



File Code: 1950/2300

Date: December 8, 2005

Dear Forest Interest:

The Pleasant Grove Ranger District of the Uinta National Forest is initiating scoping and asking for public comment on two proposed projects that are in the same area on the eastern edge of Mount Timpanogos Wilderness (Wilderness).

The first proposal is to replace and/or relocate an aging buried water tank and associated waterlines that provide water to Mount Timpanogos Campground and other recreation facilities adjacent to Mount Timpanogos Trailhead in the North Fork of Provo Canyon, Utah. The tank and a portion of the waterline are located within the Wilderness.

The second proposal is to relocate sections of Trail 052 in the same general area of the water tank. This trail serves as a primary access route to the Wilderness. This trail intersects with Trail 055, also known as the Summit Trail. Trail 055 is open to bicycles and motorcycles, neither of which is allowed in the Wilderness. A 2003 land survey conducted in the area (described below in the Background section) determined that the junction between these two trails and a portion of Trail 055 are in the Wilderness. (See enclosed map for location details.)

Background

Congress designated the Wilderness in 1984 as part of The Utah Wilderness Act of 1984. The Wilderness, containing 10,518 acres, was described at the time of designation using an indefinite boundary. Using a legal description with no official survey, the Forest Service initially determined the water tank and waterline and Trail 055 to be outside the Wilderness.

In 2003, the eastside of the Wilderness was surveyed to establish a defined boundary. Subsequently, this survey now places the tank and waterline and a portion of Trail 055 within the Wilderness. The area is located within the NE 1/4 of Section 9, Township 5 South, Range 3 East, Salt Lake Base Meridian.

The 10,000-gallon concrete water tank was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1936. During the past 70 years, the water tank has deteriorated to a point it leaks significant amounts of water each day. The water tank and distribution system require frequent monitoring and service to comply with Utah State culinary water requirements. The water tank, along with a distribution waterline from the tank to the distribution box, needs to be replaced and brought up to current requirements.

The North Fork Special Service District has an interest in the condition of the Forest Service water system. Within the Wilderness, a water collection system, head box, and main feeder waterline (from head box to a Forest Service diversion valve) are shared by both entities. At this



diversion valve, water is first directed into the Forest Service storage tank. Once the tank is full, an intake valve closes so water backs up the main line to the diversion valve. From this valve, water then flows into the North Fork system. Water that should flow to the North Fork system is lost when the tank valve doesn't completely close. Tank seepage is preventing the intake valve from working as designed. Therefore, the North Fork Special Service District is also losing significant amounts of water each day.

Because the water tank is in the Wilderness, a Minimum Requirement Analysis has been prepared to examine options for the water tank replacement. Options considered included replacing the tank in place and relocating the tank at a location outside the Wilderness. The feeder waterline from the water spring source must remain within the Wilderness.

Proposed Project Description for Water Tank Relocation

The Forest Service is proposing to install a new 10,000-gallon steel water tank outside of the Wilderness adjacent to Trail 052. A trackhoe would be used to excavate a hole about 45 feet by 45 feet and 15 feet deep. The new tank would be buried to a depth so that only the access riser would be visible. It would be installed according to Forest Service specifications and Utah State culinary water quality requirements.

The old concrete tank within the Wilderness would be collapsed using a trackhoe excavator, and the pulverized conglomerate would be left in place to fill the open cavity. The disturbed site would be contoured to match the existing topography and planted with native vegetation. It would be expected that the area should regain its previous visual characteristics within three years.

About 900 feet of new high-density polyvinyl waterline would be installed to connect the steel tank with the diversion valve. The disturbed surface area would be planted with native vegetation to regain its previous visual characteristics.

A new waterline would be installed from the steel tank to an existing distribution box located about 800 feet east of the new tank site outside of the Wilderness. The disturbed area for this line would be restored in the same manner as described above.

Proposed Project Description for Trail Reroute and Bridge Installation

Trail 052 is a primary trail traveled by hikers into the Wilderness. As previously discussed, this trail intersects with Trail 055 inside the newly surveyed Wilderness boundary. It had been assumed since the Wilderness was established that the trail junction and all of Trail 055 were outside the Wilderness. Trail 055 is a multi-use trail that allows for travel by bicycles and motorcycles. The 2003 survey revealed that about a quarter mile of Trail 055 is inside the Wilderness. Bicycles and motorcycles are not legal uses within the Wilderness.

A bridge that crosses the North Fork of the Provo River at the beginning of Trail 052 was buried by an avalanche during the winter of 2004/2005. This bridge has experienced damage from

avalanches in previous years. The bridge was under snow and later under water for much of the 2005 summer.

The proposed trail reroute would relocate the bridge and the lower section of Trail 052 to a location outside the Wilderness. The bridge location would be lower in the drainage and would be less subject to avalanche damage. The new section of trail would be routed off of Trail 052 and switchback up the hillside above the drainage to intersect with the existing Trail 055 outside the Wilderness. This new junction would be clearly marked to indicate the direction of the Wilderness and appropriate trail use on Trail 052 and the direction of Trail 055 and the allowed trail uses. An estimated one-quarter mile of new trail construction would be needed to reroute Trail 052 to a junction with Trail 055. The abandoned trail section would be blocked off to discourage travel, and the bridge damaged from the winter 2004/2005 avalanche would be removed.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose and need of the proposed action are to:

- Reduce water loss and meet Utah State water quality standards by replacing a leaking, 70-year-old concrete water storage tank and associated waterlines.

- Create a safer and more reliable water storage and delivery system to provide culinary water service to Mount Timpanogos and Theater-in-the-Pines campgrounds, Theater-in-the-Pines picnic area and the Mount Timpanogos Trailhead.

- Improve the natural character of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness by removing a nonconforming Forest Service structure and relocating a section of mechanized/motorized trail outside of the Wilderness.

- Reduce future repair and maintenance expenses and impacts on the Wilderness by removing facilities from the Wilderness.

Decisions to be Made

The following decisions will be made based on an interdisciplinary analysis:

- Whether to install a new 10,000-gallon culinary water storage tank and associated waterlines outside the Wilderness.

- Whether to install a new storage tank feeder waterline and distribution line within the Wilderness.

- Whether to relocate a section of Trail 052 and install a new bridge outside the Wilderness.

Preliminary Issues

Issues initially identified during development of the proposed action include:

- Effects on threatened, endangered or sensitive plant and wildlife species and/or migratory birds.

- Effects on the Wilderness resource.

- Effects on recreation visitors traveling on Trails 052 and 055.

- Effects on riparian areas.

Effects on soil and water quality.

Public Involvement

The public is invited to provide substantive comments on the proposed action. Please send written comments to:

Pamela J. Gardner, District Ranger
Pleasant Grove Ranger District
390 N 100 E
Pleasant Grove, UT 84062

Or telephone: 801-795-3563; or fax: 801-785-6932.

Email comments may be sent to comments-intermtn-uinta-pleasantgrove@fs.fed.us and must be in word (*.doc) or rich text format (*.rtf).

Oral or written comments may also be submitted at the above address during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays.

The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of the notice for this project in the *Provo Daily Herald*.

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please contact Larry Velarde, Recreation Staff Officer, at the Pleasant Grove Ranger District Office, 390 N 100 E, Pleasant Grove, UT, 84062, or by telephone at 801-785-3563.

Thank you for your interest in management of the Uinta National Forest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Pamela J. Gardner

PAMELA J. GARDNER
Pleasant Grove District Ranger

Enclosure: Project Map