



Staff Report

To: Summit County Council
From: Sean Lewis, County Planner
Janna Young, Deputy County Manager
Date of Meeting: October 24, 2018
Subject: Utah State Roadless Rule Petition

Background

The Governor's Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO) has initiated an effort to petition the U.S. Forest Service for a Utah-specific version of the Forest Service's Roadless Rule, a 2001 regulation that restricts active forest management on some National Forest Service lands. The impetus behind this project is to allow more active forest management within the state, which is currently restricted due to the roadless rule/designation, in order to mitigate catastrophic wildland fires.

PLPCO has asked Summit County, along with the other 28 counties in the state, to participate in this process. Specifically, they have requested we inventory and review all the currently designated roadless areas within the county and provide recommendations either to maintain the status quo/current designation, or reclassify the area into one of four categories (which are described below and in the attached Exhibit A).

Summit County staff has reviewed the proposal and toured various roadless areas within county boundaries. There are 28 identified Roadless areas (map polygons) in Summit County. Of those 28, 11 of the areas cross jurisdictional boundaries between Summit County and other Utah counties. Staff has used the following factors to guide our analysis:

- 1) Much of the existing Roadless area is accessible via existing roads. No new roads are proposed.
- 2) Existing regulations prevent the effective management of the forest by limiting the amount of dead/dying timber that may be removed. Summit County supports

the effective management of the Forest by allowing timber industries appropriate access to remove dead/dying timber.

- 3) Appropriate Forest management includes many methods of thinning timber stands, including responsible logging, prescribed burns, natural controlled burns, among others.
- 4) The Forest areas in Summit County represent a major draw to the area from tourists and locals alike. This represents a significant portion of Summit County's economic viability and the Forest areas should be protected, and managed effectively to preserve this valuable resource utilizing all elements enumerated in factor 3.
- 5) Smaller polygons should be merged with larger polygons.
- 6) Areas within proposed wilderness areas should be classified as "Primitive".
- 7) Areas that cross jurisdictional boundaries may be realigned to match political boundaries where the adjustments make reasonable sense.

Based upon the most recent draft of the proposed rule provided by PLPCO, and following the recent discussion with the Summit County Council of Governments, Staff has again evaluated each polygon area for specific recommendation as shown on Exhibit A. Some areas are recommended as "Primitive", some as "Forest Restoration" and others as "Boundary Adjustment/Re-Inventory".

Staff has created an [interactive map presentation](#) of all of the areas on which the Governor's Office has asked Summit County to provide input. To navigate the map, use the arrows at the bottom center of the page. A legend is available in the upper-right corner of the page.

As the proposal to define areas is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Summit County Resource Management Plan (adopted in 2017), Staff is proposing no changes to the plan at this time.

Timeline and Process

The Governor's Office requested to receive Summit County's recommendations by the beginning of November. A final decision on the recommendations is requested from the Council at the October 24 County Council meeting in order to meet the deadline.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Council review the proposed classifications for the Roadless area polygons as shown on Exhibit A. Staff further recommends that the Council vote to forward the Summit County recommendations along with the attached letter (Exhibit B)

to PLPCO for consideration with the Governor's proposal to create a Utah specific version of the 2001 Roadless Rule.

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Draft Roadless Area Designations

Exhibit B – Draft letter to PLPCO

COUNTY	ID	NAME	FOREST	MGMT CATEGORY	COMMENTS
SUMMIT	5530	401029	Ashley	(4) Reinventory	Polygon 99% in Daggett County. Realign boundry to match Summit/Daggett County Boundary
SUMMIT	5535	419020	Ashley	(1) Primitive	Polygon shared between Summit, Daggett, Uintah, & Duschene Counties. Portion of area is slated for future wilderness designation.
SUMMIT	6343	419020	Ashley	(4) Reinventory	Polygon is 100% within Daggett County. Realign Boundary to match Summit/Daggett County Boundary or merge with 6405.
SUMMIT	6405	419020	Ashley	(1) Primitive	Polygon shared between Summit & Daggett Counties. Portion of area is slated for future wilderness designation.
SUMMIT	5737	419022	Ashley	(4) Reinventory	Polygon 99% in Summit County. Realign boundry to match Summit/Daggett County Boundary. Following realignment, (2) Forest Restoration Preferred.
SUMMIT	6114	419022	Ashley	(4) Reinventory	Merge with 5737. Following realignment, (2) Forest Restoration Preferred.
SUMMIT	5489	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	Could be merged with 6415.
SUMMIT	5534	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	5813	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	5821	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	Small polygon. Could be mergerd with either 6098 or 5825.
SUMMIT	5825	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	6098	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Portion of area is slated for future wilderness designation. Polygon should be divided between proposed wilderness and non-wilderness areas. Following realignment, (2) Forest Restoration preferred for non-wilderness (west); (1) Primitive preferred for proposed wilderness (east) areas.
SUMMIT	6126	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Small polygon. Merge with 5825.
SUMMIT	6415	High Uintas	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	Polygon shared between Summit, Duschene, & Wasatch Counties. Portion of boundary along Summit/Wasatch line could be realigned to match County boundaries.
SUMMIT	4495	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Small polygon. Merge with 6358.
SUMMIT	4497	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Small polygon. Merge with 6358.
SUMMIT	5477	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Small polygon. Merge with 6365.
SUMMIT	5487	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Small polygon. Could be mergerd with either 6358 or 6365.
SUMMIT	5786	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	6139	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	Polygon shared with Duschene County. Could be merged with 6358.
SUMMIT	6352	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Polygon shared with Duschene County. Duschene portion could be realigned with 6358 along County boundary. Following realignment, (2) Forest Restoration preferred.
SUMMIT	6358	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	Polygon shared with Duschene County. Large polygon that could be merged with smaller adjacent polygons. Realignments along County boundary could be considered.
SUMMIT	6365	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	

SUMMIT	6469	Lakes	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	6094	Little West Fork Blacks	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	6095	Little West Fork Blacks	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	
SUMMIT	5638	Mt. Olympus	Wasatch-Cache	(1) Primitive	Polygon shared with Salt Lake County. Located in remote area above resorts.
SUMMIT	6189	Nobleetts	Wasatch-Cache	(4) Reinventory	Polygon 95% is Wasatch County. Realign along County boundary.
SUMMIT	6375	Widdop Mountain	Wasatch-Cache	(2) Restoration	

COUNTY COUNCIL



Kim Carson – Chair
Roger Armstrong – Vice Chair
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November 1, 2018

Attn: Ms. Kathleen Clarke, Director
Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office
Office of the Governor
State of Utah

Re: Summit County's Recommendations and Comments for the State of Utah's Petition to Establish New Management Provisions for Utah's Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Dear Director Clarke:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your office's effort to petition the United States Forest Service for a Utah-specific roadless rule. We appreciate the time your staff has taken to meet with us, provide materials, and address our questions.

Attached to this letter is the spreadsheet requested by the Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO) that includes all the roadless areas within Summit County's borders, along with our recommendations and comments regarding how to categorize those areas.

To arrive at these recommendations, Summit County Staff and a member of our Council toured many of the roadless areas with the Heber-Kamas District Ranger, Dano Jauregui. This tour was useful in seeing the condition of the forest first-hand and also to learn from Mr. Jauregui what could be done to help him better manage the forest, specifically in terms of removal of the significant amount of dead and dying timber caused by beetle kill.

After this meeting, Staff grouped together all the polygons provided us by PLPCO into 12 areas, developed interactive maps illustrating the location of these areas, and made recommendations for the classification of each area based on the four definitions provided to us by the PLPCO staff: (1) Primitive Areas; (2) Forest Restoration Areas; (3) Active Forest Management Areas; and (4) Re-inventoried areas.

Staff identified and considered the following factors in drafting the recommendations outlined in the attached spreadsheet:

- 1) Much of the existing Roadless area is accessible via existing roads. No new roads are proposed.
- 2) Existing regulations prevent the effective management of the forest by limiting the amount of dead/dying timber that may be removed. Summit County supports the effective management of the Forest by allowing timber industries appropriate access to

remove dead/dying timber.

- 3) Appropriate Forest management includes many methods of thinning timber stands, including responsible logging, prescribed burns, natural controlled burns, among others.
- 4) The Forest areas in Summit County represent a major draw to the area from tourists and locals alike. This represents a significant portion of Summit County's economic viability and the Forest areas should be protected, and managed effectively to preserve this valuable resource utilizing all elements enumerated in factor 3.

On September 6, 2018, Staff presented these recommendations to the Eastern Summit County Planning Commission and held a public hearing. No member of the public spoke at the hearing. The Planning Commission voted to forward the recommendations to the County Council, deferring to them to make the policy decisions regarding Summit County's submittal to PLPCO on this issue.

On September 12, 2018, Staff held a work session with the County Council to present the 12 roadless areas and discuss the proposed classifications. On September 19th, the County Council discussed the issue again and invited public comment. As a result of that meeting, the Council voted to submit the attached recommendations and comments to PLPCO to consider for the Governor's petition.

The critical feedback that came out of this process is an interest from our community to preserve the current roadless rule and primitive nature of the areas within our borders to the extent possible, while also allowing some flexibility to remove dead or fallen timber caused by beetle kill in order to mitigate the risk of catastrophic fire.

Our goal by participating in this petition effort is primarily the health and safety of the forest and to increase the ability to remove potential catastrophic fire fuel sources. It is not our desire to exempt these lands from the Roadless Rule as a way to open them up for mineral extraction or other commercial uses. We wish to maintain the primitive nature of these areas as much as possible.

Our submittal is also an attempt to address the red tape and other barriers to fire mitigation as expressed to us by the Forest District. While establishing the federal authority to address each roadless area is needed for health, safety and welfare, the biggest challenge facing effective fire mitigation in the forests is economic. There exists neither the manpower nor market to effectively remove all the dead and dying timber needed to substantially reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. We feel a significant investment from both the Federal and State governments are needed to employ people to remove the timber and subsidize the timber and ancillary industries to utilize the timber taken out of the forests.

Thanks again for inviting Summit County to participate in PLPCO's petition process. Please let us know if you have any questions about the recommendations we have provided for the roadless areas within our borders, or if there is additional assistance we could provide.

Sincerely,

Kim Carson
Chair, Summit County Council