

Four Threats

The Forest Service has identified Four Threats that pose significant risks to health of forest ecosystems. These threats include: fire & fuels, invasive species, loss of open space and unmanaged recreation. Each individual can do his or her part to protect our forests from harm. Below is overview of how we can make a positive difference.

Fire and Fuels

Fires are caused by decades of fuel buildup in many forest types have led to growing numbers of catastrophic fires, especially in the West. Catastrophic fires are those that burn out of control, damage forest stands, compromise human safety and ecosystem integrity. Wherever severe or catastrophic wild land fires occur, the post-fire devastation impacts lives and property, wildlife habitat, fragile ecosystems, soil and water quality, lost timber and most everything on the path of a fire. You as a citizen can help in restoring healthy, disturbance resilient ecosystems on lands at risk, through improving the condition and function of critically important watersheds and sustaining critical wildlife habitat. Volunteer at your local district office to see what you can do to help.

Links for Fire and Fuels:

- * Wallowa Resources
- * Friends of the Forest
- * Fire Regime Condition Class
- * Firewise Communities
- * Healthy Forests Report



Invasive Species

Of 2,000 nonnative plants found in the United States, 400 are invasive species. The U.S. spends \$13 billion per year to prevent and contain the spread of invasives. For all invasives combined, the price tag is \$138 billion per year in total economic damages and associated control costs. In addition to nonnative plants, 70 million acres of forest in all ownerships (public and private landholdings) are at risk from 26 different insects and diseases (e.g., gypsy moth, hemlock woolly adelgid, dogwood anthracnose — the list goes on).

A strategic Forest Service response to invasive species is embodied in the National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management launched in October 2004. The strategy is an aggressive program that harnesses the capabilities of the Forest Service. The Forest Service provides cutting edge leadership in natural resource management and research and development. For more information regarding

the Forest Service National Invasive Species program, please visit our section on Invasive Species.

Invasive species have the ability to dominate, overwhelm or whip out the natural or native species to any given area. The goal of the forest is to protect the forest ecosystems by preventing the release of non-native species and by controlling the spread of invasive species.

Links for Invasive Species:

- * American Chestnut Foundation
- * Forest Service Invasive Species Program
- * National Invasive Species Information Center
- * Wasatch-Cache Noxious Weeds
- * PLANTS Database



Loss of Open Space

More than 21.8 million acres of open space were lost to development between 1982 and 1997, about 4,000 acres per day, 3 acres a minute. Of this loss, close to 10.3 million acres are in forestland. It continues today.

Across the nation, forests and rangelands are being broken up into smaller parcels, leading to the loss of habitat, affecting air and water quality, and reducing economic viability of farming, ranching and forest management enterprises. Many organizations are working to conserve the nation's forests and rangelands most at risk due to subdivision and land conversion by working with partners, communities and landowners to balance development with sustaining the ecosystem services and viable working landscapes.

Links for Loss of Open Space:

- * Trust for Public Land
- * About.com - Forestry
- * What is Biodiversity?
- * Fragmentation - FS Northeastern Area
- * Landscape Dynamics - Forest Fragmentation
- * Forest Service - Four Threats to the Health of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands
- * Friends of the Forest



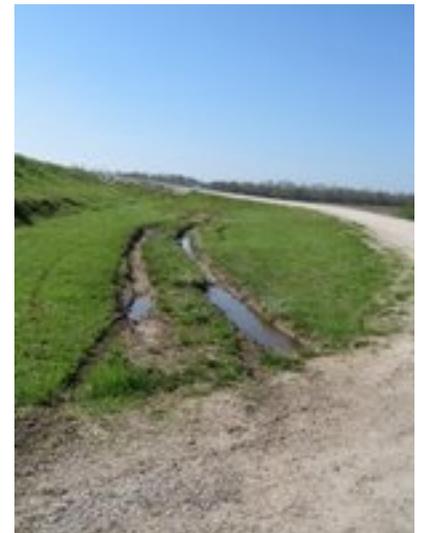
Unmanaged Recreation

Increasing use of the national forests for outdoor activities prompts the need to manage these forms of recreation, including the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs). OHV use has grown from 5 million in 1972 to 51 million in 2004. OHV use is a legitimate use of NFS lands in the right places. However, depending on the site, unmanaged OHV use in the national forest can have serious impact on the land, among them: (1) damage to wetlands and wetland species, (2) severe soil erosion, and (3) spread of invasive species.

The forest is working with partners to develop travel management plans that regulate the use of OHV's on all roads, trails, and parks in an appropriate manner.

Links for Unmanaged Recreation:

- * Forest Service - Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program
- * Recreation.gov
- * Forest Service - National Visitor Use Monitoring Program
- * Natural Trails & Waters Coalition
- * National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council
- * Wilderness Society
- * Tread Lightly
- * Utah State Parks - OHV
- * Wyoming OHV & Snowmobile Education Opportunities
- * Friends of the Forest
- * Forest Service - Four Threats to the Health of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands
- * Ride with Respect
- * Utah ATV Trails



US Forest Service
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/wcnf/four/>