

Decision Memo

Long Hollow Gravel Pit

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Logan Ranger District
Cache County, Utah

Decision

I have decided to approve the Long Hollow gravel pit project. The gravel pit is located adjacent to the Long Hollow road approximately 15 miles east of Logan Utah, in T12N, R3E, Section 24. The pit will be used as a gravel source for general maintenance of forest roads, primarily in the Temple Fork, Long Hollow, and Dip Hollow vicinities.

The maximum area of disturbance for the project will be less than 5 acres in size, including an area of disturbance for the pit itself of approximately 2 acres and a loading area, approximately ½ acre in size, located adjacent to the pit on the south side. The short access route to the pit from the Long Hollow Road will be obliterated and revegetated when the pit is closed. Approximately 15 to 20 aspen trees will need to be cut to clear the area for the gravel pit, access, and the loading area. These trees will be retained on site to be used for site reclamation when the pit is closed.

The following are details of the project:

- The pit will be constructed beginning on the northwest end of the pit boundary moving toward the southeast edge of the pit boundary
- Once a phase of the pit is removed, the pit slopes will be contoured to a 2:1 slope with slope rounding on top of the slopes
- Tall shrubs and a several aspen trees will be removed along Long Hollow road at the access point to provide for a safe sight line when entering the Long Hollow road from the gravel loading area
- The top 6 inches of surface soil will be removed from the gravel pit area and reserved, to be replaced on the surface when the pit is closed and the area reclaimed
- A pit plan, including Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control and specifications for closure of the pit, will be written before project implementation
- There are invasive species present such as cheat grass and bulbous bluegrass; it will be necessary to monitor and treat any potential spread of invasive species in the areas where the gravel is used

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures included as part of the decision are intended to reduce or avoid environmental impacts from the proposed project.

1. Reclaimed areas will be vegetated with native plant seed
2. The vegetation strip between the Long Hollow road and the loading area will be retained as long as possible to minimize the visual connection of the pit and the Long Hollow road
3. The old alignment of Long Hollow road will form a catchment basin between the gravel pit and the stream, preventing sediment from the pit from reaching the stream
4. A small earthen berm 2 to 3 feet in height will be constructed at the southeastern edge of the pit and the loading area to retain storm runoff and prevent sediment from entering the stream

Scoping and Public Involvement

This proposal was provided to 130 individuals, organizations, and other agencies on the District mailing list in a scoping letter dated June 4, 2008, posted on the Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/wcnf/projects/proposed>, and included in the spring 2008 Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) database. The project was available for comment during the scoping period (June 4, 2008 through July 7, 2008).

The District received 1 comment letter; the respondent had no concern with the gravel pit project as described and mitigated.

Reason for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Action

Based on public input, interdisciplinary team review, past experience, and consideration of the resource conditions listed below, I have determined the effects of implementing this action will be of limited context and intensity and will result in little or no environmental effect to either the physical or biological components of the environment. As such, this is a decision that has been categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

The proposed action falls under 36 CFR Part 220 and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 - Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook, Chapter 30, Section 31.2 Category 3 – Approval modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land. The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action. There were no significant effects identified for the resource conditions listed below.

a. Federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species. The wildlife biologist has reviewed the proposal and has determined there will be “no effect” to any threatened and endangered wildlife species or designated critical habitat and “no impact” to any Forest Service sensitive wildlife species because the species were not found within the project area. The fisheries biologist has determined there will be “no effect” to any threatened and endangered aquatic species or designated critical habitat and “no impact” to any Forest Service sensitive aquatic species because the species are not found in or adjacent to the project area. Also, because the old road prism will capture any potential sediment before it enters the stream, there will be no impact to the stream. The forest botanist has surveyed the project area has determined there will be “no effect” to any threatened and endangered plant species or designated critical habitat and “no impact” to any Forest Service sensitive plant species because either suitable habitat is not provided or the plants were not found here. Therefore, the project will have no effect on any T,E,S species or critical habitat.

b. Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds. The forest soil scientist and forest hydrologist visited the proposed gravel pit site and have determined the project is not located within any flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds, and therefore, will have no effect on any of these features.

c. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas. The proposed gravel pit site is not located within a congressionally designated area and therefore, will not have any effect on any such designated area.

d. Inventoried roadless areas. The proposed gravel site is located directly adjacent to the Long Hollow Road which serves as the boundary between the Right Hand Fork and Elk Valley roadless areas. There is no road construction or timber harvest associated with this project and the pit will be reclaimed and

revegetated after it is closed. Therefore, although the proposed gravel pit is located within the Right Hand Fork roadless area, this project will have no effect on inventoried roadless area values or character.

e. Research Natural Areas. The proposed gravel site is not located within a Research Natural Area and therefore, will not have any effect on any RNA.

f. American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites. The Forest archaeologist has visited and surveyed the proposed gravel pit site and has determined that no American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites will be affected by this project.

g. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas. The Forest archaeologist has visited and surveyed the proposed gravel pit site and has determined that no archaeological sites or historic properties or areas will be affected by this project.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the Revised Forest Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed in conformance with forest plan standards and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidelines. The project is consistent with the desired future conditions as described in the Forest Plan. The gravel pit site is located within the Cache Box Elder Management Area (Forest Plan, pages 4-128 to 4-139).

Administrative Appeal Opportunity and Implementation

This decision pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f) is not subject to appeal and may be implemented immediately.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Jennefer Parker, District Ranger, 1500 East Highway 89, Logan, Utah 84321, (435-755-3620).

/s/Jennefer Parker

September 23, 2008

JENNEFER PARKER
District Ranger

Date

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