

**Operation of
Flaming Gorge Dam
Draft Environmental
Impact Statement**

**Forest Service
Position Paper
Technical Appendix**





FOREST SERVICE POSITION PAPER

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

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Forest Service Position Paper Technical Appendix



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Bruce C. Barrett, Area Manager
 USDI – BOR Upper Colorado Region
 302 East 1860 South
 Provo, Utah 84606-7317

Subject: **Addendum** - Cooperating Agency Position for the Operation of Flaming Gorge Dam
 Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Barrett:

We have developed an addendum to the USDA Forest Service Position as a Cooperating Agency for the subject EIS. The addendum and the August 10 position paper are enclosed. All items in the addendum and position paper address policies and procedures that are in place for the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, including operation and management responsibilities for the Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Green River. The enclosed documents include information that is necessary to adequately address management concerns; and therefore, we request that these concerns guide data gathering, and analysis and evaluation steps in the EIS process.

Please provide us with a response to our requests and concerns, including how each will be displayed or otherwise used in the EIS process and EIS.

To date, we have coordinated closely with EIS team leaders and members and will continue to cooperate fully during the process.

Sincerely,

BERT KULESZA
 Forest Supervisor

Enclosures (2)

cc:
 Eileen Richmond, Flaming Gorge District Ranger
 Terry Clark, Public Service Group Leader
 Garth Heaton, consultant

NOTICE: IF YOU DETACH
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OPERATION OF FLAMING GORGE DAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Addendum to The revised (8/10/00) USDA Forest Service Position Paper

August 23, 2000

The Purpose and Need for Action for the Flaming Gorge Dam Operations EIS is: "...to protect and assist in the recovery of the population and designated critical habitat of the four endangered fishes, **while maintaining the other authorized purposes** of the Flaming Gorge Unit of the Colorado River Storage Project." (emphasis added). The "Authorizing Legislations" are described by BOR as; 1) The Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956, and 2) the Colorado River Basin Project act of 1968.

The Forest Service believes that a third legislated Act needs to be added to the list of Authorizing Legislation (**PL 90-540, the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area Act of 1968**). The Forest Service requests that the following wording be added to all purpose and need narratives in the EIS, with such wording serving as the basis for analysis and evaluation of natural and socioeconomic resources:

PL 90-540 was enacted "... in furtherance of the purposes of the Colorado River Storage project." The purposes of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area are to provide "(1) Public Outdoor Recreation benefits; (2) Conservation of Scenic, Scientific, Historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment; and (3) such management, utilization, and disposal of natural resources as in his (Secretary of Agriculture) judgment will promote, or are compatible with and do not significantly impair the purposes for which the recreation area is established." (emphasis added).

The Forest Service proposes that the EIS identify and describe the...." **other authorized purposes** of the Flaming Gorge Unit of the Colorado River Storage Project" for each of the three acts cited above. Appropriate EIS sections should also define what would be entailed in maintaining these other purposes, display any and all deviations from the conditions that are to be maintained, and include specific mitigation measures for maintenance of the purposes.

In the case of PL 90-540 the purposes that should be specified and analyzed for effects are: 1) Recreation Benefits (i.e.: supply and economic contribution of land based, river based, and reservoir based recreation opportunities), 2) Scenic, 3) Scientific, and 4) Historic.

The Forest Service proposes to work with the socio-economic and/or other appropriate resource teams to describe the current or desired conditions to be maintained and to identify changes that would exceed the threshold of concern for each of the primary purposes identified in PL 90-540. We will work with the EIS team to define a level of "Significant Impairment" (sec 2, PL 90-540)

Addendum cont.

for each of the primary purposes, and to develop mitigation measures that could be employed if significant impairment results from implementing an alternative.

The Forest Service does not support the development of alternatives designed to emphasize one resource area, such as a recreation emphasis alternative. We prefer that all of the alternatives incorporate measures that lessen the effects on the authorized purposes of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, while improving the recovery of the endangered fish species.

Operation of Flaming Gorge Dam Environmental Impact Statement



USDA Forest Service Position as a Cooperating Agency

Revised - August 10, 2000

Representatives of the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) have responded to all invitations to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the environmental impact statement for Operation of Flaming Gorge Dam. We have attending initial planning meetings, site visits, and public scoping meetings. We have also provided a Forest Service "fact sheet" to the Bureau of Reclamation NEPA managers for distribution during public scoping. We will continue to participate as a cooperating agency as defined in Council of Environmental Quality guidelines, and regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The Forest Service has the following management concerns that need to be addressed in appropriate sections of the subject EIS. We will work with Bureau of Reclamation EIS team members to provide data, and corresponding analysis and evaluation that will be necessary to address and mitigate these concerns.

The EIS must adequately address the Forest Service role and responsibility to manage the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, including all infrastructure and uses associated with the management of this area. This includes: a) Flaming Gorge Reservoir from Green River, Wyoming to Flaming Gorge Dam; b) on-water and reservoir shoreline infrastructure and use; and c) Green River and river corridor use and infrastructure from Flaming Gorge Dam to a point 12 miles below the dam. The Forest Service places special emphasis on the need for the EIS to analyze economic affects (revenue, cash flow, etc.) to Forest Service operations, as well as to Forest Service concessionaire and permittee operations within the Flaming Gorge National Recreation area and the Green River Corridor. The EIS must also address the relationship and joint management role and responsibilities between the Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management for managing facilities and use on the segment of the Green River from the boundary of the Ashley National Forest to the State of Utah Wildlife Refuge in Browns Park.

Therefore, the Flaming Gorge Dam EIS should include:

1. Analyses, evaluations and accompanying mitigation measures for all recreational, socioeconomic and natural resource values, benefits, and infrastructure associated with the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, including Flaming Gorge Reservoir, the Green River Corridor, and the Flaming Gorge-Uintas National Scenic Byway. *

2. Alternatives with flow regimes and draw downs that address and allow for adequate protection of existing facilities/infrastructure and uses on Flaming Gorge Reservoir and within the Green River Corridor, including maintaining the Little Hole National Recreation Trail in its present location; or if necessary due to unacceptable damage from flows, the relocation of the trail beyond high flow elevations. *
3. References to the role and responsibility of the Forest Service in regards to the Flaming Gorge National Recreation area. *
4. References to ongoing studies and considerations of Sections A and B as "Scenic" and Section C as "Wild" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. *

*

In order to achieve accurate and complete data needed to address the above four points, the Forest Service asks that the Bureau of Reclamation EIS team prepare a technical report for socioeconomic values and benefits associated with the Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Green River.

The supporting rationale for the above management concerns and the need for a "socioeconomic technical report" is described in the following information on programs, actions, sites, and facilities that will be affected by the Proposed Action. We request that EIS team members gather site specific data associated with this information and address the above four points in appropriate sections of the EIS.

Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area Designation –

The Congressional Act establishing the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area specified three broad missions and management goals. Specifically, the Secretary of Agriculture is directed *"to administer, protect, and develop the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area in a manner to best provide for (1) public outdoor recreation benefits; (2) conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment; and (3) such management, utilization, and disposal of natural resources as in his judgment will promote or are compatible with, and do not significantly impair the purpose for which the recreation area is established."*

As directed by the Congressional Act and the accompanying Administrative Directive, the Ashley National Forest administers and manages programs and activities associated with:

- ✓ Recreation Uses and Sites
 - ✓ Scenic qualities
 - ✓ Historic and Cultural values
 - ✓ Special Uses, ex. Outfitters and Guides
 - ✓ Transportation (roads and trails)
 - ✓ Natural Resources, including grazing, wood products, and minerals
-
- ◆ The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area is the flagship of the national recreation areas in the USDA Forest Service. It was the first national recreation area in the agency and remains a high priority in overall budgeting and planning actions.

 - ◆ The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, including the Green River attracts 700 thousand to over 2 million visitors annually, depending on the year. The Green River corridor portion of the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area has received annually between 100,000 and 150,000-user days over the past five years. The remaining use is spread out over the Flaming Gorge Reservoir and adjacent land areas. The Utah Travel Council and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources advertise the Green River as a blue ribbon fishery, and Flaming Gorge Reservoir as a major sport fishery and boating paradise. Direct and indirect annual expenditures connected with river experiences and uses are estimated to average \$25 million ("Recreation Use Capacity of the Green River Corridor below Flaming Gorge Dam", dated April 1991), with close to \$100 million expended on recreation pursuits for the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area as a whole in both Wyoming and Utah (figures from Utah and Wyoming Travel Council Tourism Economic Studies).

Flaming Gorge Reservoir –

The 91-mile reservoir has approximately 360 miles of shoreline. A variety of infrastructure and uses occupy both the surface and shoreline of the reservoir.

- ◆ There are 29 developed sites immediately adjacent to the reservoir, consisting of:
 - 3 developed marinas
 - 9 concrete boat ramps with paved access roads
 - 4 boat-in campgrounds
 - 7 family or group campgrounds
 - 3 swim beaches
 - 3 undeveloped recreation sites

- ◆ In addition, there are numerous buoys, docks, signs, etc., associated with these sites.
- ◆ Both private business operations and Forest Service management activities are interconnected with each above sites. Mariana and campgrounds are operated and managed under special use permit by private companies.
- ◆ Concessionaires manage the campgrounds. Onsite management occurs 24 hours each day of the week. The majority of the campgrounds are on the National Campground Reservation System.
- ◆ Investments in recreation related infrastructure (both private and federal government) is estimated to near or slightly above 200 million dollars, with gross annual business income estimated between one and two million dollars. **

** These figures will be refined during the EIS Process.

- ◆ Both investments and income can be adversely affected by unplanned, and severe changes in reservoir elevation levels. Damage to facilities can occur during severe drawdowns, causing increased business costs and loss of revenues to special use permittees and concessionaires.

Flaming Gorge-Uintas National Scenic Byway –

- ◆ Utah State Road 44 and US Highway 191 are components of the Flaming Gorge National Scenic Byway. This special designation recognizes historical, scenic, and recreational values associated with the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. The byway and its amenities are marketed and promoted nationally and internationally as a destination highway. The Flaming Gorge-Uintas Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan directs programs and actions along the two routes, and includes actions and programs connected to Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Green River. The reservoir and river are major attractions and integral to successful marketing, promotion, and management of this National Scenic Byway.

Recreation and Administration of the Green River from Flaming Gorge Dam to Little Hole, including Little Hole National Recreation Trail, roads, boat ramps, parking areas, restroom facilities, day use areas, and concessionaire and outfitter/guide operations –

- ◆ Little Hole National Recreation Trail is advertised and displayed on State, Forest and other regional and national recreation maps. Primary use occurs between Flaming Gorge Dam and Little Hole Recreation Complex, with proposals to improve and extend the trail beyond the Little Hole area.

- ◆ The trail is needed to provide and manage access and use along the Green River. The trail is engineered to provide safe access. Relocation options are limited. Trail work and trail facilities have always been coordinated with the Bureau of Reclamation, Flaming Gorge Field Division.
- ◆ There is a 2.7 million dollar investment in facilities supporting the recreational fishery on National Forest System lands below Flaming Gorge Dam. Facilities considered in the investment are:
 - Spillway Recreation Complex (road, toilets, ramps, trail, etc.)
 - Trail along the river (engineered trail, including stabilizing structures)
 - Toilets in river corridor
 - Riverside campsites (13 sites)
 - Little Hole Road
 - Little Hole Overlook
 - Little Hole Recreation Complex (ramps, toilet, picnic area, jetties, etc.)
 - Dripping Spring Campground
- ◆ One million dollars of the 2.7 million dollars are invested in facilities directly within the Green River corridor on National Forest System lands.
- ◆ The Bureau of Land Management issues special use permits to outfitters/guides and concessionaires within the Green River corridor. The Forest Service administers these permits. This arrangement allows the return of up to 3 percent of special use permit revenues for the purpose of administering, improving, and maintaining river facilities. (The Forest Service does not have the authority that allows return of revenues collected within the Green River corridor.)
- ◆ Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service personnel jointly patrol the river, and manage and maintain river facilities in Sections A, B, and C, as defined in the Green River Management Plan”, dated May 20, 1996. The Forest Service provides overall supervision.
- ◆ Concessionaires manage the Spillway Recreation Complex and Little Hole Recreation Complex in Section A. Onsite management occurs 14 hours each day of the week. These concessionaires also maintain the “river campgrounds” in Section B and collect a \$10.00 per night fee. Several of these river campgrounds will soon be placed on the National Campground Reservation System.
- ◆ Thirteen Outfitter/Guide businesses use the Green River corridor, Sections A, B, and C as defined in the Green River Management Plan”, dated May 20, 1996. Annual revenues for these businesses equal or exceed 1.3 million dollars. Each outfitter employs 7 to 9 people from early spring to late fall.

Business Ventures and Capital in the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area—

- ◆ In addition to the developed marinas and outfitter/guide services mentioned above, several other businesses are directly related to both reservoir and river recreation activities. These businesses consist of stores, gas service stations, shuttle services, restaurants, and lodging facilities. Each business has substantial investments in infrastructure and employ many people, sometimes year round.
- ◆ Several of the businesses operate under special use permit issued by the Forest Service. We have the responsibility to provide a successful business environment and/or to inform them of pending changes that will adversely or otherwise affect their business income. The analysis and evaluation process for the EIS must address and quantify affects to these business ventures.

Dutch John Privatization —

- ◆ The town and town site of Dutch John, Utah has recently been privatized, with land and various facilities to be transferred to Daggett County. Success of this community will hinge on existing and new recreation businesses, and on regional and national recreation visits. Business success will be dependent on maintaining quality experiences for clients within the Green River corridor and on Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

Destination Resorts —

- ◆ Many visitors consider the Green River corridor and the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area as a destination, rather than a “pass through” experience. Visitors are planning complete vacations around activities and accommodations associated with two areas. The Utah Travel Council advertises the Green River Corridor and Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area as destination resort areas. Annual recreation visits indicate that the area is within the top ten most visited sites in Utah.

Future Studies on Recreation Use —

- ◆ A “Recreation Use Monitoring Contract” will be implemented October 1, 2000, and continue through September 2001. This contract will be designed to measure use, satisfaction, and expectations. Survey data will be gathered at many locations within the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area and in the Green River corridor.

The Forest Service will provide technical representatives to assist EIS team members in gathering specific data for the above management concerns. We review all technical reports and the preliminary draft environmental impact statement, and provide substantive comments for change, modification, and clarification of issues, concerns, affects, alternatives, and mitigation measures.

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