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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** All Steering Committee Members and Interested Parties

**From:** Iron County Commissioner, Chair Paul Cozzens

**Subject:** Steering Committee Meeting, at 12:30 PM on Wednesday, January 14th, 2026,  
in Cedar City, Utah  
*(Lunch will be provided to Steering Committee members and FCAOG Staff at the meeting location at 12:00 noon.)*

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be determined at this steering meeting. The meeting is at its regular location: **Festival Hall Conference Center; Combined Rooms 5 & 6; Address: 96 North Main St., Cedar City, Utah.**

While in-person attendance by Steering Committee members is preferred and encouraged, any Steering Committee member may participate via a Teams meeting, if necessary, in order for them to join in this meeting. Presenters may also be able to utilize this method, if necessary, presenters should contact Darin Bushman (see below) to arrange that. Those participating via Teams should please mute your audio when initially joining in. The public may participate, in-person, at the meeting location shown above.

Materials are attached to assist board members in preparing for this meeting and to inform other interested parties of what will be taking place during this meeting of our association's governing body.

Please review all materials and address any questions or concerns to AOG staff, C/O Executive Director Darin Bushman: [Dbushman@fivecounty.utah.gov](mailto:Dbushman@fivecounty.utah.gov)  
Staff will thus be able to research answers to your questions or concerns prior to the Steering Committee meeting.

[FCAOG Steering Committee Meeting | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)



## **A G E N D A**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**FESTIVAL HALL CONFERENCE CENTER IN COMBINED ROOMS 5 & 6**

**ADDRESS: 96 NORTH MAIN ST., CEDAR CITY, UTAH**

**WEDNESDAY, January 14, 2026**

**Meeting starts at 12:30 p.m. MST**

**(Board members may participate electronically if necessary)**

- 1. Welcome and Introductions of all in attendance. - Commissioner Paul Cozzens, Chair**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance. - Led by invitation of the Chair {5 minutes}**
- 3. Approve Appointment of new Chairman -Chair {5 minutes} [Approval Requires Motion & Vote] 12:35**
- 4. Review and Approve Draft Minutes of Steering Committee November 12, 2025 [Approval Requires Motion & Vote] 12:45**
- 5. Review and Approve Draft Minutes from CDBG First Public Hearing December 4, 2025 [Approval Requires Motion & Vote]. 12:40**
- 6. HR Report – Jen Wong {5 minutes} 12:50**
- 7. Upcoming Changes to URS – Jen Wong {5 minutes} 12:55**
- 8. Changes to Travel Reimbursement Policy – Jen Wong {5 minutes} 1:00**
- 9. Directors' Report – Darin Bushman {10 minutes} 1:05**
- 10. HB 48 Resolution [Approval Requires Motion & Vote] {5 minutes} 1:15**
- 11. AOG Program Presentation – Kathryn Moster {15 minutes} 1:20**
- 12. CDBG Application Discussion – Vehicles – Darin Bushman {10 Minutes} 1:35**
- 13. Utah Tech University – President Smeed {30 minutes} 1:45**
- 14. Congressional Staff Updates. {15-20 minutes} 2:15**
- 15. State Agency Updates. {5 minutes} 2:30**



# Five County Association of Governments

1070 West 1600 South, Bldg. B  
Saint George, UT 84770  
Office (435) 673-3548

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**16. Universities and Technical Colleges Updates.** {10-15 minutes} 2:35

**17. Local Affairs Discussions, if needed.** {2-5 minutes, or as needed} 2:50

**18. Other Business, as called by the Chair, if needed.**

**19. Closed Session, if needed.**

**20. Adjourn- *Chair*** 2:55



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## **STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Location: Festival Hall, Cedar City Utah, (Hybrid)

### **Attending:**

Gil Almquist	Scott Bolander	Darin Bushman
Collette Cox (Virtual)	Paul Cozzens	Nolan Davis
Luke Dunn	Tyler Fails	Lyle Goulding
Garth Green	Stephanie Hill	Wade Hollingshead
Kevin Jones	Brad Last (Virtual)	Allison McCoy
Celeste Meyeres	Carrie Schonlaw	Carrie Sigler
Burke Staheli	Jerry Taylor	Melynda Thorpe
Melanie Torgerson	Gary Webster (Virtual)	Nathan Wiberg
Nannette Billings	Jeff Raisor	

### **1) Call to Order & Introductions**

Chair Commissioner Paul Cozzens (Iron County) called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 PM and led introductions of in-person and online attendees representing local governments, educational institutions, and legislative offices.

### **2) Pledge of Allegiance**

Led by Commissioner Jerry Taylor (Garfield County).

### **3) Approval of Minutes (October 1, 2025)**

Motion to approve the minutes made by Mayor Billings and seconded Gil Almquist; motion carried unanimously.

### **4) HR / Administrative**

Executive Director Darin Bushman reported staffing updates including the upcoming retirement of Ross Burton in January 2026 and J.C. Finicum's transition into the Accounting Specialist position. The Community and Economic Development position remains open due to federal funding delays. Total staff count is 77.

### **5) Executive Director Report**

Director Bushman highlighted several major initiatives: receipt of a new recreation planning grant for a recreational hub feasibility study. The AOG also applied for a RCOG grant to assist SUEA with their advanced manufacturing initiative. He also announced the restructuring of planning and local



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administrative advisor functions to a single point-of-contact model. They recently had a review with GOPB on the Built Here Zions shuttle project. Director Bushman also discussed facility consolidations to reduce overhead; and ongoing technology and fleet modernization. He also discussed preparations for a Washington, D.C. congressional briefing promotional trip. He also shared the implementation of a 24-month leadership development program across departments.

## 6) Program Risk and Program Status

Carrie Schonlaw reported receipt of an IHC Foundation grant supporting malnutrition prevention for seniors. She also discussed the continuation of the Benefit Enrollment Center program, and impacts of the ongoing federal shutdown on HEAT and housing assistance programs. Temporary measures and local partnerships are in place to maintain service continuity. receiving an IHC Foundation grant to support

## 7) FY 2024 Financial Audit – Kevin Jones, CPA (Nathan Buckner & Company)

Auditor Kevin Jones presented the results of the FY 2024 independent audit. He reported that the financial statements received a clean, unmodified opinion, meaning they were found to be fairly stated in all material respects. Jones summarized overall trends in assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenditures and noted that the AOG remains in a sound financial position with a positive change in net position from the prior year. The audit also confirmed that the agency's accounting practices comply with generally accepted accounting principles and Government Auditing Standards.

### Findings and Observations

- One significant deficiency was identified in the Microloan Program related to internal controls and oversight of loan write-offs and collection efforts.
- One state compliance exception occurred when meeting minutes were not posted to the state website within the required three-day window.
- No findings were issued under the Single Audit Act, and there were no disagreements or difficulties with management during the audit process.

Management responded that corrective actions are already underway, including assigning independent oversight of the microloan program and improving internal posting procedures.

Action: Motion to accept the FY 2024 Audit Report was made by Jerry Taylor and seconded by Wade Hollingshead. Motion passed unanimously.

## 8) Microloan Program Oversight

Discussion was had because of the audit to establish a Microloan Committee as an independent body to oversee the Microloan program. A motion was made by Nanette Billings and seconded by Burke Staheli to designate the Executive Committee (the five county commissioners) as the independent oversight body for the Microloan Program, with the Executive Director serving in an advisory, non-voting role. Motion carried unanimously.



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**9) Program Spotlight – Care About Childcare**

Presentation by Carrie Siegler highlighting regional childcare support services across ten counties, including expansion of licensed programs and training for providers. She also noted that the Southern Utah Early Childhood Conference is planned for April 2026 at Southern Utah University.

**10) CDBG Public Hearing Planning**

Discussion was had regarding the 2026 CDBG first public hearing which will be held the first week in December via Teams and in-person at the St George office.

**11) Fleet Replacement Discussion**

A Discussion was had on the potential CDBG eligibility for fleet replacement and continued review of Enterprise Fleet as a potential fleet management partner and equity-recovery options. The committee supported pursuing funding opportunities through CDBG.

**12) December Steering Committee Meeting**

Consensus was to hold the December meeting in conjunction with the Public Health and Behavioral Health meetings in St George at the Abby Inn.

**13) Congressional Staff Updates**

Gary Webster (Senator Mike Lee) and Jeff Raisor (Senator John Curtis) both presented updates on behalf of the senators.

**14) State Agency Updates**

Collette Cox (GOEO) and Luke Dunn (DWS) both presented updates on behalf of their offices.

**15) Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 PM.

Prepared by: Chat GPT/Darin Bushman

Reviewed by: Darin J. Bushman



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## **FIRST CDBG PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

### **Five County Association of Governments First CDBG Public Hearing Hearing Held: December 4, 2025**

The Five County Association of Governments first CDBG public hearing was held on December 4, 2025, at the Five County Association of Governments, St. George Office Building, 1070 West 1600 South, Bldg. B, St. George, Ut 84770. The meeting commenced at 5:05 pm.

Hearing Link: [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_YTY1ZDE2MWEtMTgyYS000ThjLWFkNTAtYTZINTc2NjBIZWQ1%40thread.v2/0?content=%7b%22id%22%3a%22307050b5-4fc5-4a13-8d7f-7210a6ac12ee%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%221a74e1f2-0fc1-43d8-a461-5892e6d5d9c5%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YTY1ZDE2MWEtMTgyYS000ThjLWFkNTAtYTZINTc2NjBIZWQ1%40thread.v2/0?content=%7b%22id%22%3a%22307050b5-4fc5-4a13-8d7f-7210a6ac12ee%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%221a74e1f2-0fc1-43d8-a461-5892e6d5d9c5%22%7d)

Present: Nathan Wiberg – Five County Association of Governments  
Kevin Smedley – Five County Association of Governments  
Anona Yardly (Online) – Beaver City  
JayCee Finicum – Five County Association of Governments  
Darin Bushman – Executive Director, Five County Association of Governments

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PUBLIC HEARING:**

Kevin Smedley opened the 1<sup>st</sup> CDBG public hearing open and turned the time over Nathan Wiberg to discuss the purpose of the Hearing.

Nathan Wiberg explained that the purpose of the public hearing is to provide citizens with pertinent information about the Community Development Block Grant program and to allow for discussion of possible applications for the 2026 funding cycle. He stated that the grant money must be spent on projects benefiting primarily low- and moderate-income persons. Nathan said that Five County Association of Governments is expecting to receive approximately \$1,083,168 in this new program year. He explained that all eligible activities that can be accomplished under this program are identified in the CDBG Application Policies and Procedures Manual and interested people can review it at any time. A PDF version is available online at the Utah Department of Workforce Services website. They can also request a link to the manual from Five County CED staff.

Nate Wiberg stated that eligible activities include construction of public works and facilities, such as, water and sewer lines, fire stations, acquisition of real property, provision of public services such as food banks or homeless shelters. In the past, Five County Association of Governments has received grants to



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administrate CDBG throughout the Five County Region, develop Capital Improvement lists, update the consolidated plan, and provide technical planning assistance, such as but not limited to, zoning ordinance review, data analysis, GIS assistance, etc.

Nate Wiberg said that the Capital Asset List for the AOG was present and available to review. He stated that it is part of the consolidated planning process and that the list shows which projects have been identified as being needed.

Kevin Smedley asked if anyone has questions, comments or suggestions during this hearing? If so, please identify yourself by name, before you speak. He stated that names in the minutes, and we would like to specifically respond to your questions and suggestions during this hearing.

Anona Yardly stated that she has no comments. Nathan Wiberg stated that he has received feedback that the AOG is in need of vehicles and that the Capital Facilities Plan reflects that need.

Kevin Smedley asked if there were any further comments. Being that there are no further comments, questions, or suggestions, the meeting is adjourned at 5:09 pm.



## Steering Committee Chair Rotation Schedule

Year	County	Commissioner
2024	Washington	Commissioner Gil Almquist
2025	Iron	Commissioner Paul Cozzens
2026	Beaver	Commissioner Wade Hollingshead
2027	Garfield	
2028	Kane	
2029	Washington	
2030	Iron	
2031	Beaver	
2032	Garfield	
2033	Kane	
2034	Washington	
2035	Iron	

## AOG Staffing Stats - January 2026

Administration - 4.5 staff, 0 turnover, 0 openings

- 4 FT staff in Washington County
  - Darin Bushman - Executive Director
  - Carrie Schonlaw - Deputy Director (50% time)
  - Allison McCoy - CFO
  - Jennifer Wong - HR Director
  - JayCee Finicum - Fiscal Accounting Specialist

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) - 16.5 staff, 0 turnover, 0 openings

- 3.5 FT Aging Services staff in Washington County
- 4 PT Aging Services staff in Washington County
- 7 FT Case Managers in Washington County
- 2 PT Ombudsman 1 in Washington County, 1 in Iron County

Child Care Resource Agency (CCRA) - 15 staff, 0 turnover, 0 openings

- 5 FT staff in Washington County
- 1 FT staff in Iron County
- 1-75% in Iron County (splits position with CAP)
- 2 FT staff in Sevier County
- 6 PT Remote trainers across counties

Community Economic Development (CED, LAA) - 5 staff, 0 turnover, 0 opening

- 3 FT staff in Washington County
- 1-20% in Washington County (splits with Transportation)
- 1 PT remote intern

Community Support Services (CSS) - 29 staff, 3 turnover, 1 opening

- 11 FT staff in Washington County- 1 at Hurricane Pantry
- 10 FT staff in Iron County
- 1 FT staff in Beaver & Garfield Counties
- 5 PT staff in Washington County
- 1-25% in Iron County (splits position with CCRA)
- 1 PT staff in Iron County

Transportation - 5 staff, 0 turnover 0 openings

- 4 FT staff in Washington County
- 1-80% in Washington County (position split with CED)

Total current staff - 75

Help Your Employees Build Tax-Free Retirement Income

# Roth 401(k) and 457(b) Plans: Why You Should Offer Them

## What They Are

Roth 401(k) and Roth 457(b) plans are retirement savings options that allow employees to contribute **after-tax dollars** and enjoy **tax-free withdrawals** in retirement.



## How They Benefit Employees

- » **Tax-Free Growth:** Contributions grow tax-free, and qualified withdrawals are 100% tax-free
- » **No Income Limits:** Unlike Roth IRAs, high earners can contribute
- » **Diversification:** Offers tax diversification alongside traditional pre-tax 401(k) and 457(b) contributions
- » **Maximize Savings Potential:** Generous contribution limits

## How They Benefit Employers

- » **Attract and Retain Talent:** Enhance your benefits package and show employees you care about their financial future
- » **Encourage Engagement:** More savings options can boost overall employee participation and engagement in your retirement plans
- » **No Cost to You:** No additional cost for employers to offer these plans alongside traditional 401(k) and 457(b)

## Which Employees Can Benefit Most?

- » **Younger employees** currently in lower tax brackets
- » **High-income earners** seeking tax diversification
- » **Employees expecting** higher taxes in retirement



Learn more:  
[www.urs.org/us/newroths](http://www.urs.org/us/newroths)

**Join Us for a Free Employer Webinar**

# Roth 401(k) and 457(b) Plans: How can they benefit my employees? What do I need to do to offer them?



**Join us in January for one of three employer webinars** about the Roth 401(k) and Roth 457(b). Representatives from three URS departments, Retirement Planning, Savings Plans, and Employer Services, will be on hand to explain your options and answer questions. We'll walk through the steps to adopt these plans so you'll be ready when they become available on March 30.

Wednesday, **January 7**, 2026, 8:30-9:30 a.m. | [Register](#)

Thursday, **January 8**, 2026, 1:30-2:30 p.m. | [Register](#)

Tuesday, **January 13**, 2026, 3:30-4:30 p.m. | [Register](#)

Learn more:

[www.urs.org/us/newroths](http://www.urs.org/us/newroths)



## Travel Per Diem & Mileage Policy

### Five County Association of Governments

#### 1. Purpose

This policy establishes standardized allowances for meals, mileage, and related travel costs for employees conducting official agency business.

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#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees traveling on behalf of Five County Association of Governments.

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#### 3. Definitions

**Per Diem:**

Daily allowance for meals paid without requiring receipts.

**Mileage Reimbursement:**

A per-mile allowance reimbursing employees for the use of a private vehicle.

**Duty Station:**

The primary location where an employee normally works.

**In-State vs. Out-of-State Travel:**

Determines whether fixed agency rates or GSA rates apply.

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#### 4. General Policy

1. **In-state per diem** is **\$60/day**, divided by meal (see Section 5).
  2. **Out-of-state travel** follows GSA's published M&IE rates.
  3. Lodging is reimbursed at actual cost with receipts.
- 

#### 5. In-State Per Diem Rates (Utah)

Meal	Amount
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Breakfast	\$15
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Lunch	\$18
-------	------

Meal	Amount
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Dinner	\$27
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<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60/day</b>
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#### Travel Days (First & Last Day)

- Reimbursed at **75%** of the daily per diem = **\$45**.

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### 6. Out-of-State Per Diem Rates

1. Out-of-state travel follows the **U.S. GSA** M&IE rates.
2. First and last days of travel are paid at **75%** of the applicable GSA rate.

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### 7. Mileage Reimbursement Policy

Employees may be reimbursed for use of a personal vehicle while traveling for official business, based on two conditions:

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#### 7.1 When an AOG Vehicle Is Available

If a government vehicle is available but the employee **elects to use their personal vehicle**, reimbursement will be made at a **reduced mileage rate** of:

**\$0.40 per mile**

This rate recognizes fuel and basic wear but does not cover full operating costs since a government vehicle was an available alternative.

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#### 7.2 When an AOG Vehicle Is Not Available

If all agency vehicles are in use or otherwise unavailable, reimbursement will be paid at the **full IRS standard mileage rate** in effect at the time of travel.

(Current IRS rate is commonly updated annually.)

#### IRS Standard Rate (example)

- 2025 standard rate: Use current IRS published rate at time of travel;

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#### 7.3 Additional Mileage Rules

- Mileage is calculated from the employee's **duty station** unless departing from home results in fewer miles.
- Mileage to meals or personal errands is not reimbursable.
- Employees must document beginning and ending odometer readings or mileage for the trip route.

#### **7.4 Justifiable Business Reason for Use of a Personal Vehicle**

- Employees are expected to use a company vehicle when reasonably available. Use of a personal vehicle in lieu of a company vehicle is permitted only when a legitimate business need exists, such as when a company vehicle is unavailable, impractical due to location or timing, unsuitable for the travel purpose, or when doing so improves operational efficiency or avoids unnecessary delays. Personal convenience alone is not a justifiable business reason. Approval and documentation may be required for reimbursement.
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### **8. Authorization of Travel**

Travel must be approved in advance by the supervisor and department director. Out-of-state travel requires additional approval from the Executive Director.

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### **9. Documentation Requirements**

Submit the following within **10 business days** of trip completion:

- Travel reimbursement form
  - Lodging receipts
  - Mileage logs
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### **10. Policy Updates**

The governing body may update this policy as needed to maintain compliance with IRS rules, GSA guidelines, or internal administrative requirements.



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## **Resolution Requesting Targeted Revisions and Delayed Implementation of HB 48 During the 2026 Utah General Session**

**WHEREAS**, the Five County Association of Governments represents the counties of Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington, and serves as a regional forum for coordination on land use, public safety, and natural resource issues; and

**WHEREAS**, wildfire risk in Utah's wildland urban interface continues to increase, and proactive mitigation, preparedness, and community resilience are shared priorities among state and local governments; and

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 48, Wildland Urban Interface Modifications, was enacted during the 2025 Utah General Session with the intent of improving wildfire risk assessment, mitigation, and insurance transparency statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, counties and municipalities within the Five County region support the underlying objectives of HB 48 and recognize the Legislature's effort to address growing wildfire threats; and

**WHEREAS**, local governments within the region are experiencing significant concern from residents regarding the initial Wildland Urban Interface risk mapping, including perceptions that the maps do not adequately reflect local conditions, existing mitigation efforts, or parcel-level risk differences; and

**WHEREAS**, counties and municipalities are reporting that the current implementation timeline does not provide adequate time for public education, refinement of mapping tools, establishment of meaningful appeals processes, or development of local administrative and enforcement capacity prior to the January 1, 2026, effective date; and

**WHEREAS**, uncertainty related to insurance impacts and mitigation requirements is contributing to public confusion and concern before assessment, appeal, and mitigation pathways are fully operational; and

**WHEREAS**, counties and municipalities are being placed in the position of frontline communicators and implementers without sufficient clarity, staffing, or funding to meet public expectations under the current timeline;





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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Steering Committee of the Five County Association of Governments respectfully requests that the Utah Legislature consider targeted statutory and administrative revisions to HB 48 during the 2026 General Session to address implementation concerns identified by local governments and affected communities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Association respectfully requests a delay in the implementation of key provisions of HB 48, including fee assessments and local enforcement requirements, to allow adequate time for map refinement, local government preparation, public education, and the establishment of clear and workable appeals and mitigation processes; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Association encourages continued collaboration among legislators, state agencies, counties, municipalities, insurers, and stakeholders to ensure wildfire risk reduction efforts are data-driven, locally informed, and practically achievable; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Association expresses appreciation to legislative leadership and the bill sponsor for engagement on this issue and affirms its willingness to participate constructively in efforts to improve the effectiveness and public confidence of HB 48.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Wade Hollingshead, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:



State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX  
*Governor*

DEIDRE HENDERSON  
*Lieutenant Governor*

Department of  
Environmental Quality

Tim Davis  
*Executive Director*

DIVISION OF AIR QUALITY  
Bryce C. Bird  
*Director*

DAQE-NN162870001-25

December 18, 2025

Beaver County Journal  
Legal Advertising Department  
P.O. Box 956  
Beaver, UT 84713

RE: Legal Notice of Intent to Approve

This letter will confirm the authorization to publish the attached NOTICE in the Beaver County Journal on December 24, 2025.

Please mail the invoice and affidavit of publication to the Utah State Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality, P.O. Box 144820, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4820. If you have any questions, contact Jeree Greenwood, who may be reached at (385) 306-6514.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeree Greenwood".

Jeree Greenwood  
Office Technician

Enclosure

cc: Iron County  
cc: Five County Association of Governments

### **NOTICE**

A Notice of Intent for the following project submitted in accordance with R307-401-1, Utah Administrative Code (UAC), has been received for consideration by the Director:

**Company Name:** Newcastle Biogas, LLC  
**Location:** Newcastle Biogas, LLC - Newcastle Biogas Flare – 198 South 1200 West, Newcastle, Iron County, UT  
**Project Description:** Newcastle Biogas, LLC has requested to construct and operate a flare that will control biogas (raw gas) emissions from dairy manure anaerobic digesters in Newcastle, Iron County. The feed stream for the digesters will be waste gases from an adjacent dairy farm, which is operated by a different owner.

The completed engineering evaluation and air quality impact analysis showed the proposed project meets the requirements of federal air quality regulations and the State air quality rules. The Director intends to issue an Approval Order pending a 30-day public comment period. The project proposal, estimate of the effect on local air quality, and draft Approval Order are available for public inspection and comment at the Utah Division of Air Quality, 195 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116. Written comments received by the Division at this same address on or before January 23, 2026, will be considered in making the final decision on the approval/disapproval of the proposed project. Email comments will also be accepted at [cbodell@utah.gov](mailto:cbodell@utah.gov). If anyone so requests to the Director in writing within 15 days of publication of this notice, a hearing will be held in accordance with R307-401-7, UAC.

Under Section 19-1-301.5, a person who wishes to challenge a Permit Order may only raise an issue or argument during an adjudicatory proceeding that was raised during the public comment period and was supported with sufficient information or documentation to enable the Director to fully consider the substance and significance of the issue. **Date of Notice: December 24, 2025**



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**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** January 7, 2026

Dear Friends of the Fishlake National Forest

The Beaver Ranger District of the Fishlake National Forest is conducting analysis on three small projects. The Forest has made a preliminary assessment that the proposals fall within categories of actions listed in 7 CFR 1b.3 that can be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. We are seeking your comments on these proposals to understand public issues and concerns related to the proposed project.

Please see the attached project descriptions and maps for the following projects:

- Circleville Timber Stand Improvement
- Cy's Cache Timber Stand Improvement
- Silver King Salvage

### **Public Involvement**


Scoping is not a statutorily required step in the NEPA review procedures under 7 CFR 1b but can be used to provide those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known early in project development. By soliciting public comments, the US Forest Service ensures that a wide range of interests and perspectives are considered and that site-specific natural resource concerns are identified.

### **How to Comment and Timeframe**

Comments on this project are welcome any time, but those received by January 19, 2026, will be most helpful for project development. Please send comments to Jared Whitmer, Beaver Ranger District, 575 S. Main Street, P.O. Box E, Beaver, UT 84713 or email to [jared.whitmer@usda.gov](mailto:jared.whitmer@usda.gov) and include in the subject line the name of which of the three projects listed above the comments pertain to. Hand delivered comments can be received at the Beaver Ranger District office during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding holidays).

Please see the enclosed scoping documents and maps for details. For additional information on these proposals, please contact me at (435) 896-1031.



 <p>Scoping Document</p>	<p><b>Circleville Timber Stand Improvement Project</b></p>	<p><b>USDA Forest Service Fishlake National Forest Beaver Ranger District Beaver County, Utah</b></p>
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The purpose of this document is to inform you of a new individual small project we are proposing to implement on the Beaver Ranger District. The environmental effects of the proposed project are being analyzed by Forest resource specialists (including water, wildlife, cultural resources, and fisheries) individually and cumulatively in relation to one another. We welcome your comments, concerns, and suggestions regarding this proposal.

The Beaver Ranger District has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within categories of actions listed in 7 CFR Part 1b.3 that can be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. The following information provides a description of the project. Additional information on this project is available from the Beaver Ranger District.

### **Circleville Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)**

The Circleville TSI project area encompasses approximately 135 acres of Engelmann spruce stands (see attached map). The purpose of this proposal is to implement the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP (Forest Plan)) by proposing vegetation treatments specifically to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Improve the timber age class distribution and maintain species diversity (LRMP, IV-4)
- 2) Manage the timber resources on lands suitable for production of saw timber and other Forest products (LRMP, IV-4).
- 3) Prevent and control insect infestation and disease (LRMP IV-5).

All stands are located on northerly aspects at elevations above 10,000 feet. Three of the five Englemann spruce stands in the project area were harvested and replanted between the 1970's and 1980's. Stand exams indicate two other Englemann spruce stands have regenerated after a fire sometime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All stands are moderately- to over-stocked and could benefit from TSI operations.

The proposed actions will require either/both of two actions: precommercial thinning (PCT) or commercial thinning. Precommercial thinning occur in stands where trees do not yet meet USFS merchantability standards. These stands will be thinned using hand crews, and the thinned material will be lopped and scattered on site. Commercial thinning occur where trees are large enough to be sold to a purchaser. These operations could occur using many kinds of equipment, depending on the capabilities of the purchaser, but all commercial thins involve moving cut material to a central landing, processing the logs, and loading the logs on trucks for transportation off of the mountain.

#### **Desired Results of Proposed Action:**

Improve growth and vigor of Englemann spruce stands within the project area using precommercial and/or commercial TSI operations.



# Circleville TSI Project Proposal

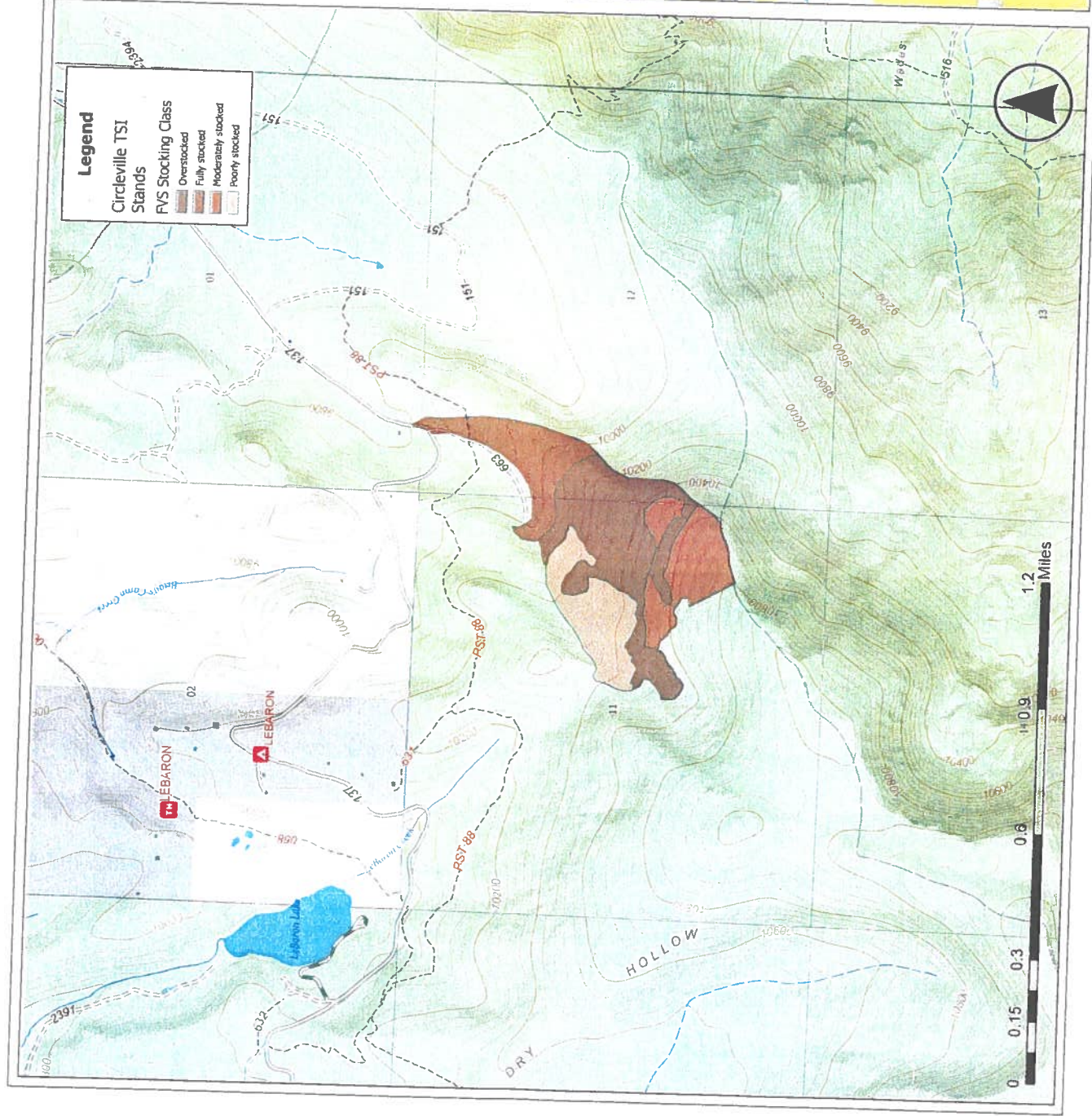
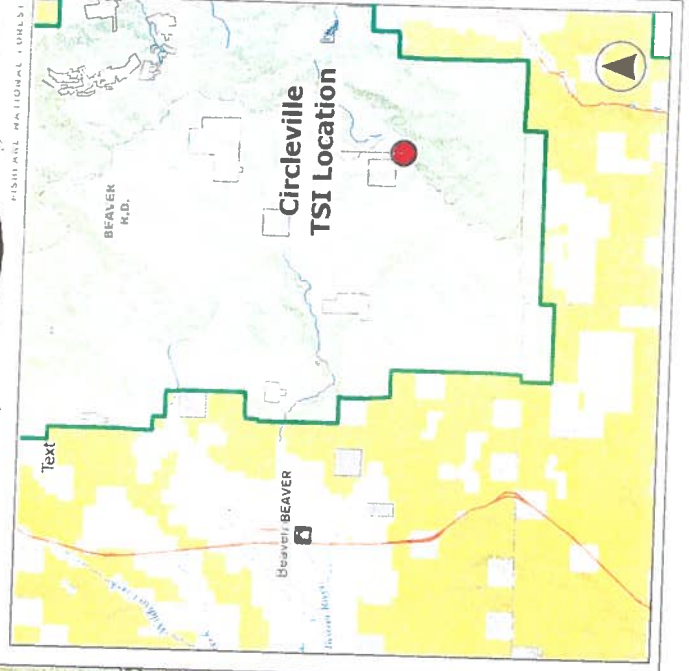
## Beaver Ranger District


Pavel Pihlak, Natabee Hunt, 12/2/15

The six stands in the Circleville TSI project area were harvested and replanted between the 1970s and 1980s, with two exceptions. Exams indicate these two stands may have regenerated after a fire sometime in the early 20th century, though the evidence is not conclusive. Stands are moderately- to overstocked, and could benefit from TSI operations.



FISHLAKE NATIONAL FOREST



 <p><b>Scoping Document</b></p>	<p><b>Cy's Cache Timber Stand Improvement</b></p>	<p><b>USDA Forest Service Fishlake National Forest Beaver Ranger District Beaver County, Utah</b></p>
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The purpose of this document is to inform you of a new individual small project we are proposing to implement on the Beaver Ranger District. The environmental effects of the proposed project are being analyzed by Forest resource specialists (including water, wildlife, cultural resources, and fisheries) individually and cumulatively in relation to one another. We welcome your comments, concerns, and suggestions regarding this proposal.

The Beaver Ranger District has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within categories of actions listed in 7 CFR 1b.3 that can be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. The following information provides a description of the project. Additional information on this project is available from the Beaver Ranger District.

### **Cy's Cache Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)**

The Cy's Cache project area encompasses approximately 300 acres of ponderosa pine forest (see attached map). The purpose of this proposal is to implement the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP (Forest Plan)) by proposing vegetation treatments specifically to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Improve the timber age class distribution and maintain species diversity (LRMP, IV-4)
- 2) Manage the timber resources on lands suitable for production of saw timber and other Forest products (LRMP, IV-4).
- 3) Restore and maintain ecosystems, consistent with land uses and historic fire regimes, through wildland fire use and prescribed fire (LRMP, IV-5)
- 4) Prevent and control insect infestation and disease. (LRMP IV-5).

High-grading (removing the highest quality timber) and fire suppression have allowed extensive white fir encroachment within the stand. Vertical fuel loading now puts the area at risk of stand-replacing fire behavior. Action is needed to restore historic ponderosa pine stand structure.

The project area borders two past fuel reduction treatments located along Forest Road (FR) 137 and Hi Lo/Whispering Pines estates. Reducing fuel loads would increase the buffer around private inholdings and improve FR137 as a holding feature in the event of a wildfire.

#### **Desired Results of Proposed Action:**

1. Restore fuel structures characteristic of historic fire regimes in degraded ponderosa pine stands.
2. Expand on fuel reduction work along FR137 and around Hi Lo/Whispering Pines private inholdings.

The timber stand improvement would include thinning all stems under 8 inches diameter at breast height (DBH), excluding ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and aspen. Cut stems would be piled and burned.



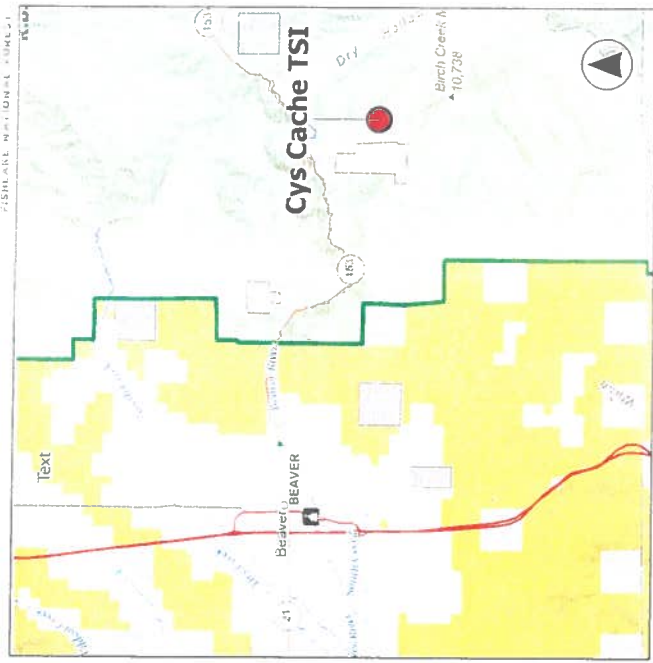
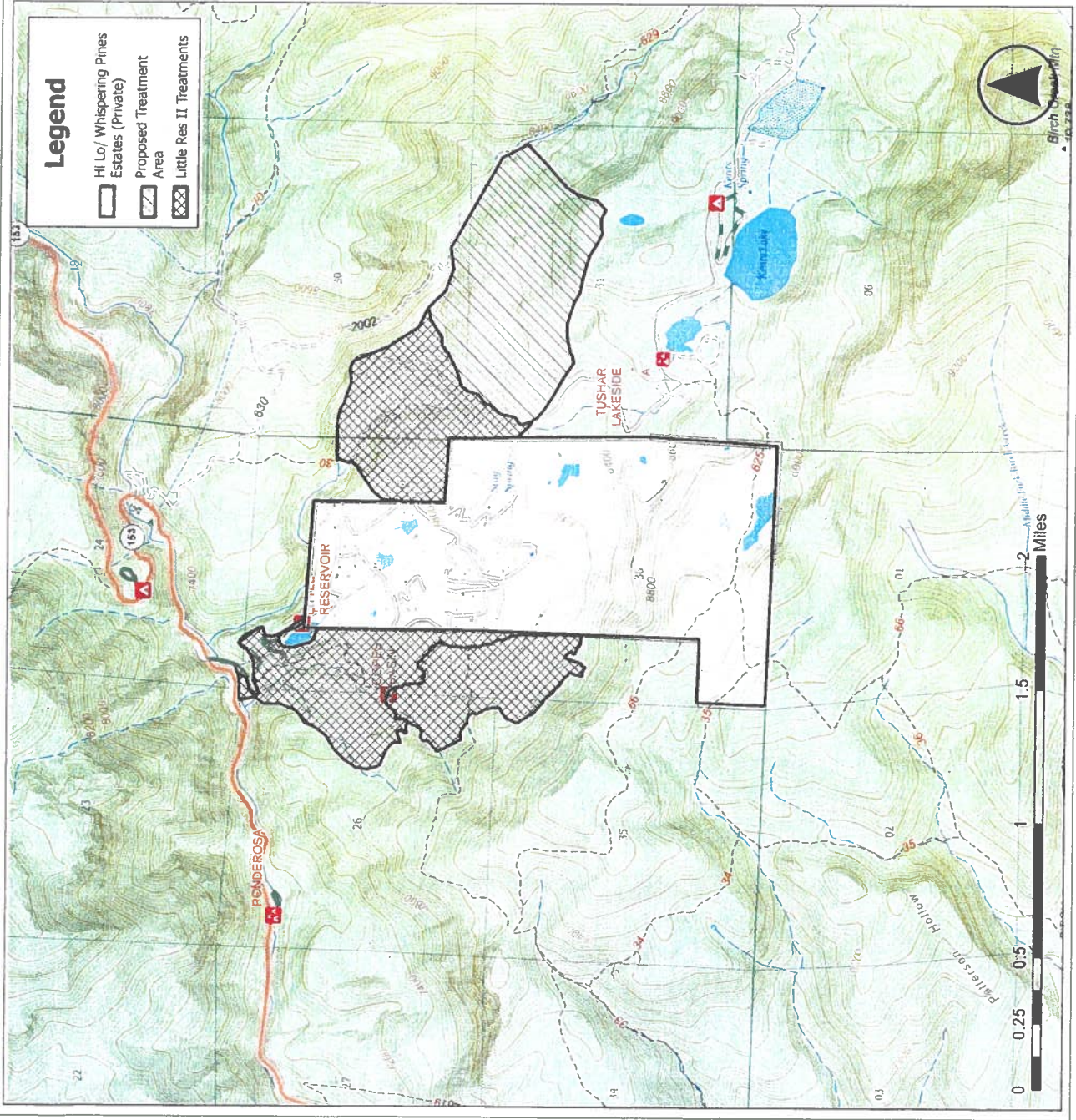
# Cy's Cache TSI Project Proposal


## Beaver Ranger District

Pavel Pluhar, Natick Hill, 1/2/25

The Cy's Cache project area encompasses ~300 acres of ponderosa pine forest. High-grading and fire suppression have allowed extensive white fir encroachment within the stand. Vertical fuel loading now puts the area at risk of stand-replacing fire behavior. Action is needed to restore historic ponderosa pine stand structures.

The area borders two past fuel reduction treatments located along FS137 and the Hi Lo/Whispering Pines estates. Reducing fuel loads would increase the buffer around private inholdings and improve FS137 as a holding feature in the event of a wildfire.



 <p><b>Scoping Document</b></p>	<p><b>Silver King Salvage</b></p>	<p><b>USDA Forest Service Fishlake National Forest Beaver Ranger District Piute County, Utah</b></p>
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The purpose of this document is to inform you of a new individual small project we are proposing to implement on the Beaver Ranger District. The environmental effects of the proposed project are being analyzed by Forest resource specialists (including water, wildlife, cultural resources, and fisheries) individually and cumulatively in relation to one another. We welcome your comments, concerns, and suggestions regarding this proposal.

The Beaver Ranger District has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within categories of actions listed in 7 CFR 1b.3 that can be excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. The following information provides a description of the project. Additional information on this project is available from the Beaver Ranger District.

#### **Silver King Salvage**

The Silver King Salvage project area encompasses approximately 40 acres of ponderosa pine forest (see attached map). The purpose of this proposal is to implement the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP (Forest Plan)) by proposing vegetation treatments specifically to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Maintain productive streams, lakes, and riparian areas and mitigate hazards on floodplains. (LRMP, IV-4).
- 2) Manage the timber resources on lands suitable for production of saw timber and other Forest products (LRMP, IV-4).

The Silver King Fire burned approximately 19,000 acres in the Beaver Creek, Deer Creek, and Pine Creek drainages during July and August of 2024. Damage to all three drainages increased flooding risk to the town of Marysvale and the surrounding area.

Reducing flood risk requires seeding and reforestation efforts. The long-term effectiveness of these treatments decreases as fire-killed trees fall. Fallen timber will dramatically increase fuel loading, increasing future risk to watersheds and populations downstream.

The proposed action would utilize salvage harvest methods to remove merchantable fire killed trees and trees in a high-risk condition of dying on approximately 40 acres within the Beaver Creek drainage. A commercial timber operator would accomplish this salvage project by cutting, skidding and hauling the trees from the sale area. Harvesting would require constructing approximately 0.5 mile of temporary road and two landing areas.

Reforestation efforts may occur and would include planting ponderosa pine seedlings within the 40-acre area.

#### **Desired Results of Proposed Action:**

1. Improve long-term effectiveness of watershed stabilization efforts by removing standing heavy fuels.
2. Provide merchantable products to the public.



# Silver King Salvage: Proposed Project Beaver Ranger District

Pavel Pluhar, Natalee Hunt: 12/10/25

The Silver King Fire burned ~19,000 acres in the Beaver Creek, Deer Creek, and Pine Creek drainages during July and August of 2024. Damage to all three drainages increased flooding risk to the town of Marysville and the surrounding area.

Snags in the vicinity of Beaver Creek are at risk of washing downstream in the event of a flood. Removing the above products using commercial timber sales will both provide merchantable product to the local community reduce the risk of downstream damage during catastrophic flooding.

