



File Code: 1950/5150

Date:

various persons on scoping mailing lists
various addresses
Ut, UT 84046

Dear Friend of the Ashley,

I am proposing to reduce the potential for severe and fast moving wildfires to cause public injury and property damage within the Cedar Springs/Deer Run Campgrounds and Marina area, and the Mustang Campground area (refer to attached maps). These facilities are located within Daggett County, Utah. They are also located within the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area near Flaming Gorge Reservoir and are popular camping and boat launching areas. These campgrounds and marina receive significant amounts of recreational use throughout spring, summer and fall and represent a substantial public and private financial investment.

The 2002 Mustang Fire showed that under extreme weather and fuel conditions fire could, and did become severe and fast moving, causing significant damage to public property and putting the public at risk of injury. This fire spread rapidly through the dense and continuous crowns of pinyon-juniper trees similar to those around the Cedar Springs, Deer Run and Mustang campground and marina areas. Once fire gets into pinyon-juniper crowns and begins to spread, the fire becomes more intense, moves faster and becomes unmanageable. This kind of a fire puts the public, firefighters, and public and private property at most risk.

Reducing the amount of pinyon-juniper fuels and their continuity reduces the potential for crown dominated fires. Resulting ground fires, while still a very serious threat to public and firefighter safety and to loss of property, are less intense and move slower, allowing for an increased opportunity for suppression or control. Consequently, reducing the amount of pinyon-juniper fuels and their continuity around these campgrounds would reduce the potential for a severe and fast moving crown fire to cause physical injury or property damage. It would also allow more time for visitors to evacuate the campgrounds and marina, more time for fire suppression activities and it may allow for additional suppression tactics to be utilized.

To reduce hazardous fuels within and around these campgrounds and marina I am proposing the following specific actions:

1. Reduce the density and continuity of pinyon-juniper fuels within and adjacent to these campgrounds and marina within the areas identified on the attached maps. Trees would be removed by chainsaw or mechanical methods (track hoe mounted snipper/buncher or use of track hoe bucket and thumb). Stumps would generally not exceed six inches in height to reduce their visibility. I expect to treat approximately 345 acres within the Cedar Springs-Deer Run Campground areas and 199 acres within the Mustang



Campground area. Treatments may begin during the fall or winter of 2007 and would be timed to minimize effects to campground or marina visitors.

2. Trees would be removed to create a mosaic of tree densities and patterns... reducing pinyon-juniper tree density to a five to 30 foot spacing (tree canopy to tree canopy), creating openings of various sizes, and leaving untreated areas as indicated below:
 - A minimum tree spacing of five feet would be used near campgrounds, roads and other facilities to maintain visual objectives and/or noise A larger spacing of up to 30 feet would be used elsewhere to reduce the amount and continuity of fuels
 - Any tree removal from inside the campgrounds or near the marina or other facilities would be done on a tree by tree basis to maintain visual objectives and to maintain privacy
 - Create openings of up to an acre
 - Existing clearings would be maintained by removing all pinyon-juniper, piling slash and burning
 - Clumps of several to many trees would be left untreated
 - Maintain and promote the esthetic and wildlife values associated with Ponderosa pine within the area by removing pinyon-juniper from up to 30 feet around individual Ponderosa pine trees or stands. This species is currently scarce within the project area.
3. Seed disturbed areas immediately following tree removal and piling as necessary to protect the soil and to prevent cheatgrass or other invasive plant species from becoming established or expanding. Seed burn pile sites again following burning. In both cases the seed mix would contain a mixture of both natives and non-natives to best ensure seed germination, soil protection and competition to cheat grass and other invasive species.
4. A variety of slash (remaining woody and vegetative materials following cutting) treatments would be used to remove excessive amounts of slash from the project area. These treatments include:
 - Piled and burned on site within created openings
 - Left in place (not to exceed five tons per acre) to promote soil productivity, improve seed germination and for soil retention
 - Mechanically incorporated into swells and gullies to act as a sediment trap
 - Removed and disposed of elsewhere (may be transported to a location near Cedar Springs Sewage Lagoons and burned)
 - Made available for use as campground firewood
 - Chipped and spread on site to promote soil productivity and improve seed germination

However, slash piling and burning is expected to be the primary treatment. Slash piles would be left on site to dry for approximately one year or less before it is burned (and if necessary, re-piled and burned again to get a desired level of slash consumption). Any

remaining slash would be mechanically spread out and the pile site prepared for seeding (disked or roughened to improve seed germination).

At this point in time I believe that this project, as defined by the specific actions listed above, may be appropriately excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS as described in Category 10 of FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.2. Category 10 projects are “Hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire, not to exceed 4,500 acres, and mechanical methods for crushing, piling, thinning, pruning, cutting, chipping, mulching, and mowing, not to exceed 1,000 acres. However, determination of the appropriate level of analysis and documentation will be made only after a review of specialist reports, biological evaluations/assessments, public comments, and other pertinent information and analyses.

You are invited to comment at this time. Comments will be accepted for 30 days following publication of the legal notice of this proposal in the Vernal Express (*expected to be published on April 18, 2007*). This comment period provides those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. Those who provide timely comments will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations. Comments that are specific are most helpful. Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project. Written comments must be submitted to: Jeff E. Schramm, District Ranger, Flaming Gorge Ranger District, P.O. Box 279, Manila, Utah 84046. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 to 4:30, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be e-mailed to comments-intermtn-ashley@fs.fed.us, contain “Cedar Springs/Deer Run Campgrounds Fuels Reduction Project” in the subject line, and must be submitted in MS Word (*.doc) or rich text format (*.rtf).

For further information concerning this proposal, please contact D. Ross Catron by phone at (435) 781-5268. Thank you for your interest and participation in the management of the Ashley National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ *JEFF E. SCHRAMM*
District Ranger

Attachment: Maps (2)