DECISION MEMO
Diamond Fork Youth Forest Discovery Trail

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

I. DECISION

A. Description of Decision

My decision is to proceed to construct a hardened trail from the north end of the Diamond Campground to the Red Ledges Day Use Area. This trail will be ¾ mile in length and lays between the river and road corridor. The trail corridor will be cleared five foot and graveled for two-way traffic. This project will be accomplished over the next two years. The trail construction area is located in section 31 T8S, R4E in Utah County (see attached map). This area is located approximately 20 miles east of Spanish Fork, Utah and north of Highway 6.

Additional design features/mitigations included in this decision are:

1. Relocation of fence and gate on the south side of the existing cement bridge.
2. Livestock resistant opening for trail heading south of cattle bridge.
3. Buck and pole fence adjacent to water on SE side of cattle bridge.
4. Let down gate in fence opening at SE side of cattle bridge.
5. Two to five rustic rest benches.
6. At station 40+00 at along Diamond Fork Road, trail will be designed to mitigate impacts to Central Water Project fiber optic line. If funding is available, a crosswalk will be installed utilizing the existing cement abutments over the spillway. A boardwalk will be installed in the interim.
7. Cross walk will be painted and signed meeting Uniform Traffic Control standards.
8. Kiosks sign will be posted at both ends and in the middle of the trail and coordination with the Central Utah Project to include information relative to their project.
9. Interpretive and discovery trail signs will be placed as appropriate. Information will include cattle and grazing, wild turkey restoration, and other educational information.
10. Trail will be signed for appropriate uses.
11. Reconstruct existing day use trails connected to trail.

B. Purpose of the Decision

The purpose of the trail is to give users of the Diamond Fork Youth Forest and other forest users a safe, hardened trail outside the campground boundaries for walking, mountain biking, and cross country skiing opportunities. Currently, no hardened trail

exists between the Diamond Campground and the Red Ledges day use area and paths are being created or they utilize the Diamond Fork road. A hardened trail will meet the future demands of the area and provide for a safe trail network, while reducing the overall impacts to the riparian zone from by directing traffic. The trail would provide for interpretive and discovery opportunities for forest visitors that currently do not exist outside of the campground in the adjacent area. The construction of this trail will not interfere with existing grazing rights.

II. REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE DECISION

Decisions may be categorically excluded from 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 31.1, 31.1b or 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect.

A. Category of Exclusion

This project may be categorically excluded because it falls within the FSH 1909.15 31.2 (1) category of exclusion that includes "recreation improvement projects."

B. Extraordinary Circumstances

FSH 1909 15, Section 30.3 lists the following as 'extraordinary circumstances':

1. 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 Endangered Species Act requires that federal activities do not jeopardize the continued existence of any species federally listed or proposed as threatened or endangered or result in adverse modification to such species' designated critical habitat.

   There is established and potential habitat for the Utes Ladies'-tresses in the area. The trail alignment is outside of the habitat. As required by the Act, potential effects of this decision on listed species have been analyzed and documented in a Biological Assessment (File Record). No effects are expected to occur to listed species or their habitats.

2. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds

Floodplains: Executive Order 11988 requires federal agencies to avoid adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. This project's activities are not located within floodplains.

Wetlands: Executive Order 11990 requires federal agencies to avoid adverse impacts associated with destruction or modification of wetlands. This project's activities are not located within wetlands.

Municipal Watersheds: This project is not located within a municipal watershed.

3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas

   This project is not located in or near Wilderness or within a Wild or Scenic River corridor. No congressionally designated areas will be affected by this decision.

4. Inventoried Roadless Areas

   The project is not located within an Inventoried Roadlesss Area.

5. Research Natural Areas

   The project is not within any proposed, candidate or designated Research Natural Area.

6. Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.

   This project does not have the potential to affect heritage resources as described under 36 CFR Part 800.3.a.1. The construction area involved in this project was inventoried for heritage resources and no National Register eligible archaeological sites were identified within them.

   No traditional cultural properties or sacred sites have been identified in this portion of Spanish Fork Canyon, including this project area. The project will not affect the ability of tribal groups to identify or use such areas in the future.

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.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND SCOPING

An interdisciplinary team (IDT) of Forest Service specialists reviewed this project. Input from this team was incorporated in the design of the proposed action and the specialist reports are contained in the project file. A request for comments was published in the *Provo Daily Herald* on April 22, 2006; scoping letters were mailed to interested parties and the project was posted in the Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions. Comments were received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, and Central Utah Project. From field trips held with them on June 13th and July 5th, their concerns were addressed by reviewing on the ground or the inclusion of design features. No other comments were received.

IV. FINDINGS REQUIRED BY AND/OR RELATED TO THEIR LAWS AND REGULATIONS

My decision will comply will all applicable laws and regulations. I have summarized some pertinent ones below:

National Forest Management Act – This Act requires all projects and activities are consistent with the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. This project and decision are consistent with the current Plan and with the proposed revision.

Endangered Species Act – See Section II, Item B1 of this document.

National Historic Preservation Act – See Section II, Item B6 of this document.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act – See Section II, Item B6 of this document.

National Environmental Policy Act – This Act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. The documentation of this decision supports compliance with this Act.

My decision is consistent with the 2003 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Uinta National Forest.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF APPEAL

No comments or expressions of interest were received. Therefore, this decision is not subject to a higher level of administrative review or appeal (36 CFR 215.12(e) (1).

VI. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.9(c)(1) this decision may be implemented immediately after publication of notice of this decision memo in the *Provo Daily Herald.*

VII. CONTACT PERSON

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Sarah Flinders of this office (801) 798-3571.

VII. SIGNATURE AND DATE

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in and environmental impact statement of environmental assessment, as it is within one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 section 31.2, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the planning record.

Douglas H. Jones

DOUGLAS H. JONES
District Ranger
Spanish Fork Ranger District

8/3/06
Date