Forest Service News Release

Public Affairs Officer: Louis Haynes
(435) 781-5105
Louis.haynes@usda.gov
Web: https://www.fs.usda.gov/ashley
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AshleyNationalForest

Ashley National Forest Releases Final Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Record of Decision

Vernal, Utah, April 14, 2023... Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service released the draft record of decision for the Ashley National Forest's final revised land management plan and final environmental impact statement (EIS).

The revised plan and environmental impact statement are the products of six-plus years of collaborative efforts across the Ashley National Forest, working with communities and those that utilize the national forest.

"Our current land management plan was implemented in 1986. Since that time, significant changes on the Forest and in surrounding communities have made it clear that revisions needed to be made," explained Susan Eickhoff, Ashley National Forest Supervisor. "These changes include the need for enhanced collaboration with Tribes, shifts in recreation trends, and challenges with forest conditions due to uncharacteristic wildfires, invasive species, warming temperatures due to climate change, and other stressors. The revised land management plan will guide our work to address these challenges into the future."

The Ashley National Forest Land Management Plan is a strategic document that will guide management decisions for the next 15 years. The plan was created using an inclusive and transparent process that involved Tribes, the public, and governmental partners. "This planning effort incorporates up-to-date science and recognizes traditional uses and changes in the way the Forest is utilized. The land management plan will guide the restoration, conservation, and preservation effort across the land managed by the Ashley National Forest," stated Eickhoff.

The revised land management plan allows for active landscape management and multiple uses, including forest products, grazing, and recreation. The mix of opportunities available for motorized and non-motorized recreation reflects the diverse input Forest staff heard from the public. The plan provides for management actions expected to support approximately 587 jobs and $25.4 million in labor income in the local economy.

The next step in the revision process is a 60-day objection period, which officially starts when the *Vernal Express* publishes the legal notice. At that time, those with legal standing to object may file an objection. At the end of the 60-day period, the agency will review those concerns and seek opportunities for resolution. Once the objections are resolved, the Forest Supervisor will sign the record of decision.

All documents for this planning effort are posted on the forest plan revision website at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ashley/landmanagement/planning. Refer to this site for other helpful information.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.