



May 2004

Manti-La Sal National Forest



Forest Plan Revision

Newsletter No. 3: Wild and Scenic Rivers

The National Forest Management Act requires National Forests to develop a Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and update or revise the plan every 15 years or when conditions significantly change. The Manti-La Sal Forest Plan (officially entitled *Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*) is the document that establishes general management direction for lands administered by the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Using broad language, the Forest Plan determines the availability of land for resource management, predicts levels of resource use and outcomes, and provides for a variety of resource management practices.

One requirement accomplished during Forest Plan Revision is to inventory and evaluate rivers within National Forest System lands to determine river segments that may be eligible for

recommendation to Congress for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System or for additional protection under the Forest Plan.

Six Decisions Made in Forest Plans

(36 CFR 219.11, 219.17, and 219.25)

- ◆ Forest-wide goals and objectives
- ◆ Forest-wide standards
- ◆ Identification of suitable uses
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation strategies
- ◆ Recommendations to Congress of areas eligible for wilderness designation and rivers eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System
- ◆ Identification of lands not suited for timber production

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, requires the Forest Service to “consider the potential for national wild, scenic, and recreational river areas in all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources.”

The Manti-La Sal National Forest began the initial inventory process for potential eligible river segments in 2001. All eligible segments must be free flowing, contain at least one outstandingly remarkable value, and be of regional or national significance. The eligibility screening process was lengthy and involved Forest specialists, county subject matter experts and coordination with other land management agencies and the State of Utah. In March of 2003, the Forest produced a report identifying fourteen eligible river segments.

Counties and communities surrounding the Forest are interested in pursuing the next phase of consideration—suitability. The Forest, with input from the public, will look at the thirteen suitability factors (found on page 2) for each eligible river segment to determine whether a wild and scenic river recommendation makes sense. During the suitability analysis, factors such as public support, manageability, land ownership, and potential and future development will be considered.

Three draft suitability reports have been developed for your review. These river segments are located on the Manti Division of the Forest. They include Huntington Creek, Lower Left Fork of Huntington Creek, and Fish Creek/Gooseberry Creek.

The remaining river segments are located on the La Sal Division of the Forest. These river segments include Miner’s Basin, Roc Creek, Mill Creek, Upper Dark Canyon, Lower Dark Canyon, Chippean and Allen Canyon, North Fork of Whiskers, Notch Canyon, Posey Canyon, and Butts Texas and Arch Canyons. Suitability reports have not been developed for these segments. We are asking the public for input on the thirteen suitability factors for each of the eleven river segments located on the La Sal Division. The draft suitability reports will be written during the summer and posted on our website this fall for your review.

All comments on the three draft suitability reports and responses to the thirteen suitability factors should be sent to: Forest Plan Revision Team, Manti-La Sal National Forest, 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501 by July 15.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE AT THIS TIME	DUE DATE
Submit information on the suitability questions listed below and on the draft suitability reports (found on the website) for rivers segments you are familiar with.	July 15

SUITABILITY

The next step in the river assessment process is the determination of suitability. This step provides the basis for the determination of which rivers to recommend to Congress as a component of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. A final decision on suitability will be made in the Record of Decision for the Forest Plan revision environmental impact statement (EIS).

Suitability Basically Answers Two Questions:

- ◆ What is the best use of the river corridor? Should the outstanding values be fully protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant not maintaining the river's free flowing or fully protecting identified values?
- ◆ Assuming the values are to be protected, what is the best method to protect the river corridor? Wild and Scenic River designation is one approach. In answering this question, the benefits and impacts of Wild and Scenic River designation must be evaluated and alternative protection methods considered.

As provided in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Sections 4(a) and 5(c), the following factors should be considered and, as appropriate, documented as a basis for the suitability determination for each river:

1. Characteristics which do or do not make the area a worthy addition to the National System.
2. The current status of land ownership and use in the area.
3. The reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed, or curtailed if the area were included in the System.
4. The federal agency that will administer the area, should it be added to the System.
5. The extent to which the agency proposes that administration of the river, including the costs thereof, be shared by state and local agencies.
6. The estimated cost to the United States of acquiring necessary lands and interests in land and of administering the area, should it be added to the System.
7. A determination of the degree to which the state or its political subdivisions might participate in the preservation and administration of the river, should it be proposed for inclusion in the System.

Additional suitability factors that may be considered include:

8. State/local government's ability to manage and protect the outstandingly remarkable values on non-federal lands.
9. The consistency of designation with other agency plans, programs, or policies.
10. Support or opposition to designation.
11. Contribution to river system or basin integrity.
12. Potential for water resource development.
13. Contribution to other regional objectives/needs.

Information available on the Manti-La Sal National Forest website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/mantilasal/projects>) to assist you in submitting comments:

- ◆ FINAL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS REPORT
- ◆ MAPS OF ELIGIBLE WATERCOURSES
- ◆ DRAFT SUITABILITY FACTOR REPORTS FOR LOWER LEFT FORK OF HUNTINGTON CREEK, HUNTINGTON CREEK, AND FISH/GOOSEBERRY CREEKS

Or contact the Forest Plan Revision Team at 435-636-3500 for further information.

ELIGIBLE WATERCOURSES

Watercourse	County	Outstandingly Remarkable Values	Scale of Importance (Significance)	Tentative Classification (see table on page 4)
Lower Left Fork of Huntington Creek	Emery	Scenic	Regional	Scenic
Huntington Creek	Emery	Scenic Recreation	Regional Regional	Recreational
Fish Creek, including Lower Gooseberry Creek (Utah County-3.26 miles; Carbon County -3.98 miles, Sanpete County-13.55 miles)	Utah, Carbon, Sanpete	Wildlife	Regional	Scenic (17.03 miles from headwaters of Fish Creek and the beginning of Lower Gooseberry Creek to junction of Fish Creek with Lower Gooseberry Creek Recreation (3.98 miles from junction of Fish Creek and Gooseberry Creek to the Forest Boundary)
North Fork of Whiskers, including Whiskers Draw	San Juan	Cultural	National	Recreational
Hammond Canyon	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	Regional National National	Scenic
Notch Canyon	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	Regional National National	Scenic
Posey Canyon	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	Regional Regional National	Scenic
Chippean & Allen Canyons	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	Regional Regional National	Recreational
Butts Canyon, Arch Canyon and Texas Canyon	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	National National National	Scenic
Upper Dark Canyon, including Drift, Horse Pasture, Rig, Peavine, & Kigalia Canyons	San Juan	Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	National National	Recreational
Lower Dark Canyon, including Poison, Deadman, Trail, Warren, and Woodshoe & Cherry Canyons	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Cultural	National National National	Wild
Millcreek Gorge	San Juan	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic Other Similar Values	National Regional Regional	Wild
Roc Creek (San Juan Co.-0.38 miles Montrose Co.-9.02 miles)	San Juan and Montrose County, Colorado	Scenic Geologic/Hydrologic	National Regional	Wild
Miners Basin	Grand	Historic	Regional	Recreational

TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION*		
WILD	SCENIC	RECREATIONAL
Free of impoundments.	Free of impoundments.	Some existing impoundments. The existence of low dams, diversion, or other modifications of the watercourse, provided the watercourse remains free-flowing and generally natural and riverine in appearance.
Essentially primitive, little or no evidence of human activity.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. No substantial evidence of human activity.	Some developments. Substantial evidence of human activity.
Presence of a few inconspicuous structures, particularly those of historic or cultural value.	Presence of small communities or dispersed dwellings or farm structures.	The presence of extensive residential development and a few commercial structures.
Limited amount of domestic grazing or hay production.	The presence of grazing or hay production or row crops.	Lands may have been developed for the full range of agricultural uses.
Little or no evidence of past timber harvest. No ongoing timber harvest.	Evidence of past logging or ongoing timber harvest, provided the forest appears natural from the riverbank.	Lands may have been developed for the full range of forestry uses.
Generally inaccessible except by trail.	Accessible in places by roads.	Readily accessible by roads.
No roads, railroads or other provision for vehicular traffic within river area. A few existing roads leading to the boundary of the area.	Roads may occasionally reach or bridge the river. The existence of short stretches of conspicuous or longer stretches of inconspicuous roads.	The existence of parallel roads on one or both banks as well as bridge crossings and other river access points.
Meets or exceeds federal criteria or federally approved state standards for aesthetics, for propagation of fish and wildlife normally adapted to the habitat of the river, and for primary contact recreation (swimming) except when exceeded by nature conditions.	Water quality sufficient to maintain outstandingly remarkable values.	Water quality sufficient to maintain outstandingly remarkable values.

* The classification given a wild and scenic river determines the management activities allowable along the river segment. A tentative classification is made based on the existing condition. Management direction in the Forest Plan would reflect these classifications if a river segment is found suitable for recommendation to Congress. Congress may change the classification.

Visit our website: http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/mantilasal/projects/projects_forest_plan/forest_plan_revision.shtml

Forest Plan Revision Mailing list: To be added our forest plan revision mailing list and/or if you have questions, comments, or suggestions write, call, fax, or email:

Manti-La Sal National Forest
 Attn: Forest Plan Revision Team
 599 West Price River Drive
 Price, UT 84501
 Phone: (435) 636-3500
 Fax: (435)-637-4940

DATES	FOREST PLAN REVISION TIMELINE	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES
May-July 15	Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Factor Analysis process and Wilderness Characteristics of Inventoried Roadless Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Submit comments by July 15 ◆ Information on Website
June 15- July 15	Summary of the Analysis of Management Situation Published <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identifies Needs for Change Notice of Intent Published in Federal Register <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Formal scoping period begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Formal comment period ◆ Submit comments in writing, fax, email, on web site
September	Public Meetings to discuss the Forest's Proposed Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Alternative Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Attend meetings ◆ Submit comments ◆ Website

WEBSITES OF INTEREST
MANTI-LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST WEBSITE http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/mantilasal/projects/
FOREST SERVICE WORLD-WIDE WEB http://www.fs.fed.us/
FOREST SERVICE DIRECTIVES (MANUALS AND HANDBOOKS) http://www.fs.fed.is/im/directives/
NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT http://ipl.unm.edu.cwl/fedbook/nfma.html
WILDERNESS ACT OF SEPTEMBER 3, 1964 http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/16/1131.html
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT OF OCTOBER 2, 1968 http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/16/1271.html

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS and WEBSITE POSTINGS	WHEN
Inventory and Evaluation of unroaded areas for wilderness recommendation	◆ Early June
Desired Conditions	◆ Early Fall

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