

NEWS RELEASE



**USDA Forest Service
Ashley National Forest
355 North Vernal Avenue
Vernal, Utah 84078
(435) 789-1181**

Contact: Louis Haynes
Title: Public Affairs Officer
Phone: (435) 781-5105
Email: ljhaynes@fs.fed.us

For: Immediate Release

Date: March 31, 2009

Ashley National Forest Digs in to 2009

Vernal, Utah ... With the approach of the summer field season on the Ashley National Forest projects and activities planned during the winter months are fast underway to becoming reality on the ground.

In 2009 the Ashley National Forest has selected three emphasis areas to focus activities and resources.

Travel Management Planning that will produce a system of designated roads and trails across the Forest is expected to be complete in September. A draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be published in the near future with public meetings occurring in Duchesne, Utah on April 21st from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the County Building, Manila, Utah on April 22nd from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the County Building and in Vernal, Utah on April 23rd from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Western Park Convention Center. These meetings will provide the public a first look at the proposed designated travel system for the Ashley National Forest.

The High Lakes Stabilization project will continue in 2009 with the goal of stabilizing five more reservoirs, four reservoirs in Garfield Basin and one reservoir in Brown Duck Basin. The goal of the High Lakes Stabilization project is to stabilize a total of 13 reservoirs within the boundaries of the High Uintas Wilderness. At the end of the 2008 field season six of the thirteen reservoirs had been stabilized.

-MORE-

2-2-2

Recreation Facilities Enhancement is a new emphasis area for 2009. This emphasis area will identify needed facilities and improve them through rehabilitation, replacement or heavy maintenance. The investments in these facilities will provide for sustainable recreation while improving visitor satisfaction, financial sustainability and natural resource protection. Several of the projects included in this emphasis area for 2009 are: repair of the Ute Tower, Iron Springs Campground repair, High Line Trailhead toilet replacement, East Galloway Trail work, Flume Trailhead construction and trail re-route to name a few.

Roads across the Ashley National Forest are expected to open on or about May 22nd. Motorized trails are expected to be wet and possibly impassible at times.