

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED ACTION**

### **Vernon Reservoir Vegetation/Sage Grouse Habitat Restoration Project USDA Forest Service – Uinta National Forest Spanish Fork Ranger District**

The Spanish Fork Ranger District proposes to enhance vegetation/sage grouse habitat in the Vernon Reservoir Area. The proposed site is located north and east of Vernon Reservoir in T9S R5W Sections 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 34, Tooele County, Utah.

Approximately 300 acres of sagebrush be treated mechanically. Sagebrush will be thinned in a mosaic pattern to create as much edge effect as possible. This would open up the sage brush canopy and create a mixed age class of sagebrush. This treatment will also allow the understory grasses and forbs that are currently suppressed by the thick sage brush canopy to be released. The treated area will be seeded with a seed mix which will include a variety of forbs that are desirable to sage grouse and which are adapted to the ecosystem. Approximately 600 acres of varying juniper density would be treated. Juniper whips, in areas previously chained by the Forest Service, will be lopped and scattered.

A fence would be constructed to protect the seedlings from cattle grazing during establishment. This fence would be approximately 2.5 miles and would split one grazing unit into two grazing units. The seeded area would be rested from cattle grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons to allow the new plants to become established. The existing pipeline would be extended and a trough added on the north side of the new fence to provide livestock water, since cattle would be fenced out of their current watering troughs. Two spurs would be added to the existing pipeline and small dugouts created and fenced to provide water and small riparian areas for use by sage grouse and other wildlife.

We anticipate this project will be categorically excluded according to FSH 1909.15 31.2(6) which is a categorical exclusion for wildlife habitat improvement projects which do not include the use of herbicides and do not require more than one mile of road construction. A decision memo will be issued.

The public is invited to comment on the proposed action. Send substantive comments to the Responsible Official, William Ott, Uinta National Forest, Spanish Fork District Ranger, 44 West 400 North, Spanish Fork, UT 84660; phone (801) 798-3571; fax (801) 798-3050; or you may hand deliver your comments during normal business hours from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. You may also e-mail your comments to: [comments\\_intermtn\\_uinta\\_spanishfork@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments_intermtn_uinta_spanishfork@fs.fed.us). Comments must be submitted in 30 days from the date of publication of this legal notice in the Provo Daily Herald.

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please contact Renae Bragonje, Spanish Fork Ranger District, 44 West 400 North, Spanish Fork, UT 84660 at (801) 798-3571.