



SAN JUAN COUNTY COMMISSION

Silvia Stubbs	Chair
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Jamie Harvey	Commissioner
Mack McDonald	Administrator

July 10, 2025

Orlando Cortez, District Ranger
Monticello Ranger District
Manti-LaSal National Forest
397 North Main Street
PO Box 820
Monticello, Utah 84535

Re: Proposed Peters Point Habitat Improvement Project

Dear Mr. Cortez:

We have reviewed the Notice of the proposed Action for the subject project and fully support the Purpose and Need and Proposed Action descriptions. We find the Proposed Action to be consistent with the objectives and policies in the San Juan Resource Management Plan (RMP) of 2022 as amended. Specific sections of the RMP with which the Proposed Action is consistent include the following.

Forest Management

Objective a. Forests, woodlands, rangelands, watersheds and habitat are healthy and resilient and are managed for multiple use.

Policies: 2. Support the use of various vegetation manipulation tools (such as mechanical, chemical, biological, prescribed and controlled wildland fire and livestock grazing) to enhance production of wildlife and livestock habitat and forage and improve watershed and water quality conditions on woodland areas with potential for improved ecological condition.

3. Encourage, where feasible, the harvest of forest products in areas of proposed or existing vegetation treatments to lessen the need for additional treatment or land disturbance, and in areas that need restoration for ecological benefits.

6. Actively manage forests and woodlands to reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire.

Fire Management

Objectives: a. Impacts of wildfire on the health, safety and property of County residents as well as valuable natural and cultural resources are prevented or minimized.

Policy 3. Use fuel reduction techniques such as conifer reduction, grazing, prescribed fire, chemical, biological, and mechanical treatments appropriate for site characteristics.

Wildlife

Finding: Best management practices for wildlife focus on principles and actions that allow people and wildlife to coexist, and on creating or maintaining healthy wildlife populations and habitat (emphasis/pertinence added).

Water Quality and Hydrology

Policy 3. Support land management practices that contribute to or maintain healthy watershed conditions.

Livestock Grazing

Policies: 1. Support the management of the range resource within its productive capabilities for grazing and browsing animals in harmony with other resources and activities to provide sustained yield and improvement of the forage resource. Encourage and coordinate other resource activities so as to maintain or enhance forage production.

3. Support the implementation of rangeland improvement projects including brush control, seeding projects, pinion and juniper removal, noxious and invasive weed control, and livestock water developments.

Air Quality

Policy: 3. Prescribed fires should be coordinated with the State Smoke Coordinator prior to ignition and follow the requirements of the State's Enhanced Smoke Management Plan.

Cultural Resources

We assume that any cultural resources within the proposed project area have been identified and will be protected as appropriate. The County RMP includes the following guidance.

Objective: a. Cultural, historical, geological and paleontological resources are managed (including appropriate mitigation of impacts) so they are available for public enjoyment, and scientific and educational purposes.

Policies: 5. Support the development of reasonable solutions to resolve conflicts between strict protection of cultural, historical, geological and paleontological resources and existing or proposed land uses.

We appreciate this opportunity for comments and commend the agency's initiative in proposing such projects to improve woodland health with the associated benefits to wildlife and livestock forage and habitat, watershed conditions and reduction of wildland fire risk.

Sincerely,



Silvia Stubbs
Commission Chair

File Code: 1950
Date: 6/27/2025

Dear Stakeholder:

The Manti-La Sal National Forest is seeking public input on the Peters Point Habitat Improvement Project. The proposed project is located on the Monticello Ranger District, in San Juan County. This announcement letter serves to initiate scoping, "an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed" (FSH 1909.15, 11).

There is a need to improve habitat for big game (mule deer and elk) and other wildlife, and to reduce the continuity of vegetative fuels associated with fire hazard to reduce the chances of severe, stand-replacing wildland fire in this area. The proposal consists of 1,336 acres of treatment units within a 3,784 acre project area using a combination of mechanized bull hog mastication, hand-thinning with chainsaws, and pruning. Slash from treatments may be lopped and scattered, removed from the project area as fuelwood, concentrated (jackpotted) or piled and burned. Broadcast burning may be utilized in areas inaccessible to machines to create openings or reduce conifer canopy density. Mature or decadent sprouting shrub species (Gambel oak, serviceberry, alderleaf mountain mahogany) may also be masticated. These treatments will reduce the density of encroaching juniper and pinyon pine in sagebrush and mountain brush areas, diversify stand structure and provide more palatable plants for wildlife and livestock forage by maintaining vegetation treatment projects accomplished in the 1960's. To review the need for the proposal and the proposed action, please see the Notice of Proposed Action document on the Peters Point Habitat Improvement Project website:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r04/manti-lasal/projects/68332>

Individuals, organizations, Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies interested in or affected by the proposed action are invited to participate in the scoping process. Comments received will be used in the analysis of environmental effects. To aid in this process, please ensure that comments are as detailed as possible and specific to the project.

Comments are requested by July 11th, 2025.

Please submit comments via one of the following methods:

1. The preferred method for submitting comments is through email. Please send comments to: comments-intermtn-manti-lasal-moab-monticello@usda.gov
2. Written comments must be submitted to Orlando Cortez, Monticello District Ranger, 397 N Main St., Monticello, UT 84535.

Comments received in response to scoping, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, without an associated name and address, receiving further correspondence concerning this project will not be possible. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality; where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within a specified number of days.

For more information about this project, please contact Barb Smith, Wildlife Biologist at barbara.smith1@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

**ORLANDO
CORTEZ**

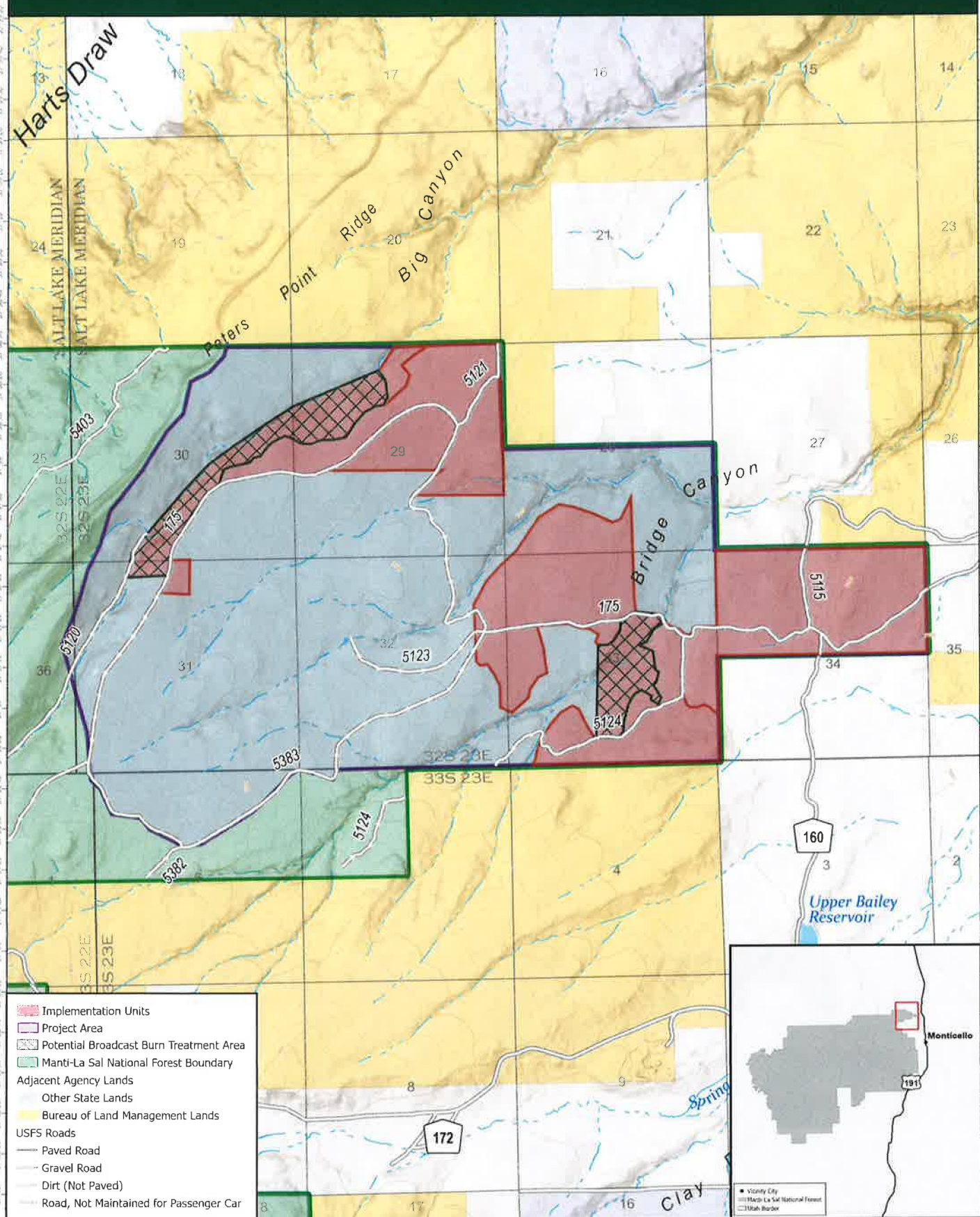
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ORLANDO CORTEZ

District Ranger

Peter's Point Habitat Improvement

Monticello Ranger District, Manti-La Sal National Forest



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Date: 6/23/2025

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