

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
USDA, Forest Service, Ashley National Forest

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO STABILIZE KIDNEY LAKE IN BROWN DUCK BASIN,
AND BLUEBELL, DRIFT, FIVE POINT, AND SUPERIOR LAKES IN GARFIELD BASIN

For

High Uinta Wilderness Lakes Stabilization Project

Notice is hereby given that the Ashley National Forest is processing special use permit applications filed by the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (URMCC), an Executive branch agency of the federal government. The application was filed to obtain authorization to stabilize four of thirteen high mountain lakes in the Garfield Basin within the High Uintas Wilderness Area (HUWA) of the Ashley National Forest. Last year the URMCC obtained a permit that authorized the agency to stabilize Kidney Lake in the Brown Duck Basin within the HUWA. The proposed projects in the Garfield Basin are designed to stabilize Bluebell, Drift, Five Point and Superior Lakes and help restore hydrologic functioning to the Garfield Creek drainage before its intersection with the Yellowstone River. The project in the Brown Basin is designed to stabilize Kidney Lake and help restore hydrologic functioning to Brown Duck Creek and the Lake Fork Drainage. The affected lakes were constructed prior to wilderness designation and have been operated and maintained for water storage use by Moon Lake Water Users Association (MLWUA) for decades. MLWUA will be relinquishing their existing special use permit and transferring their existing water rights to the enlarged Big Sand Wash Reservoir, which is located off the Forest, about three miles south of Mt. Emma, Utah.

Kidney Lake Project Area Legal Description;

Kidney Lake USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map. T.2N, R.6W, Sec. 1, 6 & 31 of the West Uintah Special Meridian. The area ranges in elevation from approximately 10,200 to 10,300 feet above mean sea level.

Bluebell Lake Project Area Legal Description;

Garfield Basin USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map. T.4N, R.5W, Sec. 31 & 32 of the West Uintah Special Meridian. The area ranges in elevation from approximately 10,800 to 10,900 feet above mean sea level.

Drift Lake Project Area Legal Description;

Garfield Basin USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map. T.4N, R.5W, Sec. 31 of the West Uintah Special Meridian. The area ranges in elevation from approximately 11,000 to 11,100 feet above mean sea level.

Five Point Lake Project Area Legal Description;

Garfield Basin USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map. T.4N, R.5W, Sec. 10 & 29 of the West Uintah Special Meridian. The area ranges in elevation from approximately 10,950 to 11,100 feet above mean sea level.

Superior Lake & Stream Reconnect Project Area Legal Description;

Garfield Basin USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map. T.4N, R.5W, Sec. 20 & 21 of the West Uintah Special Meridian. The area ranges in elevation from approximately 11,100 to 11,200 feet above mean sea level.

Primitive hand tools would be packed into these wilderness worksites by crews and horses and/or may be flown in by helicopter to implement work planned for stabilization. In addition to primitive hand tools, light machinery (small tracked excavators and small backhoe/skidsteers), and other motorized and mechanized equipment would be used to breach/stabilize the dams. The machinery would be flown in and out of the immediate work site at both lakes by a heavy lift helicopter. We anticipate that either Moon Lake Dam, the Center Park Trailhead, or the Yellowstone ATV Trailhead would be chosen as a staging/landing area for the helicopter delivery and removal of equipment and supplies. In the interest of public safety area closures and traffic control would be necessary before and during helicopter delivery operations. Closures would include the helicopter staging/landing area and select portions of the surrounding area, as well as trails leading to the wilderness lakes and the lakes themselves. Also in the interest of public safety, all work sites would be closed to the public during the stabilization effort and one permanent trail reroute along an existing social trail to Kidney Lake would be implemented west of Island Lake. Also, as part of a contingency plan to accomplish work in one season and reduce implementation costs, a one-way motorized route may be used to transport equipment and supplies over the existing trail between Five Point and Superior Lakes, if needed. Two to three crews would be camped at or near Kidney Lake; and four to six crews would be camped within the Garfield Basin during the 90-day work season. Detailed information on the proposed project is available on the Ashley National Forest webpage at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/ashley/projects> or may be reviewed during business hours (0800 to 1630, Monday through Friday) at the Ashley National Forest, Duchesne Ranger District Office, 85 West Main Street, Duchesne, Utah, 84021.

For a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this notice the general public and interested parties may submit comments to R. Brian Paul, at the above address or contact him at (435) 781-5217.