

Decision Notice
& Finding of No Significant Impact

Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction

**USDA Forest Service
Roosevelt/Duchesne Ranger District, Ashley National Forest
Duchesne County, Utah**

Background

The Duchesne/Roosevelt District hires approximately 30 to 40 seasonal employees per year and currently can accommodate around 15 seasonal employees. The majority of the seasonals are housed in a 1980s split entry duplex located approximately 1 hour from the office. Seasonal housing is generally not available in Duchesne and it is needed to provide incentive to work here. In 2010, the Forest conveyed two single family dwellings and a bunkhouse in Duchesne and two single family dwellings in Roosevelt with the intent to construct a more efficient bunkhouse in Duchesne. The conveyed dwellings were older buildings that did not accommodate single, seasonal, mixed gender occupancy and were not accessible.

The purpose of this project is to construct a 10-person bunkhouse in Duchesne for housing seasonal employees. This single new building would improve accessibility, energy efficiency, and reduce the carbon footprint of the existing structures through better insulation and ventilation, with updated electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and heating components; and the elimination of deferred maintenance costs associated with the old residence buildings.

The need for this bunkhouse was identified in the Ashley National Forest Facilities Master Plan.

The environmental assessment for the Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction project documents the analysis of alternatives to meet this need.

Decision

Based upon my review of the alternatives, I have decided to implement the proposed action, as analyzed in the Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction Environmental Assessment (EA), including all project design elements and monitoring (see EA pp. 4-5 for a complete description of the proposed action and project design elements). The selected alternative will include the following actions:

1. Construction of a single story 10-person bunkhouse, a parking area, and underground utilities to the building.

2. Existing fencing of the horse pasture would be moved to accommodate the bunkhouse and parking areas and the existing round pen would be relocated.

Project Design Elements

In response to public comments and specialist analysis of the proposal, project design elements were developed to mitigate some of the potential impacts from the proposed action. These measures, in addition to all other applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines and other relevant direction will apply.

1. Construction noise: To mitigate the effect of construction noise on adjacent residences, construction work hours will be limited to Monday through Saturday 7:00am to 9:00pm.
2. To limit the spread and establishment of invasive plant species into the project area, all heavy equipment used during the project implementation will be free of noxious weeds and seeds or invasive exotic weeds and seeds before entering the project area.
3. Any mulch, hay or rice straw brought to the site must be certified weed free.
4. During project implementation and after the project is completed, monitor the site for noxious weeds. Any new populations of noxious weeds will be immediately treated.
5. All appropriate Forest Best Management Practices (BMPs) shall be implemented to minimize damage to surface soil structure and to reduce potential for erosion and sediment transport to drainages due to project activities.
6. Project generated garbage must be properly stored/disposed of on a daily basis. When operations are complete, any excess material or debris shall be removed from the work area.

Decision Rationale

There is a need to construct a bunkhouse in Duchesne for both efficiency and improving our recruiting ability for seasonal employees. The site where the bunkhouse will be constructed is within the city limits and no significant or insignificant affects to the environment or cultural or heritage resources would occur from implementing this project. No substantive comments were identified from public comments.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered the no action alternative. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on page 5.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, no bunkhouse would be constructed in Duchesne.

Public Involvement

The proposal was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on 8/07/2012. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during the 30 day scoping/comment period, which began when the notice of scoping was published in the *Uintah Basin Standard* on August 14, 2012. As part of the public involvement process, the agency mailed or emailed scoping letters soliciting comments to individuals and organizations. One comment was received as a result of this scoping/comment period.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety. The proposed action would not be expected to have any significant and adverse effects on any municipal water supply (EA p. 7).
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area, because no cultural resources were identified in the area and design criteria will minimize potential effects to wetlands and watersheds (EA p. 6-7).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. Because there is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project.
5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk.
6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because the action is routine in nature and is neither precedent-setting nor are significant effects expected from similar actions.
7. Analysis shows that there will be no cumulative impacts.

8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources, because surveys conducted by the Forest heritage program found no cultural resources and Utah SHPO Concurred with No Historic Properties on September 13, 2012. The section 106 (cultural resources) clearance process is complete and project may proceed. A clearance letter from the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer dated September 13, 2012 is located in the project record.
9. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973.
A determination of **no effect** was made for Threatened and Endangered (T&E) plants and aquatic species in relation to the selected alternative as there are no T&E plant or aquatic species within the project area (EA p. 6).
10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA. The action is consistent with the Ashley National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the Ashley National Forest Land Management Plan.

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and EA were considered. I determined these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

To the best of my knowledge, this decision is in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Some of the principal laws and regulations considered include the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, National Forest Management Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Executive Order 13186 of 2001 and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Federal Noxious Weed Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and Executive Order 11990 Wetlands, Executive Order 11988 Floodplains and Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice.

Implementation Date

This project may begin immediately.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

Contact

Kristy Groves, Roosevelt/Duchesne District District Ranger, is the responsible official for the Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction EA. For further information you may contact: 435-781-5203.

/s/ *Kristy L. Groves*

9/27/2012

Kristy Groves
District Ranger
Roosevelt/Duchesne Ranger District

Date

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