



Forest
Service

September 2012



Environmental Assessment

Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction

Roosevelt-Duchesne Ranger District, Ashley National Forest

Duchesne County, Utah

Township 3 South Range 13 East, Section 1 NW SW

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SUMMARY

The Ashley Nation Forest proposes to construct a bunkhouse on property owned by the Forest Service within the city limits of Duchesne, UT. This action is needed, because there is a need to provide seasonal housing in Duchesne that is more efficient, and with lower maintenance costs.

The proposed action would have no significant effects on the environment. Expected non-significant effects from the proposed action are discussed in the *Environmental Consequences* section of this document.

In addition to the proposed action, the Forest Service also evaluated the following alternatives:

- *No Action (Alternative 1)*. The no action alternative provides a baseline from which to examine potential effects. Under this alternative, no bunkhouse would be constructed.

Based upon the environmental analysis, the responsible official will decide whether or not to construct the bunkhouse. If it proceeds, the responsible official will also decide what decision criteria and monitoring requirements would apply.

INTRODUCTION

Document Structure

The Forest Service has prepared this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Environmental Assessment discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives. The document is organized into four parts:

- *Introduction:* The section includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency's proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal and how the public responded.
- *Comparison of Alternatives, including the Proposed Action:* This section provides a more detailed description of the agency's proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes possible decision criteria. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.
- *Environmental Consequences:* This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and other alternatives. This analysis is organized by issue.
- *Agencies and Persons Consulted:* This section provides a list of preparers and agencies consulted during the development of the environmental assessment.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the Duchesne Ranger District Office in Duchesne, 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.

Purpose and Need for Action

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.

Proposed Action

A 10 person bunkhouse will be constructed in Duchesne along with an associated parking area (Figure 1). The bunkhouse will have an efficient design for living space to accommodate up to ten single employees and allow for mixed-gender occupancy. The building will be accessible, meet current building and zoning codes, and have lower maintenance costs than previous facilities. The project will be located on property owned by the Forest Service within the city limits of Duchesne. Construction will consist of a single story 10-person bunkhouse, a parking area, and underground utilities to the building.

Decision Framework

The decision to be made by the District Ranger, based on review of the Purpose and Need for the Action, the Proposed Action, and environmental consequences, is whether to approve the Proposed Action, or the No Action Alternative for the Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction EA.

Public Involvement

The proposal was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on August 7, 2012. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during a scoping/comment period, which began when the notice of scoping/comment was published in the *Uintah Basin Standard* on August 14, 2012. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency mailed or emailed scoping letters soliciting comments to individuals and organizations. Only one comment was received.

Using the input from those interested publics and agencies who commented on the proposal, as well as preliminary specialist input (see *Issues* section), the interdisciplinary team developed a list of issues to address.

The comments received during the scoping/comment period are summarized in the table below:

Date	From	Comment	Response
8/14/2012	Duchesne County Commissioners	Supportive of the project contingent on all requirements of Duchesne City Code being met.	Comment noted.

Issues

The Forest Service separates comments into two groups: substantive and non-substantive. Substantive comments are defined as those directly or indirectly caused by implementing the Proposed Action. Comments are identified as non-substantive if: 1) they are outside the scope of the Proposed Action; 2) they are already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; or, 3) they are conjectural or value statements and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. Substantive comments may be dealt with summarily by adjusting an alternative or correcting an omission. Substantive comments may also be considered as issues that drive an alternative or affects analysis. Issues with limited extent, duration, and intensity of environmental effects were also considered non-substantive. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations require this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)..."

There were no substantive comments brought forward from public comments during the scoping /comment phase and no larger issues were identified from them. The following issues were identified and analyzed:

1. Impact to threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) species. The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: 1) impacts to federally threatened or endangered species are avoided and 2) impacts to Forest Service sensitive species will not lead to a trend towards loss of viability or federal listing.
2. Impact to cultural/ heritage resources: The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures are: presence of cultural/ heritage resources on site.
3. Impact to hydrology of the site: The indicators used to measure whether this issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigations measures are: flow volumes and velocity.

ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for the Duchesne Bunkhouse Construction Project. It includes a description of and map reference for each alternative considered. This section also presents the alternatives in comparative form, sharply defining the differences between each alternative and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker and the public.

Alternatives

Alternative 1

No Action

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

Alternative 2

The Proposed Action

A 10 person bunkhouse will be constructed in Duchesne along with an associated parking area (Figure 1). The bunkhouse will have an efficient design for living space to accommodate up to ten single employees and allow for mixed-gender occupancy. The building will be accessible, meet current building and zoning codes, and have lower maintenance costs than previous facilities. The project will be located on property owned by the Forest Service within the city limits of Duchesne. Construction will consist of a single story 10-person bunkhouse, a parking area, and underground utilities to the building. Existing fencing of the horse pasture would be moved to accommodate the bunkhouse and parking areas and the existing round pen would be relocated.

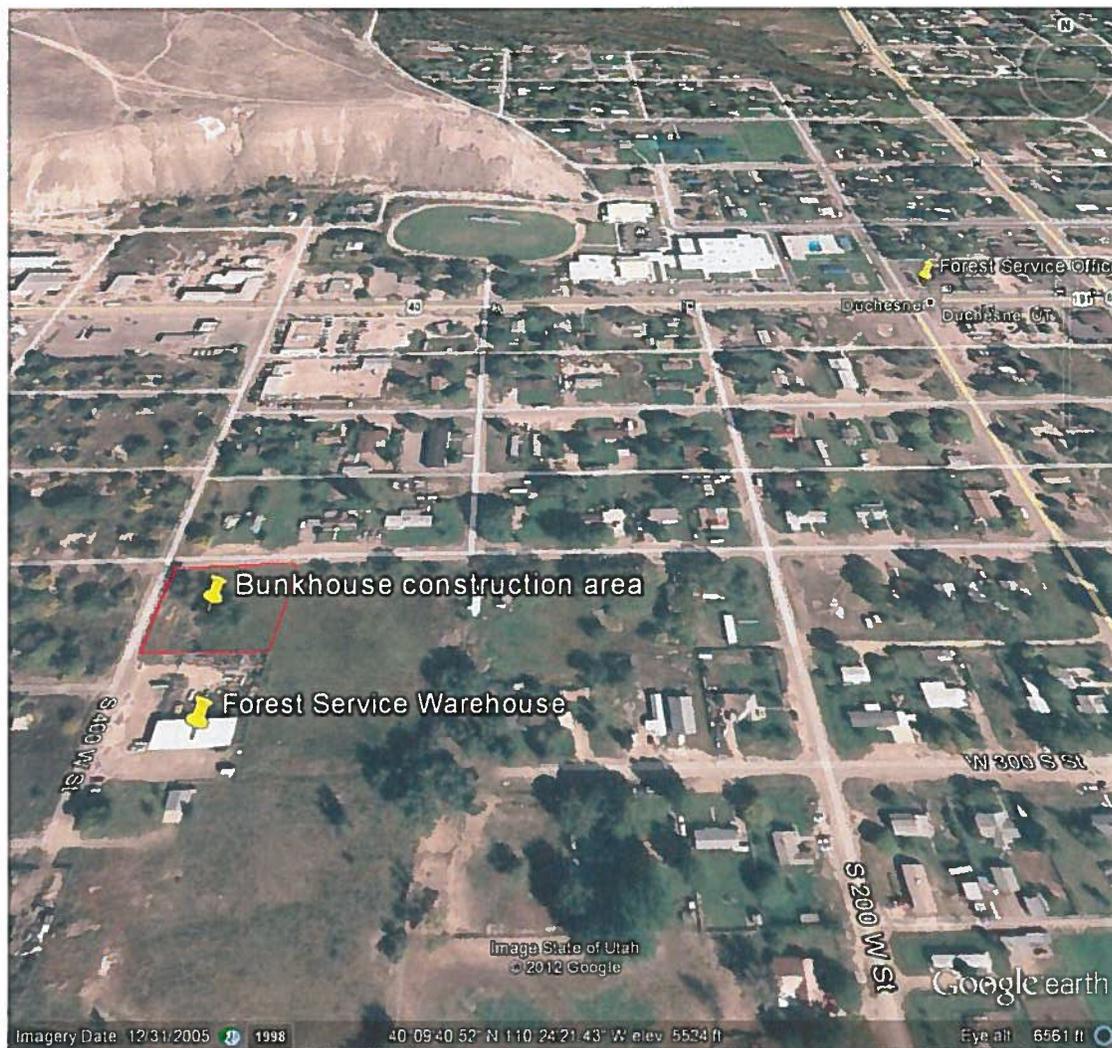


Figure 1. Duchesne bunkhouse location.

Project Design Criteria

In response to public comments and specialist analysis of the proposal, project design criteria and decision criteria were developed to ease or eliminate some of the potential impacts the proposed action may cause.

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.

Comparison of Alternatives

This section provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives.

Comparison of Effects of Alternatives: Summary

	Alternative 1 No Action	Alternative 2 Proposed Action
Impact to TES Species	No new impacts to TES species	No impacts to TES species
Impact to cultural/heritage	No new impacts to cultural/heritage resources	No effect to any historic properties
Impact to Hydrology/Soils	No new impacts to Hydrology/soils	No soil concerns and no effects to floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section summarizes the physical, biological, social and economic environments of the affected project area and the potential changes to those environments due to implementation of

the alternatives. It also presents the scientific and analytical basis for comparison of alternatives presented in the chart above.

In 1978, the Council on Environmental Quality disseminated regulations for implementing NEPA. These regulations (50 CFR Parts 1500-1508) include a definition of “significantly” as used in NEPA. The definition includes consideration of context and of ten elements of intensity.

(a) Context. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

(b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact.

TES Species

Proposed Action: Due to lack of habitat at the proposed location of the new bunkhouse, there would be no concerns to TES wildlife species. Therefore there would be “No effects” to TES wildlife species as a result of building the proposed bunkhouse.

This proposed project is located within an urban area and does not affect suitable habitat or deplete or degrade the flow of downstream waters into the Upper Colorado River Basin and would have **No Effect** on the four Colorado River endangered fishes. Because there is no suitable habitat within or near the proposed project area for Colorado River cutthroat trout, Columbian spotted frog, or boreal toad, the proposed project is expected to have **no impact** on these species as well.

Extensive surveys on the Ashley National Forest and review of literature indicates there are no threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species in the area of this proposed action. Based on absence of these species a determination of **no effect** to Threatened or Endangered plant species or their habitat, and **no impact** to sensitive plants is made for this proposed action.

No Action: The bunkhouse would not be constructed in Duchesne. No ground disturbing activities would take place so there would be no additional impacts to any TES species.

Cultural/Heritage Resources

All Alternatives: Cultural and heritage resources often consist of –but are not limited to– architectural resources (buildings and structures), and properties of importance to Native Americans and other ethnic groups. Under Section 106 guidelines of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Federal agencies must take into account project impacts on historic properties. This property was purchased by the Forest Service in 1968 and records do not indicate there was ever a structure on this property. A 3 acre cultural resource survey was conducted on the site and no new cultural resource sites, either historic or prehistoric, were identified. No evidence exists suggesting the historic presence of a structure in the proposed

project area and no prehistoric artifacts or features were present on the surface. Construction of the bunkhouse will result in "No Historic Properties Affected".

Hydrology/Soils

Proposed Action: The site for the new bunkhouse in Duchesne was surveyed and there were no watershed concerns identified (floodplains, wetlands, municipal watershed) regarding the plans for the bunkhouse. There will be no effects to floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds. There were also no soil management concerns identified.

No Action: The bunkhouse would not be constructed in Duchesne. No ground disturbing activities would take place so there would be no additional impacts to watershed or soils.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes and non-Forest Service persons during the development of this environmental assessment:

ID TEAM MEMBERS:

Ronald Brunson, Fisheries Biologist
Bob Christensen, Wildlife Biologist
Allen Huber, Range Ecologist
Darlene Koerner, Soils Scientist
Jeffrey Rust, Archaeologist
Chris Plunkett, Hydrologist

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES:

Duchesne City Mayor
Duchesne County Commissioners
Duchesne County Planning Commission
Duchesne City Planning Commission

TRIBES:

Ute Indian Tribe, Fort Duchesne, UT

OTHERS:

The above entities and all others with which the Forest Service consulted are contained in the scoping letter mailing lists found in the project record.