

# News Release



USDA Forest Service  
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **COON CREEK ADMINISTRATIVE SITE TO BE SOLD**

**Delta, CO (May 13, 2008)**-The Forest Service has released its decision to sell the Coon Creek administrative site on the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests. The 160-acre parcel is located on the north flank of the Grand Mesa, about 1.5 miles north of Powderhorn Ski Resort. Randall Karstaedt, Regional Director for Physical Resources and decision-maker for the project, selected the alternative that allows for the sale of the site, which also includes conservation measures to enhance habitat for greenback cutthroat trout, a federally-threatened species.

Karstaedt's decision weighed heavily on three key factors, namely this parcel of land is separated from other national forest lands, making it hard to manage to meet national forest needs; the parcel is surrounded by private lands that are becoming increasingly developed for residential purposes, which further affects the parcel and its ability to meet national forest objectives; and while this land was identified to meet administrative purposes for the national forest such as an office or warehouse yard, it is no longer needed or feasible to use for these purposes.

Most of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) Forest's offices are leased facilities. Lease rates continue to increase and the Forest's need for energy-efficient facilities has become more pronounced. The funds generated from the sale will be used for backlog maintenance needs on Forest Service buildings or to help fund the replacement of a leased office with a government-owned office.

Congress recognized that the Forest Service has limited funding available for facility acquisition, operations and maintenance by passing the "Pilot Conveyance Program" legislation. This

legislation allows the Forest Service to sell unneeded facilities and administrative sites and retain the revenues to maintain other forest facilities or acquire replacement facilities. Additionally, because both the Forest Service and Congress are highly conservative in making any decision to sell national forest lands, sales such as the Coon Creek Administrative Site require Congressional approval.

The decision to sell the parcel includes the construction of a barrier on Coon Creek to keep brook trout, a non-native species, from moving upstream into and competing with a known population of greenback cutthroat trout. The Forest Service will also improve fish habitat on either the upper Coon Creek or West Antelope Creek, by placing large wood or rock structures in the stream, stabilizing stream banks, and possibly some planting of riparian vegetation.

The GMUG's next step is to develop a marketing plan. "We plan to sell the Coon Creek Administrative Site by offering four different configurations. These range from selling the whole 160 acres to one individual or selling four separate 35- to 40-acre parcels," explained Corey Wong, Public Service Staff Officer for the GMUG. "We are directed by Congress to receive fair market value, which we'll likely do via competitive, online bidding."

The GMUG expects to sell the administrative site this fall. The final Environmental Assessment that analyzed the proposal to sell the administrative site was released for public review on March 24, 2008. More information on the decision and the decision-appeal opportunity is available on the GMUG's website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/policy/> under the section "Lands."

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