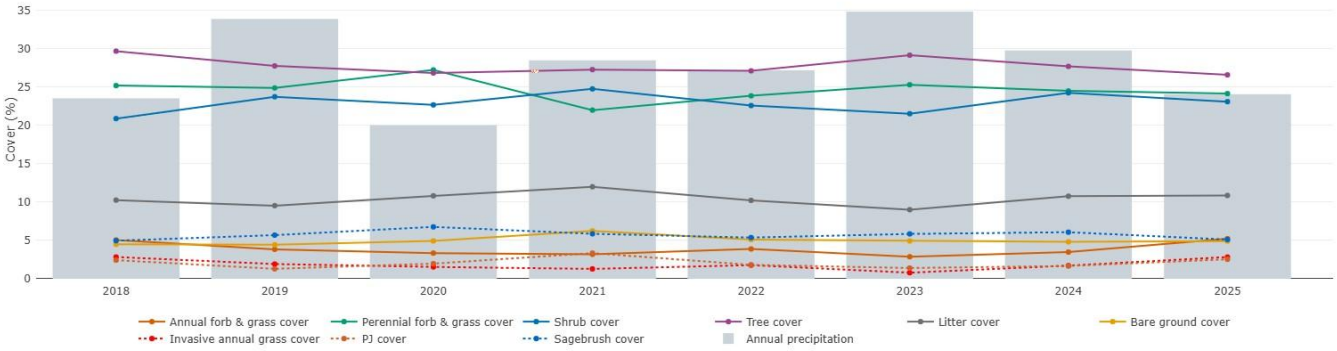


Figure 3 Vegetation cover percentage by type generated by analyzing 10-meter satellite imagery from 2018 to 2025 using the Range Analysis Platform. Vegetation cover estimates are grouped into annual and perennial native herbaceous vegetation, non-native annual grasses, Pinyon-Juniper (PJ), shrub, sagebrush, tree, litter and bare ground. Annual precipitation is also shown as gray bars. Overall vegetation trend appears stable in all categories with slight variability by year

Rangeland monitoring results for indicator #2:

On the Wolf Creek and Strawberry Valley corridor of the Uinta NF approximately 406 long-term monitoring studies were established or re-read on the cattle and sheep allotments between 2024 and 2025. Some of the allotments on the Heber-Kamas District located on the Uinta NF which include Mill Hollow, Lake Creek, Mud Creek, Heber Mountain, Bryants Fork, Neeley Basin, Wolf Creek and others. The vegetative communities associated with the allotments are overall in satisfactory condition. Satisfactory condition is defined as meeting desired conditions or trending towards desired condition. Desired condition is defined as the 2003 Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and having the desired plant communities. Trend and condition were and are determined from those studies that have been revisited at least once following establishment. Condition without trend is indicated from some studies with a single visit. Several monitoring methods are or have been used to gather data for condition and trend analysis. These include but are not limited to repeat photography, photo plot, line intercept, line point intercept, vegetation ocular macroplot, nested frequency, and greenline. Older study types that provide background information but are not currently used include site analysis and Parker 3-Step. These methods are used to determine ground cover, plant community composition, forage utilization, riparian and stream bank conditions, water quality, compliance with grazing management practices or other grazing permit and/or annual operating instructions, and any other pertinent desired condition parameters.

Monitoring results: The vegetative communities associated with the allotments that are monitored on the Uinta NF are overall in satisfactory condition.

<u>Monitoring Question #8</u> Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting the ecological conditions indicated by the status of Focal species?

Findings: *No changes are needed. For conditions indicated by goshawk, the overall trend appears to be stable with variability from one year to the next. Because of population variability, additional surveys are needed at sites with low populations of cutthroat trout before drawing conclusions as to the cause of changes.*

Indicator #1 Active Goshawk territories.

Data source: 2024-2025 Goshawk survey results of monitoring a subset of the known goshawk nesting territories and comparison to goshawk inventories from 1999 to present. Surveys of territories are based on protocols for the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (UWCNF) that have been adapted from the Northern Goshawk Inventory and Monitoring Technical Guide (Woodbridge & Hargis, Northern goshawk inventory and monitoring technical guide, 2006). Methods were updated in 2025 to incorporate a random sample of known territories, rather than repeated visits to known occupied territories. The updated sampling methodology provides a representative sample across the forest, and is scalable with staffing availability. There were significant impacts to field operations due to DOGE staff cuts and other administrative changes in the federal government.

Monitoring results: For 2024, of 13 goshawk territories on the UNF 6 were monitored. Of the monitored territories 2 were occupied (33%). For 2025, of 30 identified goshawk territories on the UNF 11 were monitored. Of the monitored territories 2 were occupied (18%). Percent occupancy of monitored territories at 18 % is relatively low relative to the range observed on the forest and is lower than rates seen in the previous two year monitoring period. However numbers are not directly comparable due to

a number of methodology changes over the life of the Forest Plan. The increase in number of documented territories represents inclusion of territories previously eliminated from the sample pool in the last 20 where conditions may have changed to improve habitat quality and warrant reevaluation and areas with suitable habitat delineated by forest biologists. Monitoring in 2025 included some territories of lower quality than were monitored under previous site selection methodology, so may offer a more representative occupancy rate forest wide.

Number of active nests is at the low end of previously document variation, however monitoring focused on evaluating occupancy rates of territories, rather than returning to known occupied nests. Nest success (occupied nests with at least one chick fledging) was 50% in 2024 based on 4 active nests, and 100% in 2025 based on a single occupied nest.

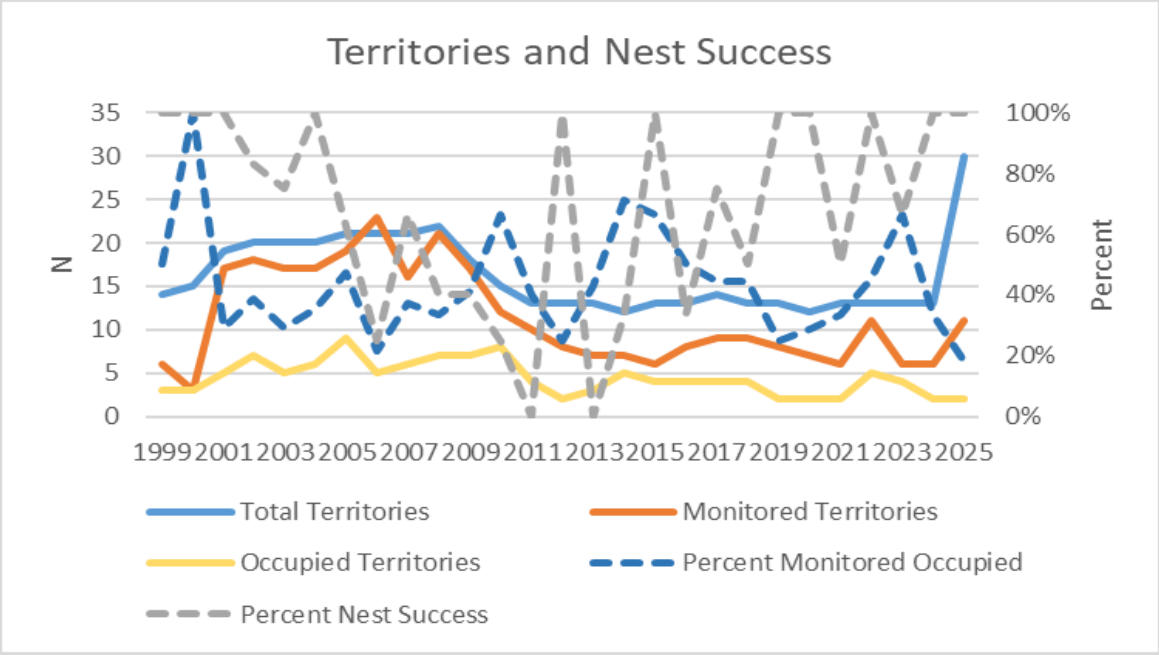


Figure 4: Territories and Nest Success: Documented territories, monitored territories, occupied territories, percent of monitored territories occupied and percent nest success on the Wasatch-Cache Planning Area between 1999 and 2025

Management activities over the past 20 years are not clearly linked to population level impacts to goshawk reproductive activities and success rates. Management activities implemented on the Forest are within plan requirements, generally resulting in project design with minimal negative effects to goshawk populations. Changes in environmental conditions, forest changes due to beetle kill and lack regeneration and younger age class forests likely are a larger driver of goshawk populations than current active management activities.

The Intermountain Bird Observatory (IBO) has found that goshawks metrics have been decreasing region-wide for several years (see Annual Variation of Northern Goshawk Breeding and Productivity in the Intermountain West, 2020 Update, Miller et al.). After a discussion with a few FS Intermountain Region biologists, the IBO requested 2017- 2020 goshawk data from FS Intermountain Region forests to determine if broader patterns are apparent, inform management actions, and help drive new science priorities for goshawks. The IBO concluded that the region is inconsistent in their monitoring approaches, protocol, and level of monitoring;

therefore, limits the ability for region-wide quantitative comparisons. The IBO used a qualitative comparison approach and reported that no forest in the region had increasing population levels, and more than half of the forests are reporting declines in goshawk breeding. The managers for many forests in the region are concerned about a decreased aspen viability, and the IBO suggested a comprehensive look into the goshawk-aspen system. In the case of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF, the decline is believed to be the result of forest structural changes related to pine beetles. IBO also suggested a region wide program to collect high quality genetic samples to evaluate inbreeding depression and broad time-scale integration of birds across the region since there are no evidence for whether new breeding goshawks are recruited from within or outside of the region (Miller et al. 2020).

Indicator #2 Cutthroat Trout population estimates.

Data source: Prior to 2014, the monitoring protocol required 33% of Colorado (CRCT) and Bonneville (BCT) cutthroat trout sample streams be surveyed annually; however, in 2015, the monitoring protocol was modified to change the Aquatics Management Indicator Species (MIS) sampling frequency to every 5 years. This better aligns the Forest sampling on the Uinta portion of the Forest with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, minimizing duplication of effort, allowing for coordination, and reducing handling impacts. In 2016 MIS designation was changed to Focal Species (FS), yet species composition within the designations did not change for Fisheries. To minimize travel costs and maximize sampling efficiency, FS sites sampled each year will be grouped by drainage or proximity to other sites.

During 2024 and 2025, the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest conducted fish surveys on throughout the Uinta portion of the Forest. These surveys repeated surveys conducted in previous years to monitor Bonneville cutthroat trout (BCT), Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRCT), and Forest management activities. The data collected during earlier surveys was compared with data collected in 2024 and 2025. In 2025, we were unable to survey some streams due to low flows and high-water temperatures. These streams will be sampled in 2026.

Monitoring results: Throughout these drainages, habitat conditions remain good, and in most instances have improved. Strong populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout remain in the Duchesne River drainage except for the North Fork Duchesne.

Table 9. Survey data for fish species monitored in 2024-2025

Subwatershed and 6th Field HUC Number	Stream	Survey Site	Fish Species	Year Sampled	Salmonids per mile	Biomass (lb/acre)	Ave. Condition Index	Comments	Reach Trend
Duchesne River									
West Fork Duchesne River 140600030103	Vat Creek	504	CRCT	2008	318	18	1.12		Stable
				2013	347	33	1.09		
				2024	145	5	1.05	Numerous Age 1+ fish	
	West Fork Duchesne	505	CRCT	2009	462	42	1.14		Up
				2013	1116	97	1.05		

				2024	1718	132	1.16		
Headwaters West Fork Duchesne Creek 140600030101	Little West Fork Duchesne	502	CRCT	2009	212	27	1.14		Up
				2013	315	62	1.10		
				2024	521	20	0.93		
East Fork Duchesne River – Duchesne River 140600030104	North Fork Duchesne	315	EBT	2008	1576	214	0.96		Up
				2001	782	51	1.05		
				2024	2263	50	0.97		
			RBT	2008	263	66	0.74		Down
				2001	211	35	0.76		
				2024	16	2	0.68		
			Tiger Trout	2008	0	0	N/A		Up
				2001	0	0	N/A		
				2024	48	7	0.70	Dependent on stocking	
Provo River									
Bench Creek – Provo River 160202030202	Bench Creek	519	BCT	2009	426	20	0.97		Stable
				2014	453	34	0.97		
				2024	405	15	1.03		
	Little South Fork Provo River	091	BCT	1996	394	28	1.10		Up
				2024	1118	32	1.08		

Diamond Fork River									
Lower Diamond Fork 160202020307	Little Diamond Creek	491	BCT	2005	177	23	1.01		Up
				2009	474	46	1.03		
				2012	722	44	1.12		
				2020	488	54	1.11		
				2025	1367	115	0.89		
Upper Diamond	Shingle Mill Fork	497	BCT	2007	286	9	1.01		Down

Fork 160202020304				2010	495	nd	nd		
				2012	1714	65	0.98		
				2025	209	16	0.92		

na = not applicable
nd = no data.

<u>Monitoring Question #9</u> Is there a change in species distribution across the Forest?

Finding: *No changes are needed.*

Indicator #1 Change from cold water to warm water species, change in terrestrial vegetation and species distribution.
Data source: Field observations and monitoring of aquatic habitat and fish population surveys
Monitoring results:
There is no indication of a change from cold to warm water species. There have been increases in riparian terrestrial vegetation due to willow growth in many areas in Nebo Creek and increased beaver activity. In Holman Creek, there was large sediment debris that has reduced the movement of fish and the numbers of Bonneville Cutthroat trout following the 2018 Bald Mtn/Pole Creek fire. There is no indication of a change in terrestrial species distribution.

<u>Monitoring Question #10</u> Are Forest management activities and/or natural events affecting ecological conditions that contribute to the recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species, and maintain a viable population of each species of concern?

Finding: *No changes are needed. For conditions indicated by northern goshawk, a Regional Forester's Sensitive species not a listed species, the ecological and population trends appear to be stable.*

Indicator #1 Mature Forest conditions and population estimates (e.g, Northern goshawk). *See Monitoring Question # 8, Indicator #1.*

Indicator #2 Aquatic and riparian condition: In-stream channel conditions and population estimates (e.g, Bonneville cutthroat trout and Colorado River cutthroat trout). Viable populations of both Bonneville cutthroat trout and Colorado River Cutthroat trout continue to exist on the Forest. *For fish abundance and condition surveys see Monitoring Question # 8, Indicator #2.*

Indicator #3 Habitat that contains other federally listed threatened and endangered species, conserve proposed and candidate species – Documentation of alterations in habitat due to management actions and natural events.
Data source: Forest Service information in FACTS database on timber treatments, prescribed fire, wildfire, Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) reports, and aquatic habitat improvement projects.

Monitoring results: Management actions may have modified some habitat for these species, but these modifications are unlikely to have substantial effects to these species populations. Regarding Northern Goshawk, management actions may have modified some habitat for these species, these modifications are likely to restore a more diverse age structure and may serve to maintain goshawk populations long term. Fire (Yellow Lake, other smaller fires and RxB) have impacted individual territories, but likely improved habitat at a forest scale and provided more diverse and resilient forest structure.

<u>Monitoring Question #11</u> Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting the ecological conditions of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems?

Finding: *No changes are needed. Aquatic ecosystems were found to be in stable conditions. In 2024-2025, there, Yellow Lake, Buckley Draw, and Cherry Fires occurred that required a Burned Area Emergency Response assessment. Overall, little change has occurred to riparian areas of the Uinta Planning Area and most management activities have avoided impacts to these areas. Work to restore riparian ecosystems post-fire is in progress. On the UNF, timber lands are generally fully stocked or will regenerate naturally. In areas affected by fire that would not regenerate naturally, these would be restored.*

Data source for all indicators: See Monitoring Question # 4, Indicator #1, Monitoring Question #5, Indicators #2, Monitoring Question # 6, Indicators #1 and #2, Monitoring Question # 7, Indicators #1and #2, Monitoring Question # 8, Indicators #1 and #2. Water quality data used for this assessment are 303(d) listed water bodies from Utah Division of Water Quality 2024 Integrated Report.

Indicator #1 Aquatic habitat conditions.

Monitoring results: For fish abundance and condition surveys see Monitoring Question # 8, Indicator #2. In summary, fish populations based on multiple observation points in roughly a 20-year period show that most of the streams have a stable or upward despite drought conditions in 2025. Water quality may indicate natural and/ or man-caused conditions that affect aquatic habitat. The Utah 2024 Integrated Report identifies all streams and lakes that are listed as not supporting its water quality beneficial use. Several streams on the Uinta NF are classified as not supporting its water quality beneficial use, as shown in the table below. All these listings are rated as low priority in the State's assessment. In the 2024 303(d) list, no analysis units on the Uinta NF had parameters delisted from the previous assessment.

Table 10. 303(d) listed water bodies from Utah Division of Water Quality 2024 303(d) list.

Analysis Unit ID	Analysis Unit Description	Parameter
UT14060003-017_00	Duchesne River-4	Temperature (3A)
UT14060004-007_00	Red Creek Middle	Macroinvertebrates (3A)
UT14060004-013_00	Strawberry-4	pH (1C, 2B, 3A, 4), Dissolved Oxygen (3A)
UT14060004-015_00	Currant Creek Upper	Dissolved Oxygen (3A)
UT14060007-001_00	White River-Colton	Eutrophication (3A)
UT16020201-002_02	Mary Ellen Gulch	Cadmium (3A), Copper (3A), Zinc (3A)
UT16020201-005_00	Salt Creek-2	pH (2B, 3A, 4)
UT16020201-014_00	Currant Creek-Juab Valley	Temperature (3A)
UT16020201-015_00	Dry Creek-Alpine	pH (2B, 3A, 4)
UT16020202-005_00	Hobble Creek-3	E. coli (2B)
UT16020202-008_00	Diamond Fork-3	E. coli (2B)
UT16020202-009_00	Sixth Water Creek	pH (2B, 3A, 4), Selenium (3A)

UT16020202-010_00	Third Water Creek	E. coli (2B)
UT16020202-011_00	Cottonwood Creek	E. coli (2B)
UT16020202-012_00	Soldier Creek-1	Phosphorus (3A), Sediment (3A), Temperature (3A)
UT16020202-027_00	Beer Creek	E. coli (2B), Macroinvertebrates (3C), Dissolved Oxygen (3C)
UT16020203-001_00	Provo River-1	Macroinvertebrates (3A), Dissolved Oxygen (3A), Temperature (3A)
UT16020203-002_00	Provo River-2	Eutrophication (3A)
UT16020203-003_00	Provo River-3	Macroinvertebrates (3A)
UT16020203-006_01	Provo River-6-1	Aluminum (3A)
UT16020203-006_02	Provo River-6-2	Aluminum (3A), Zinc (3A)
UT16020203-006_03	Provo River-6-3	pH (1C, 2B, 3A), Aluminum (3A), Copper (3A)
UT16020203-009_00	Main Creek-1	E. Coli (1C, 2B), pH (1C, 2B, 3A), Macroinvertebrates (3A), Dissolved Oxygen (3A), Temperature (3A)
UT16020203-010_00	Main Creek-2	E. Coli (1C, 2B)
UT16020203-013_00	Provo Deer Creek	Macroinvertebrates (3A)
UT16020203-015_00	Snake Creek-2	Arsenic (1C), E. Coli (1C, 2B)
UT16020203-026_00	Heber Valley	E. Coli (1C, 2B), pH (1C, 2B, 3A, 4)
UT-L-14060004-001_00	Strawberry Reservoir	Phosphorus (3A), pH (3A)
UT-L-16020201-006_00	Silver Lake Flat Reservoir	Dissolved Oxygen (3A)
UT-L-16020202-002_00	Big East Lake	Dissolved Oxygen (3A), Harmful Algal Blooms (2B), pH (3A), Phosphorus (3A)
UT-L-16020203-004_00	Mill Hollow Reservoir	pH (3A), Phosphorus (3A)
Black – Not Supporting, Carry over from previous 2022 assessment.		
Red – Not Supporting, New listing.		

Indicator #2 Riparian ecosystem conditions.

Monitoring results: Changes to riparian ecosystems have occurred after the 2024 and 2025 Fire Seasons. There was one fire, Yellow Lake, in 2024 and two fires, Buckley Draw and Cherry, in 2025 that required a Burned Area Emergency Response assessment. Yellow Lake burned across the UNF and WCNF, with the most damage to riparian areas taking place on the UNF. Many riparian areas were burned over resulting in bare ground, downcutting, and erosion. The following year, monitoring of post-fire conditions took place, and riparian restoration work is being planned for FY26 in collaboration with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and other partners. This work will include seeding, building in-stream structures to capture sediment, felling trees, etc. Monitoring in 2025 showed that while some areas were burned over, there are still healthy downstream riparian areas with willows and beaver dams to help capture sediment and attenuate flood risk. The Buckley Draw and Cherry Fires both took place in relatively dry areas with little riparian habitat. Buckley Draw did result in a debris flow in response to a summer monsoonal event. Overall, little change has occurred to riparian areas of the Uinta Planning Area and most management activities have avoided impacts to these areas. Work to restore riparian ecosystems post-fire is in progress.

Indicator #3 Forested Terrestrial ecosystem conditions.

Monitoring results: In 2024-2025, natural events and forest management activities have caused change primarily on the Heber-Kamas Ranger District due to the Yellow Lake Fire in the fall of 2024 which burned 33,040 acres. The point of origin was on Duchesne Ridge in spruce/fir forest type and burned through conifer,

mixed-conifer, and aspen stands. Post-fire assessments via BAER Team, stocking surveys, and stand walk throughs have indicated the need for removal of hazard trees and planting of areas previously forested that now have no natural seed source. Areas that are most in need of planting are northern aspect stands that were spruce/fir with little to no aspen. Those areas are mostly on the northern side of Soapstone Mountain. In aspen, aspen-conifer, and mixed conifer stands with aspect present, post-fire regeneration seems to be doing very well. In stands where stocking survey data has been gathered, if aspen was present pre-fire, regeneration is at or above Forest Plan standards. Additionally, 915 acres of commercial timber harvest were completed.

Indicator #4 Non-forested terrestrial ecosystem conditions. See Monitoring Question #7, Indicator #2

<u>Monitoring Question #12</u> Are Forest management activities and natural events affecting watershed conditions?

Finding: No changes are needed to Forest Plan. The Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is working cooperatively to collect water samples and to provide information to the Utah Division of Water Quality on possible causes of water quality impairment. No lichen monitoring data has been generated since 2016-2017. The next evaluation and reporting for lichen is scheduled in 2026 when another round of lichen monitoring should be complete. Overall vegetation and soil indicators meet forest plan standards and guidelines and were comparable between ungrazed and grazed conditions at the pastures, suggesting grazing has had minimal impact on soil protection and resistance to erosion at measured sites. Thus, current range/grazing activities are within UNF FP guidelines. The Yellow Lake Fire did not result in the loss of the inherent ecological capacity or hydrologic function of the soil resource through changes in soil properties, thus did not affect watershed conditions in the long-term.

Indicator #1 Aquatic Habitat conditions.
Data source: *See Monitoring Question #8, Indicator #2 and Monitoring Question #11, Indicator #1.*
Monitoring results: *See Monitoring Question #8, Indicator #2 and Monitoring Question #11, Indicator #1.*

Indicator #2 Air Quality - Trends of lichen biomonitoring sites.
Data source: The Uinta NF has 23 lichen monitoring sites that were originally evaluated in 1995 or 2003 and reevaluated in 2011. The results of the evaluation were presented in the 2016-2017 Forest Plan Monitoring Evaluation report. During the summer and fall of 2025, 10 lichen monitoring sites were recollected for species diversity and elemental analysis. However, the samples have not been analyzed yet. The data collected in the 2025 samples will be reported in the 2026-2027 Forest Plan Monitoring Evaluation report, which fits with the 10 year lichen monitoring interval following the 2016-2017 Forest Plan Monitoring Evaluation report.

Monitoring results: No new data is available for evaluation for the 2024-2025 Forest Plan Monitoring Evaluation report.

Indicator #3 Changes in soil properties (physical, chemical, and biological) that result in the loss of the inherent ecological capacity or hydrologic function of the soil resource.
Data source: *Soil Monitoring Reports*
Monitoring results: In 2024 & 2025, two pastures and one burned area were monitored on the Uinta NF to determine soil conditions from grazing and following fire, respectively. The East Mud Creek pasture on the Mud Creek Cattle allotment was monitored for ground cover indicators at the Lower Mud Creek Exclosure on

06/17/2025. The Lower Mud Creek pasture on the Mud Creek Sheep allotment was also monitored for ground cover indicators at the Upper Mud Creek Exclosure on 06/18/2025. Both of the measured grazed locations (outside exclosures) at the monitored pastures had 91-101% of the effective ground cover of that in ungrazed conditions (inside exclosures). Both of the measured grazed locations at the Lower and Upper Mud Creek Exclosures had greater than 70% effective ground cover (U FP Guideline S&W-3). Overall vegetation and soil indicators meet Forest Plan standards and guidelines and were comparable between ungrazed and grazed conditions at the pastures, suggesting grazing has had minimal impact on soil protection and resistance to erosion at measured sites. Thus, current range/grazing activities are within Forest Plan guidelines, and no changes are needed to the Forest Plan.

The 2024 Yellow Lake Fire was monitored by measuring ground cover indicators to assess post-fire recovery and soil protection at 14 different burned locations and six representative unburned locations in 06/2025. The Yellow Lake Fire did not result in the loss of the inherent ecological capacity or hydrologic function of the soil resource through changes in soil properties, thus did not that affect watershed conditions in the long-term. The fire was a very low severity fire (86% very low to low SBS). Only the moderate to high severity conifer and aspen/conifer combinations resulted in less than 70% of the effective ground cover (U FP Guideline S&W-3), which makes up only ~14% of the fire area. Each of the visited moderate to high severity conifer and aspen/conifer combinations had grass and forb regrowth the following summer after the fire. These severity-vegetation combinations will likely obtain 70% of the effective ground cover in unburned conditions, with the inclusion of forest floor canopy cover, in ~1-5 years following the fire. Overall, minimal heat transferred into the soil during the fire, resulting in minimal alterations to soil properties and the soil seed bank, inherent ecological capacity, and hydrologic function of the soil resource.

<u>Monitoring Question #13</u> NFMA compliance: Are we complying with appropriate NFMA requirements?
Finding: *Attempting compliance in areas through certification of natural regeneration and tree planting.*

Indicator #1 Stocking of lands.
Data source: Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF Annual Reforestation and Timber Stand Improvement Needs Report in FACTS database.
Monitoring results:
There were 241 acres of fill-in planting completed on the Uinta National Forest in 2025 at Blackhawk Campground, following the Bald and Pole Creek Fires of 2018. This site is difficult to access at the optimal planting time due to snow and seasonal road closures. Additionally, fencing issues have allowed cattle to trample or pull out some of the planted seedlings. Overall, survival rates at Blackhawk Campground have been poor, and we will continue to monitor conditions. Other burned areas from the Bald and Pole Creek Fires, particularly those with sprouting species such as Gambel oak and aspen, are recovering well. In 2024–2025, we certified 1,848 acres for natural regeneration without site preparation, which met Forest Plan stocking standards. We will continue monitoring these areas and expect to certify additional stands for natural regeneration over the next 1–5 years.

Beginning in 2025 and continuing into 2026, affected areas from the Yellow Lake Fire of 2024 are being assessed for reforestation needs. Early observations indicate that much of the burned area will be ecologically beneficial for aspen stands by reducing encroaching conifers and creating disturbance that promotes regeneration. Initial stocking surveys show abundant aspen regeneration. In contrast, spruce-fir stands on north-facing slopes are not responding as well. We anticipate the need for replanting in these locations, although the scale of replanting is still being evaluated.

In timber harvest areas, we also are monitoring for 1st, 3rd, and 5th years post-harvest to assess stocking rates. Harvesting continues, but areas in Mill Hollow Drainage that have had recent sale closures indicate adequate stocking rates.

<u>Monitoring Question #14</u> Are timber management activities impairing soil productivity of the land?

Finding: No changes are needed to Forest Plan. Both measured UNF timber harvest units had only 3-7% (averaged 5%) detrimental soil disturbance, not exceeding the 15% guideline threshold of Wasatch-Cache NF (WC FP G4)/regionally accepted value. Most sites had visible signs of impacts from skid trails, temp roads, lands, and burn piles. Overall, detrimental soil disturbance was primarily due to compaction and altered soil structure (platy/massive) from heavy machinery. Although the bare soil at these locations was measured at 33-50%, which is less than the 70% ground cover guideline of the UNF Forest Plan (U FP Guideline S&W-3). However, these determinations were based on a 1x1 ft area using the FSDMP, where other properties are measured as well in that 1x1ft area. Live plants ranged between 53-80%, fine woody debris ranged between 70-87%, and coarse woody debris ranged between 37-63% across the area. Additionally, the Forest Soil Disturbance Monitoring Protocol factors in bare ground as the detrimental soil disturbance is calculated. Current ground-based timber management activities are within accepted guidelines.

Indicator #1 Changes in soil properties (physical, chemical, and/or biological) that result in the loss of the inherent ecological capacity or hydrologic function of the soil resource. Specific indicators are amount of soil disturbance, change inorganic matter, or change in Soil structure, soil temperature, A horizon depth.
Data source: Soil monitoring reports on timber harvest units.
Monitoring results: Little Dip Salvage Sale (Payment Unit 32, Harvest Unit 32) and Cold Springs Salvage Resale (Payment Unit 3, Harvest Unit 10) were monitored on 09/24/202 and 09/26/2024, respectively. The Little Dip Salvage Sale closed on 8/14/2023 and monitoring occurred 1.08 years after sale closure. The harvest unit had skid trails and burn piles within unit, but wetlands were not impacted in this harvest unit. The forest floor of the Little Dip Salvage Sale was impacted across 50% of the harvest unit, with 10% soil displacement and 13% erosion observed. Live plant cover measured at 80%, while fine (<7 cm) and coarse woody debris (>7 cm) were present on 70% and 63% of the harvest unit, respectively. Bare soil and rock cover were observed at 33% and 30% of measurement locations, respectively, with an average forest floor depth of 1.1 cm. The harvest unit had 20% Class 0, 43% Class 1, 30% Class 2, and 7% Class 3 or detrimental soil disturbance.

The Cold Springs Salvage Resale closed on 9/10/2020 and was monitored 4.05 years after sale closure. Harvest unit had skid trails, burn piles, old temp roads, and landings within unit. The forest floor of the Cold Springs Salvage Resale was impacted across 57% of the harvest unit, with 10% soil displacement and 3% erosion observed. Live plant cover measured at 53%, while fine (<7 cm) and coarse woody debris (>7 cm) were present on 87% and 37% of the harvest unit, respectively. Bare soil and rock cover were observed at 50% and 33% of measurement locations, respectively, with an average forest floor depth of 1.1 cm. The harvest unit had 37% Class 0, 47% Class 1, 13% Class 2, and 3% Class 3 or detrimental soil disturbance. Area had minimal moisture and sandy loam predominate texture, which helped reduce the amount of detrimental soil disturbance during harvesting in the past. Much of the litter layer was aspect/moisture dependent, specifically where the conifer patches were. In between the conifer was dominated by grasses with some thatch layer.

<u>Monitoring Question #15</u> Are goods and services being provided in accordance with Forest Plan goals and objectives?

Finding: *No changes are needed. The Uinta NF is providing a variety of goods and services according to the Forest Plan.*

Indicator #1 Number of Lands Special Use Permits.
Data source: *Forest Service Special Uses Data System (SUDS) database.*
Monitoring results:
The number of lands and recreation special use permits are presented by ranger district in the table below. No data is available for 2024 or 2025. The Forest provided data as of September 2026 for reference. Lands SUPs are uses such as roads, dams, water transmission lines, fiber optic cables, and powerlines. Recreation SUPs are uses such as recreation residences, outfitter and guides, organization camps, and recreation events. Fluctuations in the total number of land use authorizations can be attributed to permit clean up, consolidation, filming permit requests, and the handful of new applications each year.

Table 11. Special Use Permits (SUP) from 2019-2026.

Ranger District	***Number of Lands SUP***				***Number of Recreation SUP***			
	2019	***2021***	***2023***	***2026***	***2019***	***2021***	***2023***	***2026***
Supervisor's Office[1]	*50*	*44*	*50*	*50*	*12*	*12*	*13*	*8*
Pleasant Grove	*63*	*69*	*71*	*53*	*60*	*66*	*80*	*79*
Heber[1]	*27*	*27*	*75*	*58*	*52*	*62*	*168*	*136*
Spanish Fork	*68*	*73*	*80*	*69*	*26*	*29*	*39*	*34*
Total	*236*	*241*	*276*	*230*	*193*	*220*	*300*	*257*

1* Kamas and Heber Ranger Districts data are combined in SUDS.

Indicator #2 Number of Recreation Special Use Permits. *See indicator #1 and table above.*

Indicator #3 Acres leased for oil and gas exploration and development.
Data source: US Bureau of Land Management, MLRS (Mineral & Land Record System).
Monitoring results: As of 1/4/2024, there are 35 authorized oil and gas leases containing 33,024 acres within the Wasatch-Cache NF plan area. There has been no change from the prior year Monitoring Reports.

Indicator #4 Level of permitted livestock grazing.
Data source: Range Allotment Annual Operating Plans
Monitoring results: The level of permitted livestock grazing has not changed since 2015.The table below presents the permitted commercial livestock use levels. The term AUM means animal unit months.

Table 12. Level of permitted livestock grazing.

Ranger District	***Number of permittees***	***Cattle Numbers***	***Cattle AUM***	***Sheep & Goats Numbers***	***Sheep & Goats AUM***	***Total number***	***Total AUM***

Pleasant Grove	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Heber	*23*	*4,003*	*20,488*	*41,640*	*39,587*	*45,643*	*60,075*
Spanish Fork	*24*	*7,375*	*42,051*	*2,000*	*3,445*	*9,375*	*45,496*
Total	*47*	*11,378*	*62,539*	*43,640*	*43,032*	*55,018*	*105,571*

Indicator #5 Other Forest Products (Fuelwood and Christmas Tree Permits).
Data source: TIM Worksheets, Volume/Value Sold by Product (PRP0251), rec.gov hub (internal to USFS)
Monitoring results: The Uinta National Forest sold 9,094 Christmas Tree Permits and 6,434 Fuelwood Permits for a total of 15,528 special forest product permits to individuals in 2024-2025.

Indicator #6 Total Timber Sale Program Quantity.
Data source: TIM Worksheets – Volume/Value Sold by Product (PRP0251), TIM Worksheets – Volume/Value Awarded by Products and Species Worksheet (CRP207)
Monitoring results:
For the combined Uinta-Wasatch-Chache NF through 2024-2025, the amount of commercial timber and personal use permits volume sold was 25,061 CCF. The Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan identifies that the Forest should be offering 9,000 CCF of timber per year. Two years x 9,000 CCF = 18,000 for the Wasatch-Cache + the Uinta (3,190 X 2 = 6,380) equals 24,380 CCF forest-wide over a two-year period. Since the material that the forest is selling is nearly all salvage material resulting from beetle killed trees, we are exceeding our average annual sale of timber.

<u>Monitoring Question #16</u> National Historic Preservation Act as amended: Are cultural resources being protected as the Forest Plan is implemented and are mitigation measures sufficient prevent damage to cultural resources from project activities? Are *Historic Properties* receiving adverse effects from project implementation, vandalism, looting, and/or neglect?

Finding: *No changes are needed.*

Indicator #1 Number of *Historic Properties* that received new adverse effects from looting, vandalism, and/or neglect.
Data source: Heritage data module, hard copy reporting.
Monitoring results: One indigenous rock art site was intentionally vandalized.

42UT1002: Hanging Rock Pictographs. This 2,000 year old rock art site was intentionally damaged through vandalism. The vandals used 4 different colored paint pens to write and draw all over the panel. This was identified during the federal furlough in the fall of 2025, so we were unable to immediately address the situation. The Utah State Historic Preservation Office issued a press release seeking information about the vandalism and contracted with a rock art conservator to assess how the vandalism could be addressed. FS law enforcement was made aware of the situation, but did not start a case as they were unable to identify any

suspects. The Utah SHPO is coordinating with the conservator to accomplish rehabilitation work at the site. The site has Archaeological Resource Protection Act signage, as well as signage indicating a closure order to the public.