

East Salina Wildlife Habitat Improvement Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact



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PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Introduction

Fire is a natural ecosystem process on the Fishlake National Forest, shaping ecosystem composition, structure, and function. The Richfield Ranger District (District) is proposing to use prescribed burning to increase resiliency of forest and rangeland vegetation, improve proper ecological function to native vegetation communities and wildlife habitats, improve firefighter and public safety, and reduce risks within wildland-urban interfaces.

The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act of 2009 directed the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to develop a cohesive wildland fire management strategy (cohesive strategy). One of the primary purposes of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, as implemented by the Forest Service and Intermountain Region, is to improve and maintain landscapes. Prescribed fire is an effective mechanism to manage vegetation and to restore fire to its natural role in the ecosystem, reducing the risk of uncharacteristic, damaging wildfire on ecosystem health. This proposal supports the intent of the cohesive strategy as well as broader ecosystem and wildlife habitat restoration goals from the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

The United States Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service launched the Wildfire Crisis Strategy (USDA Forest Service 2022) to address wildfire risks to critical infrastructure, to protect communities, and to make forests more resilient. The strategy calls for an unprecedented paradigm shift in land management to increase fuels and forest health treatments across jurisdictions to match the actual scale of wildfire risk to people, communities, and natural resources, especially in the western United States. This proposal supports the intent of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy to treat up to 20 million acres of National Forest System land in the west over and above current treatment levels over a 10-year period.

Existing Condition

Managers on the Fishlake National Forest recognize the importance of having more frequent fires on the landscape. The Fishlake Prescribed Natural Fire Plan (USDA Forest Service 1998) notes that most ecosystems on the Fishlake are fire-adapted, fire dependent and largely outside of their properly functioning condition (PFC). The Prescribed Natural Fire Plan (PNFP) provides a general assessment of fire's importance and historic role and contains a strategy for having more frequent fires in specific ecosystems. Within the PNFP, the Wasatch Plateau Subsection is one of several subsections analyzed. The Wasatch Plateau Subsection (approximately 282,000 acres) is east of Salina, Utah and includes both sides of the I-70 corridor. This project occurs entirely within the Wasatch Plateau Subsection (WPS).

Published multi-century fire histories for locations on the Fishlake National Forest and other regional landscapes with similar topography and vegetation reveal patterns of abundant fire prior to Euro-American settlement in the mid to late-1800s (Heyerdahl 2011). Collectively, this site-specific evidence and data from intensively sampled regional sites provides solid data regarding historical conditions compared to current conditions. The findings indicate there has been a

dramatic reduction in the frequency of fire on landscapes, an increase in forest density and fire severity as well as dramatic changes to forest vegetation types. The data also supports an interpretation of historic fire-regimes that included a range of short to long fire-free intervals and low to high fire severity, which creates and maintains a diverse and dynamic vegetation mosaic across time and space. These spatially complex fire regimes changed within decades of Euro-American settlement. As a result, forest type diversity has decreased.

Specific to the WPS, Heyerdahl 2011 collected fire-scar data from several ponderosa pine trees on the Old Woman Plateau within a 49-acre sampling area. From the composite fire-scar record collected from these trees, between 1650 and 1900, a fire occurred in the sampling area every 20 years on average (range was 4-39 years). About 58 percent of the fire scars were created by fires that burned when the cambium was dormant. The other 42 percent were created during the growing season (18 percent early/middle season and 24 percent late season).

LANDFIRE Vegetation Condition Class datasets assessed in 2021 identified 1,054,093 acres on the Fishlake National Forest that are moderately to very highly departed from their historic conditions (prior to Euro-American settlement) largely due to less frequent fires and fewer acres burning annually over the last 100+ years. This has affected the type and condition of vegetation, fuel loads, fire severity and fire patterns. In these areas there is an appreciable risk of losing key ecosystem components. Based on the following historic fire frequency research data:

Table 1. Vegetation cover type and estimated fire frequency

*Vegetation Cover Type	*Fire Frequency (Years)	*Acres Burning Annually (In WPS)
Spruce/Fir/Mixed Conifer	10-80	0 -300
Aspen	20-60	1,400 - 4,200
Ponderosa Pine	5-25	1,200 - 6,000
Other	20-50	600 - 1,500
Gambel Oak	20-50	500 - 1,300
Mountain Brush	20-40	100 - 300
Pinyon/Juniper	10-30	1,000 - 3,100
Sagebrush/Grass/Forbs	20-40	1,900 - 3,800
Totals		6,800 - 20,300

** The vegetation cover data is from Geospatial Analysis Process (GAP) satellite mapping done by Utah State University. The fire frequency data are generally accepted standards for each cover type regardless of where it occurs, and not necessarily specific to the Wasatch Plateau Subsection.*

The WPS historically experienced fire on approximately 6,800 to 20,300 acres annually (USDA Forest Service 1998). Over the last five years the District has been focusing vegetation management work in the Ponderosa pine and pinyon/juniper vegetation cover types with very little work in the other vegetation cover types; far less than what is necessary to maintain healthy ecosystems across the entire WPS. The District is proposing to increase prescribed burning activities in the remaining vegetation cover types in coming years to help increase the health and resilience of vegetation, improve wildlife habitat, and increase firefighters and public safety. The District identified an additional 99,460 acres east of Salina, Utah where prescribed fire needs to be reintroduced. An environmental analysis has already been completed for the ponderosa pine and pinyon/juniper vegetation cover types in the project area; thus, this analysis is focused on the remaining cover types.

Returning fire to the landscape in a controlled manner that reduces the risk of unwanted outcomes can be used to effectively reset fire dependent ecosystems. By resetting the system, fire can then be allowed to play its natural role in the ecosystem in the future with greatly reduced risk. In some areas this may be low to moderate intensity fire (mountain brush and sagebrush areas), and in other areas (aspen) it may be high intensity fire. Improving these natural burn characteristics in the Fishlake's fire-dependent ecosystems would increase the health and resiliency of these ecosystems and reduce the risk to firefighters and the public.

Though numerous vegetation types are found within proposed treatment areas, a few occupy higher priority status for prescribed fire reintroduction. These include the various aspen forest types, mixed conifer, and Gambel oak. A summary of the vegetation types, their relationship to fire, and the effects of fire exclusion to these types on the District follows.

Mixed Conifer

Approximately 11,045 acres of mixed conifer occur in the project area. Mixed conifer is a catch-all definition that includes forest composed of several species, including white fir, spruce fir, and Douglas fir. Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir also exist in mixed conifer forests at higher elevations (Jones 1974). These forests occupy middle elevations, sandwiched between mountain brush and pinyon-juniper associations at lower elevations and true spruce-fir forests at higher elevations. Mixed conifer forest types, broadly speaking, evolved in tandem with frequent low-intensity fire regimes (Reynolds 2013). Periodic surface fires 'thinned' shade-tolerant regeneration from the understory, leaving patchy-clumpy forests dominated by large, fire-resistant stems growing in a matrix of younger trees and patches of regeneration. Fire exclusion allowed shade-tolerant regeneration to survive, dominate the midstory, and (in many cases) outcompete fire-tolerant species in the overstory. The result has been fuel loads far outside their historic range of variation, which increases the risks to both firefighter safety and watershed security and threatens to remove conifer species from the area following severe fire events (Reynolds 2013).

Aspen-Aspen/Conifer

Approximately 30,753 acres of aspen and aspen/conifer forest occur in the project area. Aspen is a keystone forest species in the western U.S., where they are valued as much for their various ecological benefits as they are for their aesthetic beauty. Their ability to aggressively resprout from subterranean buds' post-disturbance makes them ideally suited to stand-replacing fire (Shinneman 2013). Indeed, in some location's aspen appears dependent on severe fire for regeneration (Mueggler 1989). Research indicates that less frequent fire has allowed conifer species to outcompete aspen over millions of acres in the western United States, including the Fishlake National Forest. This has detrimental effects for various resource concerns, including wildlife, fire suppression, timber, and hydrology (Kitchen 2019). It may also pose a risk to the long-term persistence of aspen in these areas.

Gambel Oak & Mountain Brush

Approximately 34,113 acres of Gambel oak and mountain brush occur in the project area. Gambel oak communities cover thousands of acres at lower elevations across the forest. They are important to wildlife species. Gambel oak stands provide winter range for various big game species and can be an important forage source for mule deer and elk. Periodic fires maintain oak

stands. Gambel oak is a prolific sprouter post-disturbance but may be suppressed or replaced by conifer species in the long-term absence of fire (Harper 1985).

Fire suppression can also create hazardous fuel conditions in Gambel oak stands. Accumulation of surface fuels in these woodlands can lead to intense stand-replacing fire behavior. Fires in this vegetation type were responsible for some of the most-deadly wildland fire incidents in the 20th century, including the Mann Gulch and the South Canyon fires. Periodic fires remove surface fuel buildup, reducing fire severity and promoting firefighter safety.

Sagebrush Steppe

Approximately 21,475 acres of sagebrush steppe communities occur in the project area. Sagebrush steppe ecosystems are important for obligate wildlife species and livestock grazing. Historic fire regimes were driven by fine fuels produced during the growing season and generally created a mosaic of herbaceous and sagebrush dominated areas across the ecosystem. Less frequent fire and the introduction of invasive grasses, notably cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), has altered fire regimes and reduced available forage throughout these ecosystems while allowing neighboring pinyon and juniper communities to expand into historic steppe habitats, as noted above.

All Other

Approximately 2,074 acres of other communities occur in the project area. These 2,074 acres within the project area include several more limited vegetation types, such as alpine, mountain mahogany, riparian and tall forbs. These types are not a management focus for prescribed fire but need to be taken into consideration when planning prescribed fire because they are adjacent to priority areas and co-exist with fire on the landscape.

Desired Conditions

Spruce-fir Communities

At a stand scale, the desire is to create and/or maintain live Engelmann spruce communities that are healthy and more resilient to spruce beetle. To reduce the probability of beetle infestation and manage for healthy Engelmann spruce, the desire is for the live spruce-fir stand densities to average between 80 and 90 square feet of basal area per acre (Hebertson 2013 and Jenkins 2008) and maintain the stands average diameter close to 10 inches (Ott 2024). Lastly, include a minimum of 360 seedlings per acre of Engelmann spruce (USDA Forest Service 1986). These stands should have a variety of sizes and age classes present.

At a landscape scale, stands should be composed of more than 40 percent Engelmann spruce (USDA Forest Service 2006). Subalpine fir is much shorter lived than spruce and is likely to cycle in and out of spruce-fir stands through time (Aplet 1988; data on file RMRS). Where spruce-fir grow in high elevations, this cover type is subject to long interval stand replacing fire regimes because of high amounts of precipitation and cooler temperatures (Hood 2007). To protect spruce-fir from large catastrophic events, breaking up the landscape into different successional stages is desired.

The spruce-fir vegetation type provides food and shelter for many wildlife species, including deer, elk, grouse, songbirds, and birds of prey. Typically, these trees offer thick branches for

nesting in spring and offer thermal cover and protection from the cold and deep snow during winter. High elevation spruce stands will often contain and harbor snowpacks well into the spring and early summer that provide crucial water resources for wildlife conservation.

Mixed Conifer Vegetation

In mixed conifer stands, a balance of structural stages and species diversity should be present. Species diversity and structural stages are dependent on disturbance history, aspect, elevation, and available moisture. The goal is to return the mixed conifer cover type back to early stages of succession and increase the age and spatial diversity. This will be done by targeting the more shade-tolerant species for removal in the understory and leaving shade intolerant species in the overstory. Shade intolerant species include ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and aspen. The desired outcome is to manage and or maintain tree stocking at levels that promote growth and vigor, thus making these forested areas resistant to large scale disturbances (wildland fire, insect and disease epidemics, etc.).

This vegetation type is important for wildlife including elk, mule deer (important summer range), and wild turkey. This type of vegetation can also be important to Northern goshawk and Flammulated owl, where seral species are present and dense stocking levels do not occur.

The desired condition for wildlife habitat is a forest structure across the landscape that sustains larger structural stages over time and contains attributes (i.e., vegetative structural stage, snags, down logs, woody debris, and stand densities) that meet properly functioning conditions (PFC) and stand structure needed for wildlife species. The forest composition should be focused on a balance and diversity of vegetation with seral species in a landscape that provides resiliency and the ability to renew or maintain and propagate itself after disturbances. Ecological sustainability of wildlife species can be improved by restoring or mimicking natural disturbances (i.e., fire, insects, disease and wind) within this vegetation type.

Aspen-Aspen/Conifer Communities

The desired condition is to have functioning aspen communities, with multi-height stems and adequate recruitment to perpetuate aspen communities, including site-appropriate, biodiverse understories (adopted from Monroe Mountain Aspen Ecosystem Restoration Project (USDA Forest Service 2015)). Aspen ecosystem functionality is negatively impacted when stand composition has more than 15 percent conifer composition (as per Properly Functioning Condition (PFC), USDA Forest Service 2009). There is a strong correlation between conifer composition and aspen vigor/recovery post-disturbance. Once about 80 percent of the stand composition transitions to conifer species, aspen vigor declines, to the extent that aspen typically will not recover post-disturbance (Maxwell 2019). The primary conifer species targeted for removal within, and around aspen stands are subalpine-fir, Engelmann spruce, and white fir. Where Ponderosa pine and aspen both exist as early seral dominant components of the stand, the ponderosa pine is not targeted for removal. Reintroduction of fire would be needed to perpetuate aspen. Fire regimes would be adequate to perpetuate aspen.

The goal is to use fire to increase natural regeneration in aspen. A minimum of 500 stems per acre of 5-15-foot-tall aspen saplings is desired because it should help establish functional aspen stands and increase age class diversity (USDA Forest Service 1998). In addition, aspen saplings 5-15-foot-tall have a better chance of establishing with browsing pressure. When browsing

pressure is kept below 30 percent, aspen can successfully establish and replace the old cohort, ensuring the stand remains adequately stocked (Rhodes 2018).

Aspen forests provide crucial habitat for many species of wildlife. Aspen ecosystems provide shelter and foraging habitat for both birds and mammals. Cavity nesting birds and birds of prey will often use aspen trees for nesting based on their characteristics and the open understory to forage for prey species. Wild turkeys, sage grouse, and forest grouse will utilize aspen stands, foraging for insects within the dense, herbaceous understory and utilize these stands for nesting and brood rearing. Additionally, the aspen vegetation type is considered a critical summer habitat component for deer and elk, because it provides both cover and forage for survival and is essential for fawning and calving.

Gambel Oak

The desired condition for the Gambel oak cover type is for stands to be healthy and resilient to future perturbations, including drought, insects, disease, and wildfire, while providing high levels of ecosystem services. The desired conditions are derived from USFS assessments of PFCs for Gambel oak (USDA Forest Service 2009). Herbaceous layers under healthy oak clones should be healthy and well-developed: bare ground should comprise less than 20 percent of the stand. Expansion by shade-tolerant competitors should be minimal: *Acer*, *Pinus*, *Pseudotsuga*, and *Abies* should make up less than 10 percent of the overstory (USDA Forest Service 2009). Fire regimes should be characterized by mixed and severe fires occurring between 20-50 years. A mosaic of Gambel oak stands of different age classes across the landscape should reduce the occurrence of large stand-replacement fires and the detrimental soil effects that result.

Gambel oak and its herbaceous associates are important habitat components for many wildlife species. Mule deer make extensive use of oak habitat during the winter, when oak provides an important source of browse. Research has shown that fire suppression has allowed Gambel oak to grow out of reach of wintering ungulates, removing this important food source (Harper 1985). Gambel oak communities host a rich variety of birds, especially during the nesting season. Oak communities also host more herbaceous plants than their late-seral replacements, increasing biodiversity and improving forage potential (Harper 1985).

Sagebrush/Shrubland/Grassland Communities

The desired condition in the sagebrush steppe/shrublands/ and grassland vegetation types is a balanced range of structural stages. A native, late-seral species should dominate the herbaceous layer. Ecological sustainability of wildlife species can be enhanced by restoring or mimicking natural disturbances (i.e., fire, insects, disease and wind) within this vegetation type. The desired conditions in the shrublands are a mosaic of age classes interspersed with grass and forb species. Conifer cover should be less than 10 percent as forbs, grasses, and shrubs decline rapidly as conifer cover exceeds this percentage (USDA Forest Service 2009). Brush and grass stands should be resilient to fire disturbance.

Purpose and Need: Why do we need to act?

The purpose of this proposal is to improve or maintain healthy and resilient forest ecosystems, by reintroducing fire to fire-dependent ecosystems within the WPS. This proposal aligns with Executive Order 14225 and the Secretary's Memorandum 1078-006. Approximately 80 percent of the proposed project activities fall within the Emergency Action Determination area. This

proposal also aligns with the goals and direction of the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) (USDA Forest Service 1986), as amended by the 2001 Utah Fire Amendment (table below).

Table 2. Relevant Fishlake LRMP Goals and General Direction.

Category or General Direction	Desired Conditions	Forest Plan Location
Diversity	Ecosystems are restored and maintained, consistent with land uses and historic fire regimes, through wildland fire use and prescribed fire.	IV-3
A00	Maintain structural diversity of vegetation on management areas dominated by forested ecosystems	IV-11
A00	Manage aspen for retention where needed for wildlife, watershed or esthetic purposes	IV-11
C01	Maintain habitat for viable populations of existing vertebrate wildlife species	IV-18

There is a need to take action to improve the health and resiliency of vegetation communities and wildlife habitats in fire-dependent ecosystems on the Fishlake to meet the following purposes:

- Reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire to vegetative communities and wildlife habitats, including habitat connectivity corridors, by reducing fuel accumulation.
- Increase vegetation vigor and resiliency by restoring more natural stand structure with a diversity of age classes and composition.
- Improve the proper ecological function of vegetative communities and wildlife habitats, including nutrient cycling, regeneration, and successional development.
- Reduce wildland fire risk to communities, critical infrastructure, or key ecological values.
- Reduce/mitigate post fire risks needed to protect communities, critical infrastructure, or key ecological values.
- Reduce hazardous fuels by removing or modifying vegetation to lower the risk of wildfires.
- Reduce the density of fire-dependent forests.
- Support the durability and resiliency of forests and grasslands.
- Reduce hazardous fuels to help make wildfire response, as well as ingress or egress, safer and more effective.

There is a need to restore more natural conditions in fire-dependent ecosystems to improve firefighters and public safety and reduce risks to highly valued resources and assets (Wildland Urban Interface, infrastructure, sensitive resources, etc.) There is a need to create conditions where wildfires can be better managed for multiple suppression strategies, including managing for land and resource management plan objectives where appropriate. Prescribed fire has been shown to increase heterogeneity in fuels to modify fire behavior, decrease landscape-level fire severity, and increase seedling production (Tubbesing 2019). Prescribed burning would be aligned with the conditions on the ground at the time of implementation. For prescribed burning, this is particularly necessary since site-specific conditions that allow for safe burning can be quite dynamic.

Working at a landscape scale for project planning has a distinct advantage for prescribed burning projects. The large project area may require data collection prior to implementation to confirm current conditions at the time of implementation. This provides the ability to place burn units in the right place at the right time. Landscape-level planning allows managers to choose among several areas for implementation, providing opportunities for smoke dispersion. This approach supports responsiveness and flexibility between planning and implementation.

Proposed Action: What are we proposing to do?

The Richfield Ranger District proposes to mimic natural disturbance on the landscape using prescribed fire to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires, increase health and resilience of vegetation, and improve wildlife habitat. The implementation of prescribed burning would occur over many years as conditions and available resources allow.

The proposed action would be implemented on approximately 99,460 acres of the Richfield Ranger District east of Salina, Utah (see Map 1) over many years. The District would identify specific areas for burning based on prioritized need, suitable conditions for prescribed burning, and available resources to safely implement burns. The relative risk of a catastrophic fire, including effects that would occur post-fire, would be key considerations when prioritizing prescribed fire treatment areas. This proposed action does not apply to research natural areas and some areas where the environmental analysis has previously been completed and prescribed fire has already been approved or implemented. Use of prescribed fire is proposed on the remaining National Forest System lands, which includes inventoried roadless areas.

Prescribed burning would be accomplished through smaller, site-specific treatment areas with defined management objectives and boundaries. Smaller burn units could be used where infrastructure or other highly valued resources and assets are present; larger burn units could be designed where conditions and objectives allow more extensive application of fire on the landscape. Multiple treatment entries are anticipated to move vegetation and habitat characteristics toward desired conditions in some areas and then to maintain desired conditions. In the context of this proposed action, treatments include not only the type of fire applied to achieve an objective, but the pre-fire actions, also known as burn preparation, needed to facilitate the application of fire. These may include line construction and small-scale/incidental vegetation treatments (brushing, pruning, thinning, etc.) that allow firefighters to better control the extent and intensity of prescribed fire.

Once the initial prescribed burning is completed, prescribed fire will continue to be applied periodically in future years to help maintain the desired vegetative conditions. Prescribed fire treatments could be implemented year-round when weather and air-quality conditions allow. This is a long-term commitment to meet desired conditions.

Prescribed fire would be implemented in adherence with Agency policy and direction, following the 2022 PMS 484 Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (or more current guidance if developed) which establishes national interagency standards. These standards describe what is minimally acceptable for prescribed fire planning and implementation. Topics include common terms and definitions, standardized procedures, prioritizing firefighters and public safety, risk management, cost-efficient prescribed fire operations, risks to communities, municipal watersheds, and the use of prescribed fire to restore natural ecological processes and functions.

Contained within this policy and direction are legal requirements for site-specific implementation documents, otherwise known as prescribed fire burn plans. Currently every burn plan must address twenty-one required elements, including: technical review and approval of an Agency Administrator, a complexity analysis (PMS 424-1), prescribe burn objectives, prescription parameters consisting of weather and fire behavior with fire behavior modeling, and smoke management/air quality compliance through approval from Utah Division of Air Quality, among others. Specific burn conditions and burn unit size would be determined prior to approval, in accordance with policy and direction for using prescribed fire treatments. The kind of fire to be used and the amount of each type of prescribed fire to be used is explained in the burn plan.

The design elements and implementation checklist are key elements of the proposed action which help to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met.

Design Elements and Implementation Checklist

The design elements and implementation checklist are key elements of the proposed action which helps to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met.

- Appendix A – Design Elements describes how resource conditions could alter implementation in some areas, and describe conditions where prescribed fire may be adjusted, limited, or excluded. During implementation of the decision, other areas in addition to those outlined in the design elements could be removed from the proposed action due to natural resources or other considerations. Some areas have specific restrictions on how and where prescribed fire can be used, in accordance with previous planning decisions including the Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended).
- Appendix B – Implementation Checklist included in this project would direct specific tasks that would occur prior to applying fire in an area. Among other elements, the implementation checklist would ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met.

Pre-treatment Actions (Burn Preparation)

To provide the conditions necessary for each type of prescribed fire treatment to meet the need, some activities may be needed before ignition to ensure the success of the prescribed burn. Such activities would be explained in the burn plan for each unit, prior to project implementation. Activities for burn preparation may include, but not limited to, the following:

- Hand thinning, slashing, and piling may be used to lower or concentrate existing surface, ladder, and aerial fuels. This may be done to create a fuel bed to carry fire, concentrate fuels for pile burning, or reinforce fire lines.
- Natural or manmade features (such as existing roads) would be the primary fire control lines. In some limited cases, constructed fireline (handline or mechanical) may be needed to augment existing features. Constructed fireline would be used to protect highly valued resources and assets and would be constructed (and rehabilitated post-burn) according to Forest Service Best Management Practices

(BMPs) (USDA Forest Service 2012). Such actions would be described in burn plans for each burn unit.

- Mechanical thinning, piling, chipping and/or mastication of fuels may be used to reinforce control lines or as a pre-treatment to increase safety where people are working.
- Limited cross-country motorized vehicle travel, where resource conditions allow, to conduct pre-treatment actions.
- Slash lines to modify the fuel bed for the purposes of extending the burn window into moist conditions in targeted areas.

This proposed action does not include the use of large-scale ground-based or commercial timber harvesting or broad scale mechanical treatment proposals. Broad scale mechanical treatments that are not included under this project include creating mosaics and breaking up continuous canopies over large areas through cutting or chipping rather than fire. Any hand or mechanical cutting or chipping of vegetation will be supplemental to and necessary for the application of prescribed fire. This is limited to activities such as fireline construction, removal of small diameter trees and shrubs under individual large trees, individual hazard tree removal to increase safety where people are working and removal of vegetation adjacent to private property or other values at risk.

Inventoried Roadless Areas

Mechanical thinning in inventoried roadless areas would be limited to improving fire breaks and aiding fireline reinforcement and ignition. Constructed firelines would be reclaimed upon completion. Thinning, slashing, pruning, piling, and pile burning activities generally involving small diameter trees may be conducted to reduce existing surface and ladder fuels, to prepare a fuel bed to carry fire, to increase safety where people are working, and to reinforce firelines. The implementation of pre-treatment activities would only occur prior to specific prescribed fire treatments where they are needed.

Prescribed Fire Application

Pre-treatment Actions (Burn Preparation)

Prescribed fire in this proposal includes the following types of treatments, some of which may overlap:

- **Understory burning**—low-intensity prescribed fire used to reduce ladder fuels and remove surface fuels but not all the overstory vegetation. It is used as both a first entry and maintenance burning, primarily in conifer forests. Prior to understory burning, mechanical or hand treatments may need to occur to thin understory trees to prevent widespread mortality of the overstory and to meet the objectives of the treatment (see the Pre-treatment Actions for details on this treatment). This may occur through both aerial and hand ignition.
- **Broadcast burning**—a type of mixed intensity prescribed fire that uses fire on a broad area of the landscape. Broadcast burning is used to remove understory or

overstory vegetation to create openings and optimal conditions for regenerating vegetation. This may occur through both aerial and hand ignition and may occur in any vegetation type. This treatment is also used to increase structure, age, and species diversity.

Figure 1. Example of Broadcast Burning Treatment.



- **Jackpot burning**—concentrations (or “jackpots”) of vegetative fuel that create pockets of higher intensity burning (most often in conifer vegetation communities) are targeted or allowed to burn at higher intensities than surrounding areas. This will commonly occur following cut and slash treatments to reduce fuels and introduce fire in a controlled manner where environmental conditions such as snow can be used to predict and control fire behavior while still meeting objectives. The result would be a mosaic burn pattern.
- **Pile burning**—prescribed fire that burns discrete piles of fuels with some surface fire allowed to spread between them. This is used primarily in aspen and conifer communities. It is used near fireline construction, near values at risk such as the wildland urban interface, or during initial burning where mechanical fuels reduction is needed to achieve the objectives of a future understory burn.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The following documents compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant environmental laws, Executive orders, and regulations.

Scope of Analysis

The effects of prescribed fire on the landscape are well known. Most environmental effects are expected to occur within the project boundary because of the size of the project area and the nature of prescribed fire actions. Smoke dispersal is one element of the project expected to occur outside the project boundary. The Scope of Analysis is limited to the proposed action described above which includes prescribed burning and limited use of mechanical work to facilitate the safe and effective use of prescribed fire. The project area is the portions of the Richfield Ranger District occurring east of Salina, Utah. The areas proposed for prescribed burning are shown on Map 1.

Potentially Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Based on the team's analysis and the comments received from the public, there are no identified issues affecting components of the human environment that are likely to experience significant effects and therefore are not further analyzed in this document. Each of these resource areas have been considered by the project Interdisciplinary Team, and the findings have been documented in the project record, which is hereby incorporated by reference.

- Botany
- Aquatic Resources
- Wildlife Resources
- Hydrology & Soils
- Rangeland Resources
- Recreation & Visuals
- Inventoried Roadless Areas
- Silviculture
- Cultural and Tribal Resources

A summary of findings from the Interdisciplinary Team is included below.

Botany

The proposed action was considered for impacts to botany resources. No Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate species or habitat are known to occur in the project area where prescribed fire and associated actions are proposed. The botany Biological Assessment (BA) determined the project area lacks suitable habitat and/or is outside the known range for these species and implementation of the proposed action would have *No Effect* on these species.

Additionally, no Sensitive species or habitat are known to occur in the project area where prescribed fire and associated actions are proposed. The botany Biological Evaluation (BE) determined the project area lacks suitable habitat and/or is outside the known range for these species and implementation of the proposed action would have *No Impact* on these species.

Rydberg's milkvetch (*Astragalus perianus*) is a Focal Species that occurs on the Fishlake National Forest; however, this Focal Species and habitat are not known to occur in the areas where prescribed fire and associated actions are proposed. The areas proposed for prescribed fire are located outside the known geographical range of the species resulting in a *No Adverse Effect* on the population numbers or viability of Rydberg's milkvetch on the forest.

Aquatics

The proposed action was considered for impacts to aquatic resources. No Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate species or habitat are known to occur in the project area where prescribed fire and associated actions are proposed. The aquatic Biological

Assessment (BA) determined the project area lacks suitable habitat and/or is outside the known range for these species and implementation of the proposed action would have *No Effect* on these species.

Sensitive species and habitats do occur in the project area for Bonneville cutthroat trout and Southern leatherside chub. Both are Intermountain Region Forest Service sensitive species. The aquatic Biological Evaluation (BE) determined implementation of the proposed action *may impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species* for Bonneville cutthroat trout and Southern leatherside chub.

Additionally, resident trout and macroinvertebrates are Focal Species that occur in the project area where prescribed fire and associated actions are proposed. Implementation of the proposed action is not expected to pose a threat to the overall integrity of the habitat or long-term viability for resident trout and macroinvertebrates.

Wildlife

The proposed action was considered for impacts to wildlife resources. Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate species considered in the wildlife Biological Assessment (BA) include Utah prairie dog, California condor, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, Monarch butterfly, and Yellow-billed cuckoo. The BA determined implementation of the proposed action would have *No Effect* on Utah prairie dog, California condor, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, Monarch butterfly, and Yellow-billed cuckoo.

Intermountain Region Sensitive wildlife species considered in the wildlife Biological Evaluation (BE) include Bighorn sheep, Bald Eagle, Pygmy rabbit, Greater sage grouse, Northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, Spotted bat, Peregrine falcon, Three-toed woodpecker, and Flammulated owl. The BE determined implementation of the proposed action would have *No Impact* on Bighorn sheep, Pygmy rabbit and Greater sage grouse. The wildlife BE also determined implementation of the proposed action *may impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species* for Bald eagle, Northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, Spotted bat, Peregrine falcon, Three-toed woodpecker, and Flammulated owl.

Additionally, Rocky Mountain elk, Mule deer, Cavity Nesters (Hairy woodpecker, Western bluebird, Mountain bluebird, Williamson's sapsucker), Riparian Dependent Guild (Lincoln's sparrow, Yellow warbler, MacGillivray's warbler, Song sparrow), Sage Nesters (Brewer's sparrow, Sage thrasher, and Vesper sparrow) are Focal Species that occur in the project area where prescribed fire and associated actions are proposed. Implementation of the proposed action is not expected to pose a threat to the overall integrity of the habitat or long-term viability for these species.

Impacts to migratory birds were considered. Implementation of the proposed action is not expected to result in population-level viability impacts to migratory birds and no intentional take is anticipated.

Hydrology/Soils

The project area includes the Gooseberry, Salina Creek, Willow Creek and Lost Creek areas. The project area includes portions of 26 different Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 6 watersheds. Of the approximately 99,460 acres proposed for prescribed fire in the project area, about 13,000 acres are within watersheds that have not been listed on the States 303 (d) impaired waters list. Most streams and/or tributaries to streams within the project area are on the 303 (d) list. The primary vegetation types in the proposed area are aspen/conifer, Gambel oak, and sagebrush steppe, primarily in mollisol and alfisol soils.

The effects of prescribed fire on hydrologic and soil resources are well known. Short-term effects include a reduction of organic matter and surface cover from the prescribed burn. This results in an increase in run-off and erosion (Elliot 2024). Evidence suggests that vegetation is more robust for a few years following the fire while erosion, sedimentation and runoff can increase (Elliot 2024). Short term impacts often recover in 2 to 5 years (Elliot 2024 and Certini 2005).

Some longer lasting impacts may occur (Francos 2018) related to soil burn severity and the amount of watershed impacted. Large amounts of an area burned can increase the overall impact from fire. Long-term effects are similar to short-term effects. Soil erosion resulting from loss of soil organic matter, coarse woody debris cover and sterilization can lead to a loss of vegetation recovery and an increase of erosion. In the long term, fire impact is often beneficial to soil and watershed health. However, in extreme conditions, like those found in an uncharacteristic wildfire, topsoil and vegetation removal can lead to sterilized landscapes which increase the negative impacts over a longer period.

To remain compliant with the Fishlake National Forest LRMP, applicable Executive Orders, laws and state water quality standards, the proposed action includes standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Project Design Features (PDFs). The PDFs (Appendix A) have shown to be effective in reducing impacts to soil and water resources from detrimental impacts, included those to wetlands, floodplains, and water quality. Following established Forest Service BMPs and standards/guidelines outlined in the LRMP, allows compliance with state standards to maintain water quality as affirmed in the 2019 NPS Management Plan.

Range

The project area overlaps with the following grazing allotments: Beaver Dams, Browns Hole, Flat Top, Lost Creek, Meadow Gulch, Moroni Peak, Niotche, North Post Mountain, Quitchumpah, Red Creek, Salina Creek, South Water Hollow, Water Hollow and Willow Creek. Prescribed burning within these allotments would influence rangelands and noxious/invasive weed management.

Implementation of the proposed action is expected to promote an increase in understory vegetation. Implementation of the proposed action is also expected to result in increased plant diversity and forage production for livestock across the project area. In addition, thinning and opening areas of dense undergrowth and deadfall would allow livestock to move more freely across the landscape. Increased forage production and decreased stand density would likely result in improved livestock distribution. Distributing livestock over a larger portion of the allotments could result in less intensive grazing on the currently

highly capable lands within the allotment. Cattle have the potential to damage sites where vegetation is being reestablished if concentrated grazing occurs. To minimize this potential for impact, if necessary, burned areas would be temporarily rested from livestock grazing for 1-2 growing seasons to allow vegetation time to reestablish. Livestock grazing must adhere to the Fishlake Forest Plan livestock grazing utilization standards and guidelines during project implementation. Communication and coordination with the affected permittees are a requirement of the pre-implementation checklist (Appendix B).

There is potential for introduction of noxious and/or invasive weeds from prescribed fire implementation activities. Design Elements Range 1, 2, and 3 (Appendix A) are incorporated into the proposed action to help minimize the potential of noxious weed establishment in treated areas.

Recreation

The project area encompasses multiple Management Areas with varying recreation settings and objectives as defined in the Fishlake National Forest LRMP. Recreation facilities and features within or adjacent to the project area include developed campgrounds, multiple motorized trails, and special uses are permitted. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) within the project area ranges from Semi-Primitive to Roaded Natural settings depending on the Management Area. Recreation use may be temporarily affected during active burning operations. Temporary site closures may be necessary during active burning. Temporary trail closures or detours may also be needed, and smoke may affect the recreation experience in adjacent areas. Public notification would be implemented to minimize disruptions to recreation planning by the public.

The proposed action would not alter ROS designations or change current recreational use patterns over the long term. Treatments are designed to meet the Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) for each Management Area. In areas with a Moderate SIO (Management Area 2B), openings and clearings created by treatments would be similar in size and shape to natural existing openings, and total acres treated per season would be managed to avoid creating obvious visual impact. Temporary trail and campsite closures may affect local tourism in the short term. The proposed action will help reduce the probability of the project area being impacted by a large, uncharacteristic wildfire, thus helping reduce overall impacts to recreation resources and associated economics.

Visual resources within the project area are managed according to Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) established in the Forest LRMP. Prescribed fire treatments would result in short-term visual changes to the landscape, including blackened vegetation, smoke during active burning operations, and temporary loss of vegetative. These effects are typical of fire-dependent ecosystems and would diminish overtime often within one to several growing seasons as vegetation recovers.

Short-term effects include temporary visual impacts and potential recreation site closures during active burning. Long-term effects are neutral to beneficial as vegetation recovers and uncharacteristic fire risk is reduced. Long-term visual effects may include more open forest conditions and improved viewsheds as dense vegetation is reduced. These effects are consistent with the natural landscape character of fire-dependent ecosystems and would meet established SIOs.

Inventoried Roadless Areas

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) are present within the project area (Table 5). Activities that would occur within the IRAs include prescribed fire and burn preparation activities described in the proposed action. Mechanical thinning in IRAs would occur to improve fire breaks and aid in fireline reinforcement with limited cross-country travel and access points. The design features Special Areas 1, 2, 3 and Scenery 1 would help reduce impacts to the IRA characteristics. This project complies with the Roadless Rule because no road construction or timber harvest is proposed. Any tree cutting that occurs will be incidental to fire line construction.

Table 5. Inventoried Roadless Areas Within Project Boundary

IRA Name	Proposed Treatments in IRA	IRA Total Acres	Percent IRA With Proposed Treatments
Bull Valley	7,605	10,594	72%
Johns Peak-Mt Alice	20	12,469	0.16%
Musinea Peak	5,227	6,746	77%
Steves Mountain	4,224	22,649	19%
UM Plateau-Mt Terrill	6,769	17,490	39%
White Mountain	14,781	23,939	62%

Overall, implementation of the proposed action would be beneficial to the IRAs within the project area. Improved ecosystem health would maintain or improve IRA qualities.

Forested Vegetation/Silviculture

The primary vegetation types in the project area include aspen/conifer communities, mixed conifer, spruce-fir, Gambel oak, and sagebrush steppe. These vegetation types are fire-dependent ecosystems that historically experienced periodic fire disturbance. No timber management areas (Management Areas 7A or 7B) overlap with the project area; therefore, the proposed action does not include commercial timber harvest objectives.

The exclusion of fire from these ecosystems over the past century has resulted in a myriad of undesirable conditions on the landscape. Overall, forest health has declined due to trees and other vegetation competing for limited water, sunlight and nutrients. Increased stand density and an accumulation of down and ladder fuels is increasing the risk of stand replacing wildfire. The risk of insect and disease outbreaks is also increased due to increased stand density.

The desired conditions emphasize maintaining a variety of age classes across the landscape and a mosaic of burn patterns—some areas burned, others left unburned—rather than achieving 100 percent black over large areas, which is neither common nor desirable. By implementing prescribed burns in this mosaic pattern, old-growth guidance outlined in the Forest Plan can be achieved. Whenever practicable, burns would occur under conditions that preserve old-growth characteristics; for example, targeting understory vegetation while minimizing impacts to overstory trees.

In the short term, with implementation of the proposed action, forested vegetation in some areas will reset to an earlier successional stage. Over the long term, the proposed

action is expected to provide ecological benefits that serve multiple functions across the forest.

Multiple beneficial effects of the proposed project are expected. Heat from low-intensity burns can reduce populations of harmful insects like bark beetles. Fire helps reduce crowded stands, which reduces competition for water, sunlight, and nutrients. Forest resilience may increase because fire can create more structural diversity, which improves resistance to pests, disease, and climate stress. Breaking up continuous fuels lowers the risk of future large and uncharacteristic wildfires that could impact timber and old-growth stands. Negative effects are expected to be minimal and may include young trees or fire-sensitive species being injured or killed. If burns are too hot, bark scorch can weaken trees.

Cultural and Tribal Resources

Section 106 consultation was completed for the proposed action. The Forest Service initiated consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and federally recognized Tribes.

The Utah SHPO concurred with the Forest Service's determination of No Adverse Effect on February 6, 2026 (Case No. 26-0201).

The proposed action complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966, as amended) using a phased approach as outlined in 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2). Each implementation phase requires completion of the Section 106 process prior to implementation.

Tribal consultation letters were sent on December 17, 2025. No comments were received from Tribes during the scoping period ending January 31, 2026.

The proposed action also includes design features to help reduce impacts to cultural and tribal resources.

Agencies and Persons Consulted

Given the nature of the proposal, the responsible official consulted the following parties:

The District Ranger had in-person and phone conversations with Project Eleven Hundred, Grand Canyon Trust, Sevier County Commissioners, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands, Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, Staffer with Senator Lee's office, Staffer with Senator Curtis' office, the Richfield Field Office with the Bureau of Land Management, and with the President of the Piute ATV Trail Committee. Information about this project was also shared with several grazing permit holders. A field tour of the project area also occurred. These interested parties were informed of the project, proposed action, and the intent to use the IIA 40807 Forest Health and Fuels Emergency Situation Determination (ESD). The Utah State Historic Preservation Office and nine Tribes were also consulted in accordance with Section 106 guidance. These parties were provided with an opportunity to comment. Comments were received and those comments resulted in modifications to the proposed action; specifically, about seeding and clarifying the scope of mechanical treatments.

Substantive Issues Considered for Analysis

No substantive or unresolved issues were identified for analysis. The effects of prescribed fire on the landscape are well known and predictable. Known potential impacts are minimized by project design criteria (Appendix A) and the implementation checklist (Appendix B). Therefore, analysis of this project focused on compliance with the Fishlake National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Finding of No Significant Impact criteria, and applicable laws, regulations and policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

What are the reasonably foreseeable short- and long-term and beneficial or adverse effects of the proposed action on the environment, to public health and safety, on economics, and to the quality of life of the American people that are unavoidable?

Both short- and long-term effects:

Short-term effects include temporary visual changes to the landscape, potential temporary increases in sediment delivery to streams, temporary rest of grazing allotments (typically 1-2 growing seasons), and localized vegetation mortality. These effects are typical of fire-dependent ecosystems, are within the natural range of variability, and would diminish over time as vegetation recovers.

Long-term effects are predominantly beneficial and include reduced risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire, improved forest health and resilience, improved wildlife habitat, increased forage production for livestock and wildlife, and improved ecosystem function in fire-dependent forest ecosystems.

Both beneficial and negative effects:

Beneficial effects include:

- Reduced risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire
- Improved health and resilience of vegetation
- Improved wildlife habitat through creation of habitat mosaic
- Increased grass and forb production for livestock and wildlife
- Reduced competition among trees for water, sunlight, and nutrients
- Reduced populations of harmful insects like bark beetles
- Long-term protection of watershed function

Negative effects include:

- Short-term visual impacts from burned vegetation
- Temporary displacement of wildlife during active burning
- Short-term increases in erosion potential in treated areas
- Temporary rest requirements for livestock grazing
- Potential injury or mortality to young trees or fire-sensitive species

The negative effects are minimized through implementation of design elements and are within the natural range of variability for fire-adapted ecosystems.

Effects on public health and safety:

The proposed action supports public health and safety by reducing the risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire that could threaten communities, infrastructure, and firefighter safety. Prescribed fire conducted under controlled conditions with approved burn plans reduces smoke impacts compared to uncontrolled large wildfire. Smoke management and air quality compliance through approval from Utah Division of Air Quality is required for each burn plan.

Economic effects:

Short-term economic effects include potential costs to livestock permittees during temporary rest periods. Long-term economic effects are largely beneficial, including improved rangeland productivity, protection of timber resources from insects and disease, and reduced wildfire suppression costs.

Effects on the quality of life of the American people:

The proposed action improves quality of life by maintaining healthy forest ecosystems, protecting recreation opportunities, reducing wildfire risk to communities, and sustaining ecosystem services including clean water and wildlife habitat.

What are the negative environmental impacts or consequences to public health and safety, on economics, or the quality of life of the American people if the proposed action is not implemented?

Under the No Action Alternative, the Forest Service would not authorize prescribed fire treatments within the project area. Current management would continue, and fire would remain excluded from the landscape. Fuels would continue to accumulate, forest health would continue to decline, and the risk of large, uncharacteristic and catastrophic wildfire would continue to increase over time.

Will the proposed action make an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of Federal resources?

The proposed action would not make an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of Federal resources. Prescribed fire activities are substantially less costly than fighting a large wildfire and can be conducted when budget and environmental factors allow. The ability to burn when conditions on the ground are advantageous to control the intensity and spread of the fire limits the potential impacts to non-target areas and adjacent private property.

Will there be an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of Federal resources that will contribute to a loss of long-term productivity for the human environment?

There is no irreversible or irretrievable commitment of Federal resources that would contribute to a loss of long-term productivity for the human environment. This project is expected to improve the long-term productivity of the human environment by improving

the overall health of the forest within the project area. Reducing the probability of a large, uncharacteristic and catastrophic wildfire helps protect the long-term productivity of the area as well as protecting high values and private property adjacent to forest system lands.

Other Environmental Reviews

This analysis is compliant with the following applicable laws and regulations:

Endangered Species Act

The proposed action complies with the Endangered Species Act. A Biological Assessment was completed for botany, aquatics and wildlife. These Biological Assessments are discussed above and included in the project record.

National Historic Preservation Act – Section 106 Review

Section 106 consultation was completed for this undertaking. The Forest Service initiated consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and federally recognized Tribes.

The Utah SHPO concurred with the Forest Service's determination of No Adverse Effect on February 6, 2026 (Case No. 26-0201).

The proposed action complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966, as amended) using a phased approach as outlined in 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2). Each implementation phase requires completion of the Section 106 process prior to implementation.

Consultation with Federally Recognized Tribes

Tribal consultation letters were sent on December 17, 2025. No comments were received from Tribes during the scoping period ending January 31, 2026.

Clean Water Act

Best management practices would be implemented to help protect water quality consistent with the National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands (USDA Forest Service 2012). The proposed action complies with the Clean Water Act.

Clean Air Act

Prescribed fire would be implemented in adherence with Agency policy and direction, following the 2022 PMS 484 Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (or more current guidance if developed) which establishes national interagency standards. These standards describe what is minimally acceptable for prescribed fire planning and implementation. Topics include common terms and

definitions, standardized procedures, prioritizing firefighters and public safety, risk management, cost-efficient prescribed fire operations, risks to communities, municipal watersheds, and the use of prescribed fire to restore natural ecological processes and functions.

Contained within this policy and direction are legal requirements for site-specific implementation documents, otherwise known as prescribed fire burn plans. Currently every burn plan must address twenty-one required elements, including: technical review and approval of an Agency Administrator, a complexity analysis (PMS 424-1), prescribe burn objectives, prescription parameters consisting of weather and fire behavior with fire behavior modeling, and smoke management/air quality compliance through approval from Utah Division of Air Quality, among others. Specific burn conditions and burn unit size would be determined prior to approval, in accordance with policy and direction for using prescribed fire treatments. The kind of fire to be used and the amount of each type of prescribed fire to be used is explained in the burn plan.

The design elements and implementation checklist are key elements of the proposed action which help to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met.

In summary, all prescribed burning would occur with an approved Prescribed Fire Burn Plan that includes a smoke management element that adheres to Utah Division of Air Quality's Smoke Management Program.

Utah Specific - The Burn Plan complies with the Utah Smoke Management Plan and is designed to meet the requirements of State of Utah Title R307, state administrative rule for air quality; Regional Haze Rule, 40 CFR 51.309(d)(6); and the policies of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires. The proposed action complies with the Clean Air Act.

Special Management Area Considerations

Six Inventoried Roadless Areas occur within the project area. As described above, this project complies with the Roadless Rule because no road construction or timber harvest is proposed.

Pertinent Executive Orders

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management

The proposed action does not include direct treatment within designated floodplain areas. Design criteria and Best Management Practices are included to help protect floodplain resources. The proposed action complies with Executive Order 11988.

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands

Wetlands occur in the project area, but no adverse effects are anticipated. Design criteria and Best Management Practices are included to help protect wetland resources. The proposed action complies with Executive Order 11990.

Executive Order 12962 (Aquatic Systems and Recreational Fisheries)

Aquatic systems and recreational fisheries occur in the project area. Impacts from the proposed action to Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate, Sensitive, and Focal Aquatic Species are disclosed in the Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation documents that were completed. The proposed action includes Design Criteria and Best Management Practices to help minimize impacts to aquatic systems and fisheries. The proposed action is consistent with Executive Order 12962 because proposed activities would not alter access to areas open to sport fishing on the Fishlake National Forest and are not anticipated to result in the loss of fishery populations. Effects to Bonneville cutthroat trout were evaluated and documented in the aquatic Biological Evaluation for this proposed action. That evaluation found that the proposed action “*may impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species.*” In summary, based on the analysis that was completed for Aquatic Resources, the proposed action complies with Executive Order 12962.

Executive Order 11593 (Cultural), Executive Order 12866 (Seek View of Tribal Officials Before Imposing Regulatory Requirements That May Affect Them), Executive Order 12875 (Regular Consultation with Tribal Governments), Executive Order 13007 (American Indian Sacred Sites) and Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments)

Section 106 consultation was completed for this undertaking. The Forest Service initiated consultation with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and federally recognized Tribes.

The Utah SHPO concurred with the Forest Service's determination of No Adverse Effect on February 6, 2026 (Case No. 26-0201).

The proposed action complies with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966, as amended) using a phased approach as outlined in 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2). Each implementation phase requires completion of the Section 106 process prior to implementation.

Tribal consultation letters were sent on December 17, 2025. No comments were received from Tribes during the scoping period ending January 31, 2026.

The proposed action also includes design features to help reduce impacts to cultural and tribal resources. The proposed action complies with Executive Orders 11593, 12866, 12875, 13007, and 13175.

Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species

Burn units would be inventoried for noxious weeds prior to treatment and monitored following treatment. Seeding with weed-free certified, genetically appropriate native plant materials would occur as necessary. The proposed action complies with Executive Order 13112.

Executive Order 13186, Migratory Birds

Migratory birds occur in the project area. Impacts from the proposed action to Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate, Sensitive, Migratory Birds, and Focal Wildlife Species are disclosed in the Biological Assessment, Biological Evaluation and Focal Species Report that was completed. The proposed action includes Design Criteria to help minimize impacts to wildlife. Based on the analysis that was completed for Wildlife Resources, the proposed action complies with Executive Order 13186.

CERTIFYING STATEMENT FOR EA PAGE LIMIT AND DEADLINE

The responsible official certifies that this environmental assessment:

- ☒ demonstrates the agency has thoroughly considered the factors mandated by NEPA;
- ☒ represents the agency's good-faith effort to prioritize documentation of the substantive issues and most important considerations required by NEPA within the Congressionally mandated page limits;
- ☒ reflects the agency's expert judgment;
- ☒ addressed briefly, or left unaddressed, any issues or considerations that were, in the agency's judgment, comparatively not of a substantive nature;
- ☒ represents the agency's good-faith effort to fulfill NEPA's requirements within the Congressional timeline (or within the minimally extended timeline) and this effort is substantially complete; and
- ☒ includes an analysis provided by an interdisciplinary team that is adequate to inform and reasonably explain the responsible official's final decision regarding the proposed action or selected alternative.

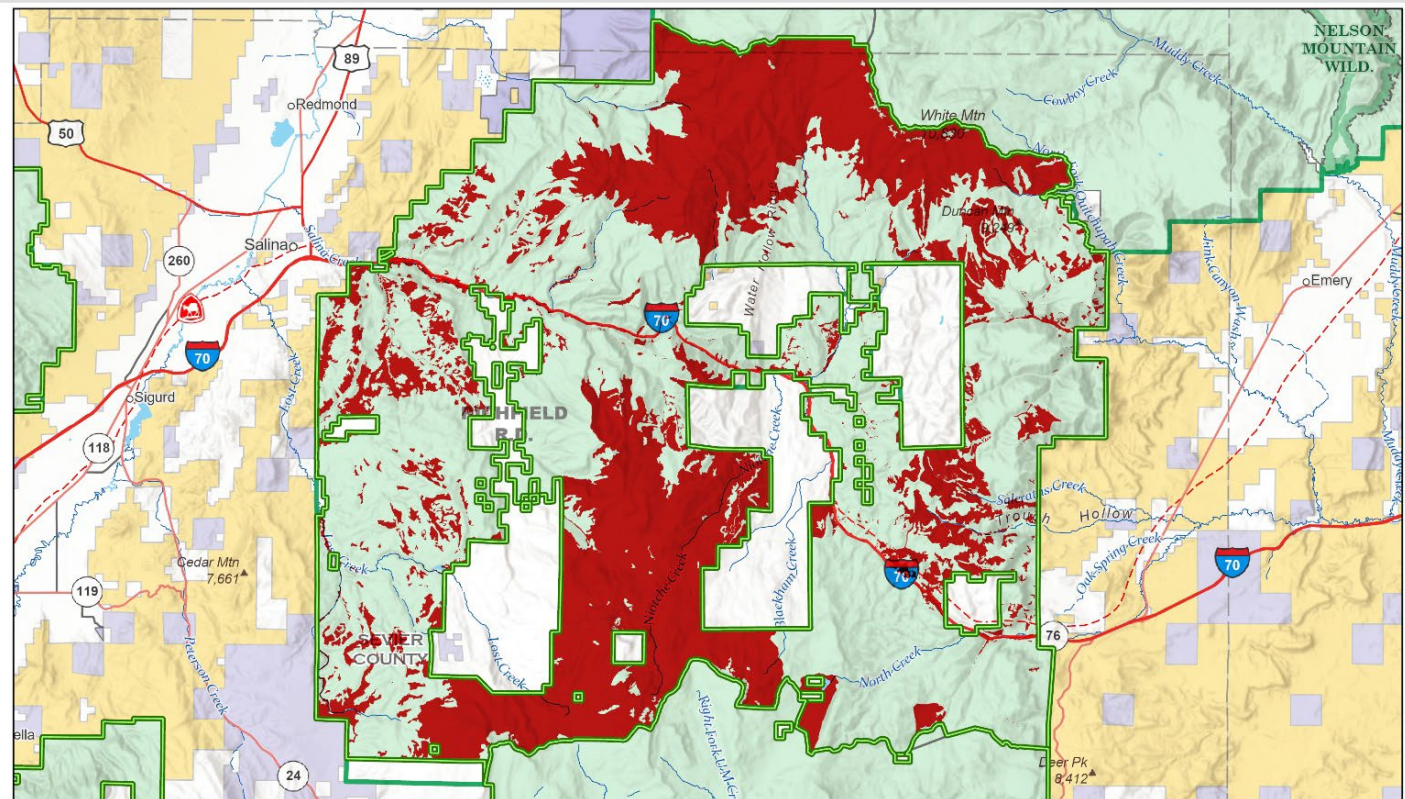
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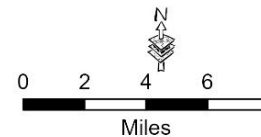
Map 1. Richfield Ranger District Areas Proposed for Prescribed Fire.



East Salina Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project

- Proposed Prescribed Fire 99,460 Acres
- Forest Service

Prepared by: Information Resources Management
 Supervisor's Office
 Fishlake National Forest
 Richfield, Utah
 Produced: 1/13/2026 By: GiselleRangel
 Projection: UTM 12 N, NAD83
 File: T:\FS\NFS\Fishlake\Project\RRD\2630EastSalinaCr\WHIP2026\GIS\Workspace\NFMA\workspace\GIS_NFMA_CE_GR_20251202.aprx



This map is intended to depict physical features as they generally appear on the ground and may not be used to determine title, ownership, legal boundaries, legal jurisdiction, including jurisdiction over roads or trails, or access restrictions that may be in place on either public or private land. Obtain permission before entering private lands and check with appropriate government offices for restrictions that may apply to public lands. Lands, roads and trails within the boundaries of the National Forest may be subject to restrictions on motor vehicle use. Obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map or inquire at the local Forest Service Office for motor vehicle access information. Natural hazards may or may not be depicted on the map, and land users should exercise due caution. This map may not be suitable for navigation.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Proposal Name: East Salina Habitat Improvement

Proposal Tracking #: PALS 68951

Agency Name: Fishlake National Forest

Unit Name: Richfield Ranger District

Documentation Informing the FONSI

This finding of no significant impact incorporates the environmental assessment and relies on documentation in the associated proposal record.

Emergency Authority

This project received approval to use the following emergency authority:

IIJA 40807 Forest Health and Fuels Emergency Situation Determination (ESD)

Selected Action

I have decided to implement the East Salina Habitat Improvement Project as described in the Proposed Action Section of this Environmental Assessment.

The selected action authorizes the use of prescribed fire on approximately 99,460 acres of National Forest System lands on the Richfield Ranger District east of Salina, Utah. Some limited mechanical work that supports the safe and effective application of prescribed fire is also approved.

Determination of No Significant Impacts

I have determined that the approved activities will not have a reasonably foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the human environment based on analysis and evidence provided in the environmental assessment and proposal record.

I have considered the degree of the effects of the action and provide the following rationale for why impacts are not significant:

(A) Both short- and long-term effects:

Short-term effects include temporary visual changes to the landscape, potential temporary increases in sediment delivery to streams, temporary rest of grazing allotments (typically 1-2 growing seasons), and localized vegetation mortality. These effects are typical of fire-dependent ecosystems, are within the natural range of variability, and would diminish over time as vegetation recovers.

Long-term effects are predominantly beneficial and include reduced risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire, improved forest health and resilience, improved wildlife habitat, increased forage production for livestock and wildlife, and improved ecosystem function in fire-dependent forest ecosystems.

(B) Both beneficial and negative effects:

Beneficial effects include:

- Reduced risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire
- Improved health and resilience of vegetation
- Improved wildlife habitat through creation of habitat mosaic
- Increased grass and forb production for livestock and wildlife
- Reduced competition among trees for water, sunlight, and nutrients
- Reduced populations of harmful insects like bark beetles
- Long-term protection of watershed function

Negative effects include:

- Short-term visual impacts from burned vegetation
- Temporary displacement of wildlife during active burning
- Short-term increases in erosion potential in treated areas
- Temporary rest requirements for livestock grazing
- Potential injury or mortality to young trees or fire-sensitive species

The negative effects are minimized through implementation of design elements and are within the natural range of variability for fire-adapted ecosystems.

(C) Effects on public health and safety: The proposed action supports public health and safety by reducing the risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire that could threaten communities, infrastructure, and firefighter safety. Prescribed fire conducted under controlled conditions with approved burn plans reduces smoke impacts compared to uncontrolled large wildfire. Smoke management and air quality compliance through approval from Utah Division of Air Quality is required for each burn plan.

(D) Economic effects: Short-term economic effects include potential costs to livestock permittees during temporary rest periods. Long-term economic effects are largely beneficial, including improved rangeland productivity, protection of timber resources from insects and disease, and reduced wildfire suppression costs.

(E) Effects on the quality of life of the American people: The proposed action improves quality of life by maintaining healthy forest ecosystems, protecting recreation opportunities, reducing wildfire risk to communities, and sustaining ecosystem services including clean water and wildlife habitat.

Rationale for Whether the Degree of Effect is Significant

In providing rationale for whether the degree of effect is significant, I considered:

How the unavoidable short- and long-term adverse impacts of implementing the action compares to the short- and long-term adverse or beneficial consequences of not implementing the action:

The unavoidable short-term negative impacts of implementing the proposed action (temporary visual impacts, short-term erosion potential, temporary grazing rest, etc.) are substantially less

than the consequences of not implementing the proposed action. Without prescribed fire treatment, fuels would continue to accumulate, forest health would continue to decline, and the risk of large and uncharacteristic wildfire would increase. Large, uncharacteristic and catastrophic wildfires would likely result in greater adverse effects to all resources including severe soil erosion, loss of wildlife habitat, damage to cultural resources, degraded water quality, and long-term loss of recreation opportunities.

How the irreversible or irretrievable commitment of a resource, as part of the action, contributes to a loss of long-term productivity for the human environment:

The proposed action does not result in any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. Prescribed fire is a natural ecological process in fire-dependent ecosystems. The proposed action would improve and maintain long-term productivity of forest ecosystems rather than diminish it.

For these reasons, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Pre-decisional Objection Opportunity

This environmental assessment was developed under the IJA, Section 40807, Emergency Situation Determination and is therefore not subject to the pre-decisional objection process (36 CFR 218).

Anticipated Implementation of Activities

I intend to begin implementing prescribed burn activities in the fall of 2026.

Signature and Date

Handwritten signature of Jason Kling in blue ink, with the date 03/13/2026 written below it.

Jason Kling
Richfield District Ranger

For more information, contact:

Jason Kling, Richfield District Ranger, at 435-896-9233.

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APPENDIX A – DESIGN ELEMENTS

Design elements are used to keep any short-term effects of the proposed action and activities within acceptable and predictable bounds. Some design elements would be applied to distinct areas or burn units; others are designed to be applied to all treatments and areas. The table below describes the design elements that would be applied to the proposed action and activities. Additional elements may be added in specific implementation units.

Table 1. East Salina Habitat Improvement Project Design Elements

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
Botany 1	Known locations of Region 4 sensitive or federally listed plant species would be protected from mechanical equipment use, constructed fireline, pile burning, jackpot burning, and negative impacts from prescribed fire within treatment areas. However, prescribed burning treatments and hand thinning activities could be implemented within populations of fire adapted sensitive plant species with the coordination of Fishlake botanist and line officer approval.	All Actions	Everywhere	Always
Cultural 1	Each phase requires compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966, as amended) using a phased approach as outlined in 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2). This effort should be initiated 1-2 years prior to implementation timeline. Implementation cannot begin until the Section 106 process for that phase is complete. The level of archaeological investigation would be commensurate with the undertaking as determined by the Fishlake’s Heritage Program. A cultural resource investigation would be conducted, and the results consulted on with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) and federally recognized Indian Tribes (Tribes). The Fishlake’s Heritage Program and/or contractor would comply with Section 106 of the NHPA as specified in the 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region and the Utah State Library Division (also known as the Utah State	Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
	Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) until superseded.			
Cultural 2	Eligible, or potentially eligible, cultural resources would be managed to achieve a “no effect” or “no adverse effect” determination through consultation with the Utah SHPO, THPO and Tribes via the section 106 process. Protection measures should be developed through consultation and may include, but are not limited to, site specific protection guidelines and/or site area avoidance.	Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always
Cultural 3	If previously unidentified cultural resources are identified during project implementation, the Forest Service would ensure that employees and/or contractors comply with guidance in the 2019 Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) as outlined the 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region and the Utah State Library Division (also known as the Utah State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) until superseded.	Implementation	Everywhere	Always
Cultural 4	If human remains are identified during project implementation, the Forest Service would ensure that employees and/or contractors comply with guidance in the Inadvertent Discovery Plan as outlined in Appendix C of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region and the Utah State Library Division (also known as the Utah State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) until superseded.	All	Everywhere	Always
Cultural 5	Protection of the character and location of archaeological sites from public disclosure.	All	Everywhere	Always
Fisheries 1	Equipment, including vehicles, pumps, drafting hoses, foot valves, etc., that may cross or enter the stream would be thoroughly cleaned and dried or decontaminated before moving from one water source to another to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). See the latest version of the PMS 444 “Guide to Preventing Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Transport by Wildland Fire Operations” for general guidance and technical information.	All	Everywhere	Always
Fisheries 2	If water needs to be drafted, all water intakes would be equipped with a screen to prevent intake of fish	Drafting and dipping	Everywhere	Always

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
	and amphibian species. Water drafted or dipped from within one watershed would be used within that same watershed and placed on the ground in a manner not entering water bodies. If operations necessitate water drafted, or dipped, from one watershed to be dropped in an adjacent watershed, these actions would be directly coordinated with the Fishlake fisheries biologist to avoid transfer of aquatic invasive species between watersheds.			
Range 1	If post implementation monitoring indicates a need for seeding, the seeding would follow Forest Service Policy per FSM 2070. Seeding would only occur in limited circumstances, such as where fire unintentionally burns in large cheatgrass patches, or where managers seek to convert areas currently dominated by non-native herbaceous species to a native-dominated assemblage. Genetically appropriate native plant materials will be given primary consideration (see FSM 2070.3(1)). Select non-native plants may be used as interim, non-persistent plant materials provided they will not hybridize with local species, will not permanently displace native species or offer serious long-term competition to the recovery of endemic plants, and are designed to aid in the re-establishment of native plant communities (see FSM 2070.3(3)). This could include sterile, non-rhizomatous non-native species. Persistent non-native species will not be used. For any areas where non-native species are used, monitoring will be undertaken to ensure those species in fact aid in the re-establishment of and do not displace or compete with native species. Determination and selection of genetically appropriate plant materials will be based on site characteristics and ecological setting, using the best available information and plant materials (see FSM 2070.3(4)). All seeds will be weed-free certified.	All Actions	Everywhere	Always
Range 2	Burning in areas where fire tolerant invasive plants are present will be minimized unless used as a tool to prepare the site for additional treatments.	All Actions	Everywhere	Always
Range 3	If determined necessary, burned areas would be temporarily rested from livestock grazing (usually 1-	Post implementation	Everywhere	Post Implementation

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
	2 growing seasons) to allow new vegetation time to establish following the prescribed burning.			
Scenery 1	Blend fuel breaks with natural landscape features such as natural openings, rock outcrops, and topography where possible. Minimize use of straight lines or geometric shapes along edges during unit design where feasibility and safety allow. Once management activities are complete, rehabilitate fire control features, safety zones, and staging areas by returning to original contours, installing erosion control features as necessary, scarifying to eliminate compaction as necessary, and planting with forest-approved seed mix. Block access with naturalistic barriers.	Implementation / Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always
Silviculture 1	Regeneration activities would meet minimum stocking requirements per cover type as identified in the Fishlake National Forest LRMP.	Monitoring/Post Implementation	In areas where a silviculture prescription requires reforestation.	5 years post treatment
Special Areas 1	Mechanical thinning in inventoried roadless areas would be limited to improving fire breaks and aiding fireline reinforcement and ignition.	Mechanical fireline/Cross-country travel	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Always
Special Areas 2	Minimize cross country travel and obliterate access points post implementation to maintain IRA characteristics.	Cross-country travel	Inventoried Roadless Areas	Always
Special Areas 3	Do not use National Historic Trails for fire lines. Establish burn piles at least 150 feet from Nationally Designated Trails. Construct hand line only within the immediate foreground (300 feet or visual sight distance if less) of Nationally Designated Trails.	Fire Line	Old Spanish Trail-Fish Lake Cut Off National Historic Trail	Always
Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate Species 1	Cease project activities if a threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species is discovered within or adjacent to the project area, until it is recommended how best to proceed by the appropriate specialist (wildlife, botany, aquatics). If necessary, for Federally listed species, Section 7 consultation may be re-initiated with the Fish and Wildlife Service.	Implementation, Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always
Watershed 1	Equipment would not be operated within the inner gorge (minimum of 100 feet) of intermittent and perennial channels, streams, springs, wetlands, and reservoirs, except where a permitted road or trail already exists. To the extent practical,	Implementation	Every Riparian Area	Always

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
	implementation personnel would limit the number of vehicle and equipment crossings on perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral stream channels. Crossings would be designated prior to implementation following standard Best Management Practices. Equipment servicing and refueling areas (excluding use of drip torches) would be designated and would be at least 300 feet from any water.			
Watershed 2	For ground disturbing activities including fire, overall watershed disturbance will not exceed 20 percent of a HUC 12 subwatershed annually.	Implementation	All 6 th level watersheds (HUC12)	Always
Watershed 3	In the 100-foot Aquatic Management Zone buffer associated with wetlands: • Wheeled or tracked equipment should avoid entering the wetland buffer unless coordinated and recommended by the Fishlake hydrologist and botanist with line officer approval. Note: This prohibition does not apply to established National Forest System roads and trails. • Vegetation treatments retain desirable Wetlands vegetation as much as practicable. • Existing downed woody material should be left in place unless requested for removal by the Fishlake hydrologist and botanist with line officer approval. • Do not locate or burn machine or hand piles within 100 feet of wetlands.	Implementation	Wetlands	Implementation
Watershed 4	No direct fire ignitions would occur in riparian areas on side slopes greater than 40 percent. On side slopes less than 40 percent in riparian areas, prescribed burning would occur when low to moderate fire severities would be expected. Riparian areas would be ignited on the outside edge so that the prescribed fire can back toward the interior of the riparian area. Minimize direct fire ignitions within 100 feet from springs, streams, ponds, lakes, and wetlands.	Implementation	Riparian Areas	Always
Watershed 5	Pile burning would be limited in riparian areas. No pile burning would occur within 100 feet of water unless coordinated with the Fishlake hydrologist and fisheries biologist and approved by the line officer. Pile burning that does occur within riparian areas	Pile Burning	Riparian Areas	Always

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
	would occur when fuel moisture levels are sufficient to limit creep and damage to underlying soils.			
Watershed 6	Where soils are classified as having high erosion potential or where susceptibility to fire damage is severe, burn blocks would be burned in a way that leaves a mosaic of surface vegetation, litter, or duff. This would reduce impacts to soil and minimize heat transfer into the soil profile. Conduct prescribed fires when soil conditions are suitable to minimize the residence time on the soil.	Implementation	Everywhere with special consideration in sensitive soil types	Always
Watershed 7	Appropriate localized post-treatment actions (seeding, silt fences, contour felling, localized sediment basins, contour waddles) where practicable may be implemented upon assessment of post implementation monitor.	Monitoring/Post Implementation	Everywhere	Always
Watershed 8	Pre-treatment mastication activities: - Whenever practical, minimize turning of mastication equipment or attempt a “rolling turn” to reduce the amount of displacement and topsoil mixing with an emphasis on operating over the top of masticated fuels to decrease compaction. - Plan mastication operations to minimize the number of passes over any one area to reduce the potential for compaction and rutting. - Avoid pre-treatment mastication activities if soil is wet (near saturation) to decrease the potential for deep rutting. This is defined as any time the equipment ruts are greater than 2 inches in depth.	Pre-Treatment Activities	Specific Pre-treatment Locations	Always
Watershed 9	If slash is chipped and the chips remain in the activity area, the depth of the chips would not generally exceed three inches.	Prescribed burning and associated activities	Specific Burn Locations	Always
Watershed 10	Prior to burning or masticating within a municipal watershed or where municipal water collection infrastructure is present consultation with Forest Hydrologist/Soil Scientist will occur to identify and protect collection infrastructure and source.	Implementation	Municipal Watersheds	Always
Weed Management 1	Only certified noxious weed free seeds, hay, straw, and mulch will be used for rehabilitation purposes.	Post Implementation	Everywhere	Always

ID	Design Elements	Activity <i>Which activity needs to be modified?</i>	Where? <i>What is the applicable area (geographic features, forest types, management areas, etc.)</i>	When? <i>What time of year is the activity restricted or modified?</i>
Weed Management 2	The Forest will monitor the introduction of noxious weeds, and noxious weeds will be treated on all disturbed areas should they become established in accordance with currently approved methods for the Forest.	Post Implementation	Everywhere	Always
Weed Management 3	Treatment areas will be monitored post implementation. If noxious and/or invasive weeds are detected, the District will take the appropriate actions during implementation of the project to control spread and eliminate the noxious and/or invasive weeds from the treatment areas per policy and regulations.	Post Implementation	Everywhere	Always
Weed Management 4	Equipment would be washed and inspected, prior to entering National Forest System lands, to remove any soil and debris that may contribute to the spread and/or establishment of noxious weeds.	All Actions	Everywhere	Always
Wildlife 1	Minimize broadcast burning in shrub/steppe, mountain mahogany, and cliffrose-bitterbrush communities.	Implementation / Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	High value big game range	Always
Wildlife 2	In Northern goshawk nest and post fledgling areas, follow forest plan goshawk guidelines.	Implementation / Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always
Wildlife 3	In forested cover types, follow forest plan guidelines on snag and down wood retention.	Implementation / Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always
Wildlife 4	If occupied raptor nests are found, follow guidelines outlined in USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (2002).	Implementation / Prescribed Fire and Burn Preparation	Everywhere	Always

APPENDIX B – IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist broadly ensures that the interdisciplinary team and responsible official would select areas for prescribed fire (and for other treatment activities such as fireline construction), apply the design elements, and implement the activities consistent with the project analysis and Decision. The steps shown would take place prior to project implementation.

Table 6. Implementation Checklist

ID	Pre-Implementation Steps
General	An interdisciplinary team would meet annually to identify project locations for treatment one to two years prior to implementation. The team would review the purpose and need, desired conditions, the Fishlake National Forest LRMP, as amended, identify survey needs, and discuss previous implementation of the project to review successes and learning opportunities. The team would also do the following: • Verify/confirm the current site-specific resource conditions were analyzed for treatment in the environmental analysis. • Select appropriate management activities from within the environmental analysis based on selection criteria. • Confirm there is no change in potential effects from those previously disclosed in the environmental analysis.
Notification	Fishlake NF would provide notice and engagement of planned project activities through the five-year vegetation plans provided to partners and the public. Notifications at implementation: Utah Smoke Management Coordinator, public notice, signage at recreation areas.

ID	Pre-Implementation Steps
Cultural	To ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, the project will adhere to the following criteria: 1. Initiation of Section 106 Review • For individual projects or phased undertakings, Section 106 compliance must be initiated 1–2 years prior to implementation to allow adequate time for consultation and review. 2. Completion of Section 106 Compliance • Identify the Area of Potential Effects (APE). • Determine and conduct the appropriate level of cultural resource survey (Class I, II, or III). • Evaluate identified resources for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. • Make a determination of effect (no historic properties affected or no adverse effect). • Develop protection and/or treatment measures for historic properties. • Consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and federally recognized Tribes. 3. Protection During Implementation • All activities within or near historic properties will follow the protection and treatment protocols specified in the Section 106 documentation for the project or phase. 4. Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources • If previously unidentified cultural resources are discovered during implementation, the Forest Service will follow the Inadvertent Discovery Plan outlined in the 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region, and the Utah SHPO, until superseded. 5. Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains • If human remains are encountered during implementation, the Forest Service will follow the procedures in Appendix C of the same MOU, until superseded.
Fisheries	A fisheries biologist would be involved in the creation of implementation actions, prior to implementing, to ensure effects to fisheries are commensurate with the effects disclosed in the NEPA document, including genetic remnant populations and high value recreational fisheries. Additional discussions with USFWS and Utah Department of Wildlife Resources would occur if determined necessary.

ID	Pre-Implementation Steps
Hydrology	Coordination would take place with the Fishlake Hydrologist/Soil Scientist prior to implementation to determine: • Appropriate percentage of watershed to be treated annually, including treatments within riparian areas and municipal water supplies. • In coordination with the Fisheries Biologist, identify possible impacts to downstream resources and user. • Consulted on when hydrological function has recovered enough for further treatment.
Minerals and Geology	The Fishlake minerals program manager would be coordinated with prior to implementation.
Motorized Trails/Roads	The Fishlake Motorized Trails Program Manager and Forest Engineer would be consulted prior to implementation.
Monitoring	Monitoring would include protocols outlined in the Fishlake National Forest LRMP.
Range	A range specialist would ensure the following prior to implementation: • Permittees are notified of allotments and/or pastures affected by the prescribed fire. • If temporary rest of pastures/allotment areas is anticipated or needed, the Fishlake would work beforehand with livestock permittees to plan for and provide the needed rest. • Range structural improvements are identified and protected to the extent practical. • The timing and pre-treatments are discussed to maximize effectiveness of efforts to reduce noxious weed spread and invasive annual grass establishment/expansion. • Project areas would be inventoried for noxious weeds prior to treatment and monitored for noxious weeds following treatment. If necessary, weeds identified would be treated under already existing approvals.
Recreation/Scenery	Coordinate burn plan development with a recreation specialist to ensure the following: • If Inventoried Roadless Areas are included in the proposed burn area, identify any special features or locally unique characteristics that need additional consideration, analysis, or protection. • If burn plan will impact National Historic or National Scenic Trails, take appropriate precautions to protect the nature and purpose of such trails. • If recreation sites or amenities are included in the proposed burn area, arrange for site closures and public notification. • If permitted special uses occur within proposed burn area, coordinate with permittees and permit administrators as needed. Consult with a recreation or visuals specialist to develop appropriate prescriptions for treatments in Forest Plan Management 2B areas.
Silviculture	Timber Management Staff would be consulted for: • Development of silvicultural prescription. • Old growth stands will be surveyed for pre-implementation.

ID	Pre-Implementation Steps
Wildlife	Coordination would take place with a District Wildlife Biologist prior to Implementation including: • Determining and completing appropriate surveys. • Review timing of treatments relative to fawning, calving and nesting seasons and assess habitat needs of big game and migratory birds. • Coordination with the USFWS and UDWR and ensure that wildlife design features are incorporated where needed. • Consultation with USFWS is completed, if necessary. • Review timing and treatment actions related to Northern goshawk, raptors and migratory birds to ensure consistency with the LRMP, raptor guidelines, and migratory bird guidance.