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## DECISION MEMO

### Summit Trail (055) Realignment

USDA – Forest Service  
Uinta National Forest  
Pleasant Grove Ranger District  
Utah County, Utah

#### BACKGROUND

The Mount Timpanogos Wilderness (Wilderness) was officially designated by Congress as a 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 at the outset determined the junction of the Mount Timpanogos Trail (052) and the Summit Trail (055), a multiple-use trail, to be outside the Wilderness. In 2003, the eastside of the Wilderness was surveyed to establish a defined boundary. The survey placed a portion of the multiple-use Summit Trail at the intersection with the Mount Timpanogos Trail within the Wilderness.

The objective is to eliminate the mechanized and motorized intrusions into the Wilderness by realigning a section of the motorized/mechanized Summit Trail out of the Wilderness.

The trail realignment was one of two proposals described in a scoping document sent out for comment on December 8, 2005. The second proposal was replacement of a culinary water tank currently located in the Wilderness. Because of some lingering technical questions regarding placement of the water tank, that decision has been delayed. The analysis for the trail realignment has been completed. Neither action is dependent on the other. Rather than delay the trail alignment until those questions are resolved, decisions on the two actions will be issued separately.

The project area is generally between Mount Timpanogos Trailhead parking area and State Route 92. The legal description is the NE ¼ of Section 9, Township 5 South, Range 3 East, Salt Lake Base Meridian.

#### DECISION

It is my decision to reduce the various negative effects on the natural character of Mount Timpanogos Wilderness by implementing the following activities:

- Realign a portion of Summit Trail 055 outside the Wilderness so bicycles and motorcycles will no longer be in the Wilderness. The new trail alignment from the new stream crossing to the trail junction will be at an approximate grade of 8 to 10 percent for up to 150 meters.

The project will also include the following design features and Best Management Practices (BMPs), as well as all other applicable 2003 Uinta National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan standards and guidelines and other relevant direction:

- Equipment crossing/in-channel work to be completed in low to no flow periods. Minimize disturbance in the channel by conducting only essential access and work in the stream area. Conduct staging activities, material/equipment storage well away from the stream. Use physical markers to delineate the area to be disturbed.
- Build up southwest bank of old stream crossing with excess aggraded material from the stream channel to prevent future stream capture of the old 052 trail prism.
- Lop/scatter vegetation and debris on disturbed areas and obliterated trail prism to capture/filter sediment and increase groundcover following disturbance. If groundcover is not adequate, additional mitigation, such as mulching may be required.
- Install silt fence or straw waddles to reduce potential sediment delivery to stream channels within the project area.
- Install signing to reroute trail to prevent users from using obliterated trail segment.
- Obliterate/recontour old trail prisms to discourage use of old trail segments.
- Use BMPs for new trail construction. These should include full bench cuts, outsloped trail surface, and rolling grade dips on the new trail segment from the stream crossing to the Wilderness boundary.
- Crib wall construction may be necessary to allow adequate turn radius for users.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

On December 8, 2005, a scoping letter was sent to potential interests describing the proposed trail realignment and proposal to replace and relocate a culinary water tank. In addition, a request for comments on the proposed action was published in the *Provo Daily Herald* on December 13, 2005. An announcement of this project was also published in the Winter 2005, Spring and Summer 2006 editions of the Uinta National Forest *Schedule of Proposed Actions*.

In response to the solicitation and outreach, six comments were received. Issues identified during development of the proposed action and from public responses to scoping are addressed in the following section:

Users might become frustrated if outdated maps were used that do not reflect the accurate location of the motorized Summit Trail 055.

*When designing the new section of trail, there will be standard trail signs at each junction. When the project is completed, maps will be updated to reflect the changes to Mount Timpanogos and Summit trails.*

Use of a CE is not specified in the proposed action description and no potential CE categories to be used are identified.

*Decisions may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b.3 or one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service*

*Handbook 1909.15 sections 31.b or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect.*

Impacts to roadless areas adjacent to the designated Wilderness needs to be analyzed in detail and used to drive development of the proposed action and alternatives if they are affected.

*The project area does not reside in, and the project will not have any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on, any inventoried roadless areas (IRAs).*

Is the proposed action consistent with RHCA, roadless, Management Area, Management Prescription Category-specific, and other general Forest Plan Direction in this area?

*The Summit Trail 055 Realignment project is consistent with the 2003 Uinta National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2003 Forest Plan). Use of Forest Plan standards and guidelines and other pertinent direction will mitigate impacts to the Class I Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA), and other areas of concern.*

## **CONSISTENCY WITH LAW, FOREST SERVICE POLICY AND DIRECTION, AND THE UINTA NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Summit Trail 055 Realignment Project is consistent with the 2003 Uinta National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2003 Forest Plan). The project area lies within the Lower Provo Management Area as identified in the Forest Plan. The management prescription for the project area is primarily 1.4 Wilderness along the eastern portion of the Mount Timpanogos Wilderness (Forest Plan, page 5-85). The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum designation for the area is Primitive/Urban (Forest Plan, page 5-81), and the Visual Quality Objective is Preservation (Forest Plan, page 5-87). The activities may be evident to the recreation user while the project is being implemented.

This area is identified as a Class I Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (Forest Plan, page 5-85). Activities associated with the decision will not impact this area. The project is consistent with the Clean Water Act.

This decision complies with the Endangered Species Act as well as policy direction on threatened and endangered species management established in sections 2670 and 2672.4 of the Forest Service Manual (FSM). A Biological Assessment (project file) was prepared in accordance with legal requirements set forth under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

This decision complies with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186, which provides for the protection of migratory birds. Executive Order 13186, *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, and directs federal agencies to take certain actions to further implement the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Under Executive Order 13186, federal agencies are directed to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on migratory bird resources, and ensure that environmental analyses of federal actions required by the National Environmental Policy Act evaluate the effects of actions and agency plans on migratory birds. Analysis of potential project impacts on migratory birds is found in the Wildlife Biologist Report and Biological Evaluation (project file). Implementation of this project may result in the unintentional take of migratory birds (nests and eggs), but the Forest

Service will minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts, and these potential impacts have been analyzed and documented in the Wildlife Biologist Report and Biological Evaluation.

Laws and regulations that describe Federal treatment of cultural resources serve as the standards and guidelines for cultural resources. The following are the most relevant to this project.

A cultural resource investigation was conducted for this project. No historic properties will be affected by the project. The decision is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

In accordance with Executive Order 12898, this action will not result in any disproportionate impact to minority or low-income populations.

Implementation of this proposal is consistent with other Federal, State, and local laws for the protection of the environment.

### **CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THIS PROJECT**

Decisions may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b.3 or one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 sections 31.b or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect.

The proposed projects fit within categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service for categorical exclusion as follows:

Rerouting of the section of Summit Trail 055 fits under FSH 1909.15, Section 31.2, No. 1:

*Construction and reconstruction of trails.*

Extraordinary circumstances are those instances that could result in a significant environmental effect to one or more resource conditions. FSH 1909.15 lists the following as “extraordinary circumstances”:

- a. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – The potential effects of the proposed action on species or critical habitat listed under the Endangered Species Act were reviewed and documented by a botanist, fisheries biologist, and wildlife biologist from the Uinta National Forest (Biological Assessment, project file). It was determined that the proposed action would have “*No Effect*” on the following species classified under the Endangered Species Act or their critical habitat: bald eagle (Threatened), Western yellow-billed cuckoo (Candidate), Canada lynx (Threatened), Ute Ladies’-tresses (Threatened), Desert milkvetch (Threatened), clay phacelia (Endangered), Utah valvata snail (Endangered), and June Sucker (Endangered).

Potential effects also were reviewed and documented for Forest Service sensitive species (separate plant, fish, and wildlife specialist reports; project file). It was determined that the proposed action would have “*No Impact*” on the following species classified as sensitive by the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service: Columbia spotted frog, peregrine falcon, greater sage-grouse, fisher, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, American three-toed woodpecker, spotted bat, Townsend’s big-eared bat, Wasatch jamesia, Barneby woody aster, Garrett bladderpod, Rockcress draba, dainty moonwort, Bonneville cutthroat trout, and Colorado River cutthroat trout. It was determined that the proposed action “*May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute to a Trend Towards Federal Listing or Loss of Viability to the Population or Species*” for slender moonwort.

- b. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds –The Forest Service has determined that this project will not adversely affect floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds. The project area is located in a Class I Riparian Habitat Conservation Area. Through design features and implementation of Best Management Practices, potential impacts to soils, stream and water quality will be minimal.
- c. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – By realigning a short section of Trail 052 out of the Wilderness, motorized/mechanized use will be discontinued on the old section within the Wilderness.
- d. Inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) – The project area does not reside in, and the project will not have any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on, any inventoried roadless areas (IRAs).
- e. Research natural areas – The project area does not reside in, and the project will not have any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on, any research natural areas.
- f. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – Heritage resource inventories of the areas of potential effects for the trail realignment were completed in September 2005. No sites of any kind were found that will be affected by this project. As a result, no American Indians religious or cultural sites will be affected by the proposed project (See project file).
- g. Archeological sites, or historic properties or areas – Heritage resource inventories of the areas of potential effects for the trail realignment were completed in May 2003. No historic properties (national register eligible sites) will be affected by the proposed project (See project file).

For projects that are categorically excluded, there is no need to repeat a detailed analysis of effects to all resources. In promulgating the categories, the Forest Service has concluded that projects that fit those categories do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. Thus, once the analysis establishes that this project has no extraordinary circumstances and fits into a category, the responsible official can reach the conclusion that there will be no significant effects to the environment without further analysis.

The proposed action will be of limited context and intensity and capable of producing little or no significant environmental effects (40 CFR 1508.4) individually or cumulatively on the quality of the

human environment; is within a category listed in FSH 1909.15; and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f) and *Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck*, No. CIV F-03-386 JKS (E.D. Cal., October 19, 2005), this decision is not subject to appeal. This decision may be implemented immediately.

**CONTACT PERSON**

For further information about this decision or project, please contact Larry Velarde, Pleasant Grove Ranger District Recreation Staff Officer, at 390 North 100 East, Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062, or by phone at (801) 342-5245

*/s/ Pamela J. Gardner*

*July 18, 2006*

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Pamela J. Gardner  
District Ranger  
Pleasant Grove Ranger District

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Date

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