



**File Code:** 1950; 2500

**Date:** June 7, 2015

Dear Friend of the Ashley National Forest:

Enclosed for your review and comment is a copy of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Cart Creek Watershed Roads Improvement Project. This EA is being sent to those who provided input on the initial scoping document, the original EA that was sent out in July of 2014, and to those who have requested to receive copies of project proposals on the Ashley National Forest. This EA has been revised from the original document sent out last summer. The revision was done in response to comments received from the public as well as additional staff suggestions.

This EA differs from the original EA in that there are now three alternatives instead of two alternatives. Alternative 1 is the "No-Action" alternative. This alternative was evaluated to show a comparison of effects and to establish the baseline or existing condition.

Alternative 2 is the "Proposed Action". The proposed action includes re-routing both Forest Roads (FR) 049 – the Greens Draw Road and FR 177 – the Bowden Draw road out of a wet meadow to drier ground that is more capable of supporting traffic without causing resource damage. The old roadbeds would be decommissioned and not available for motorized use. As a part of the proposed action, both of these re-routes would be seasonally closed from September 30th to June 1st. This seasonal closure would also apply to Forest Trails 008, 004, and 003. Additionally, a rock quarry would also be developed to provide the Forest with much needed materials for roads and maintenance. The road that would access the quarry would be for administrative use only. A short hiking trail would also access the waterfalls at the end of FR049, just before FR 049 turns into Forest Trail 004. Any timber resulting from the construction of the road would be made available for commercial sale.

Alternative 3 is identical to Alternative 2, except that there are no seasonal road closures, and FRs 049 and 177, as well as Forest Trails 004, 008, and 003 would be open to motorized traffic year round.

This project is subject to the pre-decisional administrative review process, also known as the objection process (36 CFR 218, Subpart B). Section 428 of the 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act directed the Forest Service to replace the pre-decisional Appeals Process (36 CFR 215) with the post-decisional objection process. Please see the attached document for more information about the Objections process and how to ensure your comments meet the requirements to establish standing to object.

Your site-specific, written comments received for this project will afford you the right to object to the project's proposed decision, which will accompany the environmental assessment prepared for this project. Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during a designated opportunity for public comment established by the responsible official will be eligible to file an objection. Comments must meet the requirements in 36 CFR



218.25 (a)(3). Any comments received on this proposal are part of the public record and, therefore, are available for public review upon request. Submitting your input during this 30-day comment period will ensure that you remain on the mailing list for this project. If you wish to reference scientific literature in your comment letter I request that you send a copy of the reference you have cited and include rationale as to how you feel it is pertinent to the specific project at hand. This will allow me to fully evaluate your comments; if I do not receive a copy of the literature I may not be able to utilize it in making my decision.

Comments on this proposed project will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice in the paper of record (Vernal Express). If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, your comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day.

Please address your comments to: Rowdy Muir – Flaming Gorge and Vernal District Ranger, Ashley National Forest, Vernal, Utah, 84078. Office hours, for those who wish to hand deliver or provide oral comments, are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except Federal holidays). Alternatively comments may be submitted by facsimile at 435-781-5142, or by email at [comments-intermtn-ashley@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-intermtn-ashley@fs.fed.us) (please put “Comments on the Cart Creek Watershed Roads Improvement Project” in the subject line).

More information about this project is available on the Ashley National Forest’s website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/ashley/landmanagement/projects>. If you need additional information, please contact Christopher Plunkett, Interdisciplinary Team Leader and Forest Hydrologist, at the Ashley National Forest Supervisor’s Office. He can be reached at (435) 781-5140 or [cplunkett@fs.fed.us](mailto:cplunkett@fs.fed.us). Alternatively, LeAnn S. Colburn, Forest Environmental Coordinator can also provide additional information about this project and she can be reached at (435) 781-5163 or [lscolburn@fs.fed.us](mailto:lscolburn@fs.fed.us). A draft decision notice will be sent to those parties who submitted comments or to those who request it.

Sincerely,



ROWDY MUIR  
District Ranger

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