

NEWS RELEASE

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Ogden Ranger District

507 25th Street
Ogden, Utah 84401



For Immediate Release

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Ogden Ranger District to Implement New Project

OGDEN, April 21, 2008 – Chip Sibbernsen, Ogden District Ranger, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest announced today the Ogden Ranger District is planning a vegetation treatment project located in Rich County, Utah. The 21,000 acre project area is located about 50 miles east of Ogden, Utah in the 100,000 acre Big Creek watershed.

Brian Ferebee, the Responsible Official for this project and Acting Forest Supervisor, has selected Alternative 1 with Modifications. The selected alternative will treat approximately 4,361 acres of aspen, conifer, and sagebrush communities with a combination of mechanical treatments (including timber sale, pre-commercial thinning, or sagebrush thinning), prescribed fire, and/or herbicide treatment which will:

- Improve vegetation structure and pattern for cover types within the Big Creek project area to move toward properly functioning condition at the landscape scale.
- Enhance ecosystem resiliency and maintain desired fuel levels so that fire can operate in a more natural role in the ecosystem.
- Provide commercial timber that contributes to a sustainable level of goods and services.

Wasatch-Cache National Forest resource specialists conducted a watershed assessment of this 21,000 acre portion of the Big Creek watershed in 2005. The assessment characterized the current condition of the area and identified opportunities for vegetation management. Some of the notable communities at risk are: aspen communities (being encroached upon and potentially replaced by conifer trees), sagebrush communities and Engelmann spruce/sub-alpine fir, Douglas-fir, and lodge pole pine forests.

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Scoping began in May 2006. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released in June 2007. In the Draft EIS, the interdisciplinary team identified three significant issues: Soil Productivity, Water Quality, and Wildlife/Habitat. These issues led the agency to develop three alternatives: Alternative 1 – Proposed Action, Alternative 2 – No Action, and Alternative 3 – Reduced Treatment and Wildlife Emphasis. Based on comments on the DEIS, a Final EIS was completed April 2008, and a Record of Decision signed April 15, 2008.

The Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) are available on the web at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/wcnf/projects/decisions/index.shtml>. Copies of the FEIS and ROD are also available at the Weber County Main Branch, North Ogden Branch, Ogden Valley Branch, Brigham City and Logan libraries, Rich County Clerk's Office, and the Forest Service Information Center in Union Station and this office.

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215 as described in the ROD and the legal notice published in The Salt Lake Tribune.

For more information concerning this project, please contact Chip Sibbensen at the Ogden Ranger District, 507 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401, by phone (801) 625-5112 or by e-mail at csibbensen@fs.fed.us.

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