



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

December 2004

Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact

Diamond Fork Group-Site Campground



Spanish Fork Ranger District
Uinta National Forest
Utah County, Utah

For Information Contact: William A.R. Ott, District Ranger
Spanish Fork Ranger District
Uinta National Forest
44 West 400 North
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660
801-798-3571
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/uinta/>

**Decision Notice
& Finding of No Significant Impact**

Diamond Fork Group-Site Campground

**USDA Forest Service
Spanish Fork Ranger District
Uinta National Forest
Utah County, Utah**

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Background

In 1956, Congress authorized the construction of the Central Utah Project (CUP). The Diamond Fork System, a component of CUP, will transport water from the Uinta Basin to the Bonneville Basin for use along the Wasatch Front. The 1984 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Diamond Fork System described the need to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities due to the following factors:

- Proximity to the Wasatch Front where 80 percent of the State's population is within 2 hours driving time to Diamond Fork.
- Anticipated increase in recreation demand proportional to population increase.
- Anticipated increase in leisure time.
- Estimated annual increase in outdoor recreation use by 6 percent annually.
- Identified deficit in camping and picnicking opportunities as identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- Identified excess capacity to provide outdoor recreation opportunities in Diamond Fork.

To mitigate for impacts to recreation associated with the construction and operation of CUP and also to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities along the Wasatch Front, the 1988 Definite Plan Report for the CUP committed to the construction of specific recreation facilities in Diamond Fork.

As part of these plans, the Forest Service and the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (Mitigation Commission) released an Environmental Assessment (EA) dated September 28, 1998, describing the environmental effects of a proposal to reconstruct the existing Diamond and Palmyra campgrounds in Diamond Fork. The alternative selected for implementation called for the reconstruction of the campground, which reduced the campground capacity by approximately 33 percent. This reduction in capacity was caused by removing group-site facilities from the campground and removing single family campsites from the active floodplain of Diamond Fork Creek. The purpose for the reduction in campground capacity was to reduce impacts on riparian vegetation and to maximize the opportunities for stream restoration afforded by the construction of the Diamond Fork Pipeline. The group-site facilities removed from the Diamond/Palmyra campground had a capacity of approximately 330 people at one time (PAOT). Reconstruction of the campground was completed in October 2000.

The 1998 EA and decision documents indicated that the group-site facilities removed from the Diamond and Palmyra Campgrounds would be replaced in a more favorable location and that the size and location of the group-site campground would be analyzed in a separate analysis. The 2004 Diamond Fork Group-Site EA documents the analysis of 13 alternatives to meet this need.

Decision

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative 4 (see EA pages 2-13 through 2-15) as summarized below.

Under this alternative, facilities with a total capacity of 475 PAOT will be constructed at the Monks Hollow site and will encompass approximately 19 acres. The Monks Hollow site is located east of the Monks Hollow trailhead in Diamond Fork. Most of the site served as the staging area for the CUP's construction of the Diamond Fork System which was completed in July 2004.

Alternative 4 will include facilities for 475 PAOT's located within the project boundary. An administrative access road will be constructed on the south side of Diamond Fork Creek from the Monks Hollow trailhead, across Monks Hollow Creek. This road will include a culvert installed across Monks Hollow Creek. The road is to be used for construction of the site and recurrent maintenance of the campground and range facilities. Parking will be provided on the north side of Diamond Fork Creek for campground users.

Other amenities include approximately five, 2-unit vault toilets, paved access roads and spurs, shade shelters, an information/fee station, footbridge, interpretive trail and open play area. Culinary and irrigation water will be developed at a spring located in Red Hollow and delivered to the campground via a storage tank and pipeline.

With the exception of the administrative access road, footbridge, and spring headbox, all features will be constructed out of the 100-year floodplain and riparian area.

When compared to the other alternatives this alternative would best address the driving issues identified by the interdisciplinary team (see EA pages 2-3 through 2-8), while still meeting the purpose and need of the project. Of the alternatives that would meet the purpose and need of the project, this alternative has the least potential to impact stream restoration efforts, riparian habitat and threatened, endangered and sensitive species (see EA pages 2-8 through 2-15 and pages 3-1 through 3-81). This alternative meets requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered 12 other alternatives. The selected alternative and three others were considered in detail and nine were not given detailed consideration. Reasons for dismissing are found in Chapter 2 of the EA. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in Chapter 2 of the EA. The following alternatives were considered in detail.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 is the No Action Alternative. Current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. The proposed action would not take place. The project purposed and need would not be met.

Alternative 2

Under this alternative a group-site facility would encompass approximately 25 acres and would include facilities with a total capacity of 475 Persons at One Time (PAOT). There would be approximately five, 2-unit vault toilets, paved access roads and spurs, shade shelters, a well for a water system, an information/fee station, interpretive trail and open play area. The site would be revegetated with trees and shrubs and would contain an irrigation system.

The facility would be located in the lower Diamond Fork Canyon approximately two miles from Highway 6. The site would be linear, located between the road and Diamond Fork Creek, sloping gently from the road to the creek in a series of old flood terraces. An irrigation system exists on the property and records suggest the site was historically used for alfalfa hay production. Construction would occur outside of the 100-year floodplain.

Impacts to riparian vegetation would be less than 0.1 acre. This location has a high potential for regeneration of a riparian forest through cultivation and irrigation that would be precluded in part by the construction of a group-site campground. This site is also adjacent to heavily populated Ute ladies' tresses habitat. This threatened plant could be impacted by having more people in the area. Similarly, the Columbia spotted frog, a species of concern, has been identified near the site and these populations could be indirectly impacted from visitor use. The location is also in close proximity to lands that have been acquired as partial mitigation for impacts on wildlife resulting from the construction of the Central Utah Project. Increased human use in the area could have an indirect impact on wildlife utilization of the mitigation lands.

Alternative 3

Under this alternative construction would occur at three separate sites: Brimhall, Wanrhodes, and Monks Hollow. These three sites would encompass approximately 26 acres and would include facilities with a total capacity of 475 PAOTs.

The Brimhall site would be located at the confluence of Brimhall Canyon and Diamond Fork Creek. This site would accommodate a 50 PAOT unit. Parking would be located on the north side of Diamond Fork Creek with facilities on the south side. The parking area and campground would be connected by an existing bridge. Vehicle access across the bridge would be allowed for administrative-access only. A water source would not be developed at this site. Water would be available at Diamond Campground.

The area proposed for development at the mouth of Brimhall Canyon lie in and adjacent to riparian plant communities along both sides of Diamond Fork Creek. The site is located partially in the 100-year floodplain and riparian corridor. Clearing of approximately 1.5 acres of riparian vegetation would be required. Diamond Fork Creek would need to be hardened near the campground in order to protect facilities from overbank flows and lateral migration of the river channel. This would limit future stream restoration efforts in this area. Winter roosting habitat for bald eagles would be directly impacted by construction and would be indirectly impacted with increased human use.

The Wanrhodes site would be located about three miles up Wanrhodes road from Diamond Fork. This site would accommodate up to 150 PAOTs. The campground would be located between Wanrhodes road and Wanrhodes Creek. A water source would not be developed at this site. Water would be available at Diamond Campground. The site is located in a small flat adjacent to the road, which drops steeply to the creek on the west side. The flat is occupied by mountain big sagebrush, but has been seeded in the past to smooth brome and has also been heavily impacted by dispersed camping resulting in some bare ground and compaction. This is predominantly an upland site, with cottonwoods limited to the stream banks below the site. The construction area would be in an upland site and out of the 100-year floodplain. Impacts on riparian vegetation would be less than 0.1 acre.

The Monks Hollow site would be located just east of the Monks Hollow trailhead in Diamond Fork. This site would accommodate 275 PAOTs on the north side of Diamond Fork Creek. Each site would have all the amenities as described under Alternative 2. This site was the staging area for the Tanner Ridge Tunnel project, part of the CUP. The riparian area around this site has been protected and is composed of cottonwood and willows. Water at the Monks Hollow site would be developed at a spring

located in Red Hollow and piped to the site. The construction area would be in an upland site and out of the 100-year floodplain. Impacts on riparian vegetation would be less than 0.1 acre.

Public Involvement

As described in the background section, the need for this action was first identified in the 1984 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Diamond Fork System, and was subsequently identified by the 1988 Definite Plan Report for the CUP and the 1998 Diamond and Palmyra Campgrounds Environmental Assessment. A Diamond Fork Group Site environmental assessment was first listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions in January 2000. At that time a scoping letter was sent to the public describing the proposed action and requesting comments from interested parties. The letter containing maps, a description of the proposed action, and the purpose and need for action was mailed to 201 individuals and organizations. Additionally, articles appeared in the Provo Daily Herald on February 6, 2000, and the Spanish Fork Press on February 9, 2000. The formal, written scoping comment period closed February 18, 2000. Fifteen (15) individuals and/or organizations responded. Of the public that commented there were several issues raised that were used in the development of alternatives. In May 2003 the Forest Service issued the revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The draft Environmental Assessment for the Group Site Campground was in production at the time and it did not incorporate all planning direction provided in the 2003 Forest Plan. Therefore, it was determined the May 2003 draft Environmental Assessment should be revised to incorporate the management direction provided in the 2003 Forest Plan and be re-issued for public review. On August 7, 2004 a (revised) draft Environmental Assessment was released for public review and comment. Responses to letters commenting on the August 2004 Environmental Assessment are included in Chapter 4.

Issues

Significant or “driving” issues are issues that the deciding official and Interdisciplinary Team have determined to be significant in that they are bound up in the nature of the proposed action and in the choice among alternative courses of action. They are significant because of the extent of their geographic distribution, the duration of their effects, or the intensity of interest or resource conflict.

Issues mitigated by project design are important to the project and thus are incorporated via mitigation measures. They did not drive the development of a new alternative, but they did influence project design.

Non-driving issues were identified as those: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations require this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, “...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)...”

Driving Issues

Using the comments from the public and other agencies, the interdisciplinary team identified three driving issues regarding the effects of the proposed action (see EA pages 2-1 through 2-8). To address these concerns, the Forest Service created the alternatives described above. Main driving issues of concern included the following.

Issue	Mitigation
Potential impacts on current and future stream restoration efforts in Diamond Fork.	Construction of facilities will be outside of the 100 year flood plain with the exception of the foot bridge, administrative access road crossing Monks Hollow creek, and a spring head box in Red Hollow. Place bridge abutments as far from the stream channel as possible. A vegetative management plan will be developed to guide long-term management of sensitive areas of the campground and area of influence (page 2-15 of the E.A.).
Potential impacts on riparian habitats and restoration efforts in Diamond Fork.	Construction of facilities will be outside of the 100 year flood plain with the exception of the foot bridge, administrative access road crossing Monks Hollow creek, and a spring head box in Red Hollow. Fencing and interpretive signing is required for the wetland. Measures will be taken during design and again during construction to avoid and preserve sensitive areas that may be present such as wetlands and riparian vegetation. A vegetative management plan will be developed to guide long-term management of sensitive areas of the campground and area of influence (page 2-15 of the E.A.).
Potential effects on Ute ladies' tresses orchid habitat.	Measures will be taken during design and again during construction to avoid and preserve sensitive areas that may be present such as any suitable Ute Ladies' tresses habitat, wetlands, and riparian vegetation. A vegetative management plan will be developed to guide long-term management of sensitive areas of the campground and area of influence (page 2-15 of the E.A.).

Non-Driving Issues Mitigated by Project Design

The following mitigation measures were identified by the interdisciplinary team to address related, non-driving issues that did not lead to the development of specific alternatives. These measures are important and will be incorporated into the project design and long term operation. They are in addition to Forest Plan standards and guides and the mitigation described above.

1. Implementation of construction standards and guidelines will limit sediment transport to Diamond Fork Creek and protect water quality. Best Management Practices listed in Appendix 1 of the EA will be implemented.
2. Indirect impacts from public use will be mitigated by proper signing, fencing, development of designated natural surface trails and through education and interpretation. These measures would direct the public away from sensitive areas.
3. Firewood will be made available for sale from the campground concessionaire along with the prohibition of firewood cutting to protect vegetation in the campground and vicinity.

4. Construction will take place between mid July and December 1 to limit impacts on neo-tropical birds and wintering bald eagles.
5. Weeds will be treated prior to and ground disturbance activities and monitored and treated after construction.
6. Any imported materials such as soil, mulch or seed will be weed free.
7. Equipment used in construction will be thoroughly cleaned before entering the Forest, to avoid spread of weeds.
8. The vegetation management plan, when dealing with areas of cottonwood over-story, will emphasize protection and encouragement of cottonwood recruitment, using provisions appropriate to both construction and campground operations.
9. Campground facilities will be neutral in color and blend in with the natural surrounding.
10. Fencing and cattleguards will be installed to restrict cattle from campground and parking areas.
11. A fence and interpretive signing will be constructed around the homestead site on the south side of Diamond Fork Creek. Site monitoring will included locating the campground host site in view of this cultural property.
12. A closure gate and post and rail fencing will be constructed on the administrative access road to restrict ATV users to existing authorized trails.

Monitoring

In addition to monitoring for the relevant goals, standards, and guidelines listed under each driving issue in the environmental assessment, the following monitoring activities have been identified for this project.

1. The Spanish Fork District Ranger and the interdisciplinary team that developed the environmental assessment for this project will review construction specifications to assure that mitigation measures adopted through this decision are carried forward and implemented.
2. Construction operations will be regularly monitored by a qualified Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) to insure compliance with all contract provisions. The area will be inspected by the COR, Contracting Officer, and District Ranger before final acceptance of the contract.
3. Operation of the campground will by a concessionaire authorized under a Special Use permit. These operations will be in conformance with the permit and associated annual operating plan. Compliance will be monitored by a qualified Forest Service inspector.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety. Downstream water quality will not be significantly affected (see EA pages 3-13 through 3-17) and will not affect public health. Public safety issues were considered and incorporated into the development of the alternatives (see EA pages 2-6).
3. There will be no significant effects on the unique characteristics of the area. Potential effects to cultural resources will be mitigated through interpretation and monitoring (see EA pages 2-15 and 3-42). Wetlands will not be significantly affected by the project (see EA pages 3-13 through 3-17). Habitat for proposed, endangered, threatened or sensitive species will not be significantly affected by the project (see EA pages 3-17 through 3-30). This is supported by the BE and BA located in the project file. Mitigation measures and Forest Plan guidelines will help insure that important habitat features are adequately protected from degradation. The project area is not located along a wild and scenic river or scenic byway (see 2003 Land and Resource Management Plan, page 5-59).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. There is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project. Potential impacts of this project are detailed in Chapter 3 of the EA.
5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 3-1 through 3-81).
6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects. All foreseeable future actions would require site specific environmental analysis. This decision is responsive to the issues that need to be addressed (see Chapter 2 of the EA) currently and is not a decision in principle for a future consideration.
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (see EA pages 3-51, through 3-81). Chapter 3 of the EA discloses potential cumulative effects of this action. Implementation of this decision will not contribute to significant effects when added to any past, present, or foreseeable future actions in or adjacent to the project area.
8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. These issues were analyzed by the Forest Archaeologist and the project area was inventoried for archaeological and historical sites. One National Register Eligible homestead is located near the project area which could be adversely affected by the project. Mitigation measures were incorporated into the alternative to protect this homestead (see EA pages 2-15 and 3-42). Archeological report and concurrence from SHPO are in the project file.
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973 (see EA page 3-17 through 3-30). The project area was evaluated for threatened and endangered species as required by the Act. Habitat for threatened and endangered species is not a limiting factor and no effects to these species were anticipated. Similarly, no effects to any plant species were anticipated or documented. The USFWS concurred with the conclusions of the Biological Assessment prepared by the Forest Service that the project should have "no effect" on any threatened or endangered species.

10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (see Chapter 3). The action is consistent with the 2003 Uinta National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision to implement Alternative 4 is consistent with the intent of the 2003 Forest Plan's goals and objectives listed on pages 2-5 through 2-6 of the EA. The project was designed in conformance with land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan standards and guidelines (2003 Land and Resource Management Plan, pages 3-1 through 3-52).

This decision complies with the Clean Water Act (EA Chapter 3, Watershed / Hydrology). Portions of the proposed recreation facilities fall within a Riparian Habitat Conservation Area as defined by the Forest Plan. After considering 12 other action alternatives this is the only suitable location for such facilities. Adverse effects to native aquatic organisms will be avoided or adequately mitigated (2003 Forest Plan, Rec-2, Guideline, page 3-29).

Relative to the Secretary of Agriculture's Memorandum #1827, which requires conservation of prime farmland, rangeland, and forestland, this action will have no detrimental effects on prime farmland, rangeland, floodplains or wetlands (EA, Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Environmental Effects).

The decision fully complies with the laws and regulations that ensure protection of heritage resources (EA Chapter 3 Heritage Resources).

This decision complies with Executive Order 13112 on Invasive Species which directs that federal agencies not authorize activities which would increase the spread of invasive species (EA Chapter 2 Mitigation Measures and Chapter 3 Vegetation and Noxious Weeds).

The activities authorized by the decision would not cause a significant decline in habitat for migratory bird species and thus is in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (EA Chapter 3 Neo-tropical Migratory Birds).

Implementation of this project will not affect lands inventoried as part of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (EA Chapter 3, page 3-48).

This decision complies with the Clean Air Act (EA Chapter 3 page 3-48).

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented on or after March 2005.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 215.7. A notice of appeal must be in writing and clearly state that it is a Notice of Appeal being filed in pursuant to 36 CFR 215.7. Appeals must be filed within 45 days of the date of legal notice of this decision in the Provo Daily Herald with the Forest Supervisor, Uinta National Forest, 88 West 100 North, P.O. Box 1428, Provo, UT 84603.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact either:

William A.R. Ott, District Ranger
Spanish Fork Ranger District
Uinta National Forest
44 West 400 North
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660
phone 801-798-3571
fax 801-798-3050

or:

Duane Resare
Interdisciplinary Team Leader
Spanish Fork Ranger District
Uinta National Forest
44 West 400 North
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660
phone 801-798-3571
fax 801-798-3050

or visit the Uinta home page (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/uinta/>) and navigate to “Projects and Plans.”

/s/ William A.R. Ott

WILLIAM A.R. OTT
District Ranger
Spanish Fork Ranger District
Uinta National Forest

Date