2025 HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Little Montes Creek WMA

Prepared by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Northeastern Region

UTAH DNR WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Little Montes Creek Wildlife Management Area
Habitat Management Plan

RDCC Project Number and Submission Date:

Habitat Council Review Date:

RAC Review Date:

Director's Approval: _____ Date: _____

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Background Information

Introduction

This management plan has been developed to guide management on lands owned by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) on the property known as the Little Montes Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located approximately 4 miles northeast of Roosevelt, Utah.

Purpose of Division Ownership

The Little Montes Creek WMA was purchased to develop a public recreational fishery and wildlife management area for upland game, waterfowl, and nongame wildlife.

Consumptive recreation opportunities that occur on the WMA include angling and hunting. Non-consumptive recreation opportunities on the WMA are primarily limited to birding or other wildlife viewing. OHV use is not permitted on the WMA.

Historic Uses

Before Division ownership, the WMA was privately owned and used for agriculture purposes, including a livestock pasture. Two of the fields were irrigated, while the remaining property was grazed by livestock.

Public Recreation Opportunities

Public Access

The Little Montes Creek WMA has one public access road and parking area located south of Little Montes Creek Reservoir. Access to the WMA is mostly limited to foot traffic, as many of the other roads on the WMA are maintained for administrative access only. To date, there are no seasonal closures or other permanent restrictions on public access. A vault toilet can be found in the parking area, available for public use from April through November.

Existing roads where motor vehicle access is allowed, as well as access points, are shown on Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix B.

Fishing Opportunities

Little Montes Creek Reservoir provides a great family fishery, with largemouth bass and bluegill as the main targeted species. In the fall, the DWR stocks catchable rainbow trout when water temperatures are cool enough. It is occasionally also stocked with channel catfish, supplemental

bluegill and broodstock trout. The reservoir has naturally reproducing populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, and black bullhead. Fishing access is provided with an ADA accessible fishing pier on the south side of the reservoir and a primitive trail on the north side of the reservoir. There is no boat ramp, but a small area off the dam has been improved for launching small watercraft, like kayaks and canoes.

Given its proximity to residential areas and ease of access, the Little Montes Creek WMA is a popular fishing spot year-round.

Hunting Opportunities

The Little Montes Creek WMA provides upland game hunting opportunities for California quail, mourning dove, ring-necked pheasant, Wilson's snipe, and wild turkey. The DWR releases pheasants on the WMA each year–before the hunting season. Big game hunting on the WMA is allowed, but the small size of the property limits the usefulness of the WMA for this purpose. There are also opportunities for waterfowl hunting, though safe distances must be observed from the parking lot and highway.

Wildlife Watching

While limited in size, Little Montes Creek Reservoir and the wetland and riparian areas below the dam provide good viewing opportunities for migratory birds and waterfowl. Cormorants can be frequently observed roosting in the trees on the north side of the reservoir. Upland game birds, such as quail, pheasant, mourning dove, and wild turkey, can be viewed often. The WMA has become a popular spot for birders, with at least 140 different species being observed on the WMA. Mule deer can also occasionally be seen.

Other Recreation Opportunities

Due to its small size, there are limited opportunities for hiking on the WMA. There are no developed trails, pathways, or picnic spots; although there is a short angler trail around much of the reservoir. There is no boat ramp on Little Montes Creek Reservoir, but a small area off the dam has been improved for launching small watercraft. Overnight camping is not permitted on the WMA; this property is for day-use only. OHV use is also prohibited. Most of the access roads are for administrative access only (see Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix B). There are no other developed recreation opportunities on the WMA.

Key Wildlife Species

The Little Montes Creek WMA provides yearlong habitat for upland game including quail, pheasant, and turkey. Mule deer can also be found on the WMA. Little Montes Creek reservoir, located on the WMA, provides habitat for sportfish including rainbow trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, black bullhead, and channel catfish. Wetland and riparian areas provide seasonal habitat for various migratory bird species, including waterfowl.

Grazing

In recent years, grazing has not been utilized as a management tool on the WMA in an effort to protect the wetlands and riparian areas of the WMA. In the future, the DWR may use domestic livestock grazing to manage vegetation on Division lands if the Division determines that such grazing is beneficial for the maintenance or improvement of wildlife habitat.

Sharecrop Agreement

At times, the DWR enters into a share crop agreement to manage the irrigation structures on the two agricultural fields, and to provide food plots for wildlife. When a sharecrop agreement is desired, the DWR follows the lease section of the land use rule.

Property Information

Property Description

The Little Montes Creek WMA is located at 3126 N. 3500 East, approximately 3 miles north of Highway 40 in the city of Ballard in Uintah County. The Little Montes Creek WMA is approximately 191 acres in size and includes the 12 acre Little Montes Reservoir. The WMA consists of aquatic, lowland riparian, wetland, and upland habitat types, as well as agricultural land.

(See Appendix A for detailed legal description and information concerning Deeds; see Appendix B for maps).

Land Acquisition History

In 1998, a private landowner offered to sell this property to the DWR. Because of the existence of a pond on the property, it was concluded that this purchase could be an opportunity to develop a warm water fishery to benefit the local community. The purchase was completed in three phases. The first phase was purchased in October 1998. This purchase included approximately 110 acres and the option to purchase the remaining property, along with the assumption of full use, management and protection of the remaining property.

The second phase of acquisition was completed in September 1999, and included approximately 40 acres and 10 shares of irrigation water.

The final phase of acquisition was completed in July 2000 and included the final 40 acres of land, 49 shares of irrigation water, and the existing wheel-line sprinkler system.

Encumbrances

Water Rights/Developments

The DWR owns the following water rights on the Little Montes Creek WMA:

WR#	**Status**	**Source**	**Flow**	**Storage**	**Beneficial Use**	
43-3370	Perfected	Montes Creek	0.39 cfs	NA	37.30 acres	
43-3614	Perfected	Montes Creek	300.00 acft	Ottosen Res. 95.30 acft	120.70 acres	190 elu's
43-3708	Perfected	Seepage Area	0.25 cfs	NA	29.80 acres	

43-11575	Perfected	Montes Creek	94.67 acft	Ottosen Res. 94.670 acft	Fish Culture

In addition to the water rights listed above, the DWR also holds 49 shares of Bennett Water Association shares that are used in the pressurized irrigation system.

Grazing Rights

Under DWR policy, carefully planned grazing may be used as a tool in managing wildlife habitat. To maximize feed for wildlife and protect the sensitive wetland habitat, the WMA is not currently being grazed. Regional DWR personnel will periodically evaluate the property and determine if the WMA could benefit from grazing.

Mineral Development

There is currently no mineral development on the Little Montes Creek WMA. The DWR does not own mineral rights on the WMA. Oil and gas development has occurred on adjacent lands and a surface pipeline runs along the fence, just inside the WMA boundary on the northeastern portion of the property.

Rights of Way

The Dry Gulch Irrigation Company holds a right of way for access and maintenance of an irrigation pipeline and a dissipation structure that would allow draining of Montes Creek Reservoir (just west of the WMA).

Conservation Partners Involved in Acquisition

The Little Montes Creek WMA was purchased by the DWR using Habitat Stamp funds. No other conservation partners were involved in the acquisition.

Property Inventory

Existing Capital Improvements

Roads

One dirt surface road provides public access to the WMA. This road terminates in a parking area near the Little Montes Creek reservoir dam. Other roads on the WMA provide administrative access only. Open roads, and roads that are closed, are shown on Maps 1 and 2 in Appendix B.

Fencing

The property boundary is completely fenced with wire fencing. A pipe fence runs on each side of the public access road and parking area.

Physical Facilities

Physical facilities on the WMA are limited to a vault toilet, a fishing pier, kayak/canoe launch, and access trails.

Habitat Improvement Projects

In 2003, the DWR, with assistance from the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), installed an irrigation system to deliver water to pasture areas on the east side of the WMA.

In 2006, the DWR began removing Russian olive trees in the riparian area below the dam as partial off-site mitigation for wetland impacts associated with construction at the Whiterocks Fish Hatchery, as well as the Big Sand Wash Reservoir project.

Also in 2006, a series of shallow ponds were excavated in the area below the dam. These ponds created additional wetland habitat on the WMA and were a part of the wetland mitigation for the Big Sand Wash Reservoir project.

In 2013, the DWR received assistance from Boy Scout Troop 269 to plant approximately 100 cottonwood trees in the riparian area below the dam. Many of these trees were lost due to impacts from rodent herbivory.

In 2015, the DWR contracted a crew to hand spray re-sprouting Russian olive trees on the WMA.

In 2017 and 2018, the DWR replaced the outlet gate on the reservoir because the previous gate was not functional and could not be opened.

In 2021, the DWR began the process of transforming the smaller 7 acre crop field from an agricultural crop to more native vegetation; designed to provide improved habitat for upland game birds and pollinator species, including the Monarch butterfly. This effort also included increasing seasonal pollinator food sources by planting flowering trees on the edge of the crop field, along the access road.

Irrigation

The DWR irrigates two agricultural fields on the WMA. Both fields have wheel lines and risers for irrigation purposes and are occasionally managed through a share-crop agreement.

Cultural Resources

There is a historic corral on the WMA, but this site is not eligible for the National Register.

Prior to any new surface disturbance activities on the WMA, a cultural resource survey will be conducted to locate and document any and all cultural resources. Any significant cultural resources found in such surveys will be avoided during maintenance or improvement projects.

Species of Greatest Conservation Need

The Utah Wildlife Action Plan has been created “to manage native wildlife species and their habitats, sufficient to prevent the need for additional listings under the Endangered Species Act. The State of Utah has identified several Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), which “do, or potentially could, present the possibility of an ESA listing.” Threats to these species are described in the Utah Wildlife Action Plan.

Among the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need, only a handful are likely to be found on or near the Little Montes Creek WMA. Due to its small size, the WMA provides only limited habitat for these species and their use of the WMA may be restricted to temporary visits. Further surveys are needed to document additional species or use by these species.

The following table shows the Species of Greatest Conservation Need that are most likely to occur on or near the WMA.

Species	**State Rank***	**National Rank***	**Notes**
American white pelican	S3	N4	One documented sighting of birds flying overhead. Occasional use of the reservoir is possible, but they probably prefer the larger Montes Creek Reservoir to the west of the WMA.
American Goshawk	S3	NNR	Reported within ½ mile of the WMA.

Golden eagle	S4	N5B N5N	Occasional visitors are possible, but have not been reported.
Little brown bat	S3	N3	Some known maternity colonies nearby. Likely use the WMA to forage.
Monarch butterfly	S2	N5B, N2N3N	Known to use the WMA.
Northern leopard frog	S3	N5	Known to use the WMA.
Ute ladies' tresses	S1	N2N3	Some appropriate habitat exists on the WMA. Surveys needed.
White-faced Ibis	S3	N4B N4N	Several confirmed sightings. Extent of use unknown.
White-tailed prairie dog	S3	N4	Appropriate habitat exists, and colonies found within 2 miles of the WMA, but not documented on the WMA.
Wilson's phalarope	S3	N5B	One documented sighting on the WMA.

*See Appendix C for definitions of State and National Ranks

Important Fish and Wildlife Habitats

In addition to the Species of Greatest Conservation Need listed above, the Little Montes Creek WMA provides a habitat for upland game, waterfowl and sportfish. The lake contains largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish, black bullhead, and rainbow trout. The lake also provides a staging and resting area for many species of waterfowl. The irrigated fields on the north and south of the lake provide food plots for upland game birds, mule deer, and other wildlife. Below the lake, a series of smaller ponds and surrounding wetlands provide additional habitat for waterfowl and marsh birds, including Wilson's snipe. Cottonwood trees, buffaloberry, sumac, and Russian olive trees bordering the wetlands, provide additional habitat for mule deer and upland game birds, including California quail, ring-necked pheasant, and wild turkey. Some smaller areas of dry uplands are covered with sagebrush and grasses, providing habitat for mule deer and cottontail rabbit.

General Conditions of Habitats

Habitat Types

The Little Montes Creek WMA contains a variety of habitat types, including open water, wetlands, riparian, agricultural fields, and uplands, including lowland sagebrush.

Range and Watershed Conditions

In general, habitats on the WMA are in good condition; however, weeds are a continual problem. Russian olive trees, while providing food and cover for upland game birds, are problematic in the wetlands. Several efforts to remove Russian olive have removed most of the trees from the cottonwood riparian area and reduced stand densities throughout the WMA, but additional work is needed. Adjacent properties contain abundant Russian olive, making control difficult.

Phragmites is present in the wetlands below the pond. Knapweed is present in the agricultural fields. Cheatgrass is abundant on some of the drier uplands and rocky hillsides. Siberian elm could become problematic, as it is present in the cottonwood riparian area and on some of the hillsides surrounding the wetlands. Northern watermilfoil is present in low abundance in the reservoir.

In the summers of 2020 and 2021, the Little Montes Creek reservoir experienced low dissolved oxygen levels, leading to partial fish kills–both years. DWR staff is working to determine the causes of these kills in an effort to prevent future occurrences.

Habitat Limitations

The wildlife habitat on the WMA is limited primarily by the small size of the property. Absence of development on adjacent properties likely provides for greater wildlife use on the WMA than if extensive development were to occur.

Human Use Related Problems

The WMA is used quite heavily for fishing, upland game hunting, and outdoor recreation by local residents. This has resulted in some problems associated with litter near the parking area and vault toilet, as well as near the fishing pier.

Adjacent Land Uses and Potential Impacts

The Little Montes Creek WMA is surrounded entirely by private lands, with numerous parcels of Ute Tribal lands nearby. There are some homes nearby, but the primary use of adjacent lands is agricultural. On the west side of the WMA, the Dry Gulch Irrigation Company owns the Montes Creek reservoir. While its primary use is for irrigation, this reservoir near the WMA also provides additional habitat for waterfowl and other water birds, and seepage helps maintain the reservoir and wetlands on the WMA.

There is some potential for the Little Montes Creek WMA to be impacted by oil and gas extraction activities, as several well pads exist on nearby properties. Every effort will be made to move oil and gas development out of sensitive riparian and wetland areas and away from areas of high public use.

There is some potential for development on adjacent private property. If additional homes are built on adjacent properties, this could limit the usefulness of the WMA for hunting.

Zoning and Land Use Ordinances

In Uintah County, private lands surrounding the Little Montes Creek WMA are zoned as Agricultural Zone A-4. This zoning is intended to protect agricultural and residential uses, but also allow for small scale industrial businesses that support natural resource extraction.

Management Goals and Objectives

The management of the Little Montes Creek WMA was designed to implement the goals, objectives, and strategies of other DWR planning efforts, as well as county and state resource management plans. These plans include, but are not limited to, the DWR strategic Plan, the Utah Wildlife Action Plan, and species specific management plans. Some of these plans are briefly discussed below. *Note: this is not a comprehensive review of the listed plans, but a summary of relevant objectives and strategies contained within those plans.*

DWR Strategic Plan

The management of the Little Montes Creek WMA will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the DWR Strategic Plan:

- Constituency Goal: Strengthen support for wildlife management by demonstrating the value and importance of wildlife to all Utahns.
    - Objective C6 – Increase hunting and fishing opportunities.
- Resource Goal: Conserve, enhance and actively manage Utah's protected wildlife populations.
    - Objective R1- Increase, decrease or maintain wildlife populations, as needed, to meet the objectives in our management plans.
    - Objective R2- Maintain existing wildlife habitat and increase the quality of critical habitats and watersheds throughout the state.
    - Objective R4 – Decrease risks to species and their habitats through integrated implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan, species recovery plans, conservation agreements and other management plans.

Wildlife Action Plan

The Draft 2025 Utah Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) is created with the goal "to manage native wildlife, fish, mollusk, crustacean, amphibian, reptile, insect, and plant species and their habitats, sufficient to prevent the need for additional listings under the Endangered Species Act." The WAP identifies wildlife species most in need of conservation attention and the habitats they require for survival. The WAP includes a statewide threat assessment, which identifies threats to each key habitat and then ranks the impact of that threat according to the number of species of greatest conservation need that could be affected from that threat. Management activities on the WMA will attempt, to the extent possible, to address these priority threats, and will utilize the strategies for management suggested in the WAP.

Listed below are the key habitat types that occur on the WMA along with their associated threats. This is not a comprehensive list of statewide threats identified for these habitats, but are those that may be most relevant to managing the habitats on the WMA. *Note: the threat rankings (very high, high, medium) are statewide rankings of impact, and may not necessarily correspond to the impact of these threats to the WMA itself.*

Lakes and Reservoirs

Priority threats include:

- Unauthorized Species Introductions (Medium)
- Presence of Diversions (High)
- Agricultural / Municipal / Industrial Water Usage (Very High)
- Water Allocation Policies (Very High)
- Invasive Wildlife Species – Non-native (Medium)
- Invasive Plant Species – Non-native (Medium)
- Droughts (Very High)

Strategies for management include:

- Promote policies that maintain conservation pools.
- Promote policies that limit nutrient input into lakes and reservoirs.
- Promote policies that reduce grazing practices by domestic livestock, feral horses, and wildlife that negatively impact lakes and reservoirs.
- Promote policies that minimize or eliminate the placement of roads in riparian zones.
- Continue the use of methods for reducing the spread and dominance of invasive weeds and aquatic vegetation, including EDRR programs.
- Promote policies that eliminate illegal fish introductions.

Wetlands

Priority threats include:

- Commercial and Industrial Areas (Medium)
- Conversion from Flood to Sprinkler Irrigation (High)
- Improper Grazing – Livestock (historic) (Medium)
- Roads – Transportation Network (Medium)
- Agricultural / Municipal / Industrial Water Usage (High)
- Water Allocation Policies (High)
- Invasive Plant Species – Non-native (Medium)
- Agricultural Pollution (Medium)
- Droughts (High)

Strategies for management include:

- Promote policies that maintain or restore natural flow and sediment regimes.
- Promote policies that reduce inappropriate grazing by domestic livestock, feral horses, and wildlife.

- Promote policies that protect wetlands from development and those that provide a buffer between development and adjacent aquatic resources.
- Continue the use of appropriate methods for reducing the spread and dominance of invasive weeds and aquatic vegetation, including EDRR programs.
- Support and expand existing wetland restoration programs (e.g., Zeedyk structures, *Phragmites* removal) and develop additional restoration capacity.

Riparian

Priority threats include:

- Improper Grazing – Livestock (historic) (Very High)
- Roads – Transportation Network (High)
- Inappropriate Fire Frequency and Intensity (High)
- Presence of Dams (High)
- Dam / Reservoir Operation (High)
- Agricultural / Municipal / Industrial Water Usage (Very High)
- Water Allocation Policies (Very High)
- Invasive Plant Species – Non-native (High)
- Agricultural and Forestry Effluents (High)
- Droughts (High)

Strategies for management include:

- Identify riparian habitat impacted by land use practices and continue to support funding for low-tech, process-based restoration (e.g., BDAs, one-rock dams).
- Continue to support funding for weed treatment in riparian habitat, including Russian olive and tamarisk eradication.
- Promote zoning, policies, and laws that lead to responsible human intrusion and development.
- Promote development of BDAs and post-assisted log structures.

Priority needs include:

- Prioritize areas for systematic removal of non-native riparian vegetation (e.g., tamarisk, non-native willows, Russian olive) and replace with native riparian vegetation.
- Develop functional flows for Utah's streams and rivers to provide appropriate flow regimes to sustain riparian habitat.

Rivers and Streams

Priority threats include:

- Housing and Urban Areas (High)
- Conversion from Flood to Sprinkler Irrigation (Medium)
- Improper Grazing – Livestock (historic) (High)
- Well Pad Development (Medium)
- Roads – Transportation Network (Medium)

- Presence of Dams (High)
- Dam / Reservoir Operation (High)
- Agricultural / Municipal / Industrial Water Usage (Very High)
- Water Allocation Policies (Very High)
- Invasive Plant Species – Non-native (High)
- Droughts (High)

Strategies for management include:

- Promote policies that maintain or restore natural flow and sediment regimes.
- Promote policies that reduce inappropriate grazing by domestic livestock, feral horses, and wildlife.
- Promote policies that minimize or eliminate the placement of roads in riparian zones.
- Promote policies that reduce inappropriate residential and commercial development in floodplains.
- Continue the use of appropriate methods for reducing the spread and dominance of invasive weeds and aquatic vegetation, including EDRR programs.
- Use proven stream restoration techniques to aggrade the channels of highly degraded streams, especially those that are so channelized and/or incised that they are no longer connected to the floodplain to restore natural stream conditions.

Lowland Sagebrush

Priority threats include:

- Inappropriate Fire Frequency and Intensity (Very High)
- Improper Grazing – Livestock (historic) (High)
- Droughts (High)
- Invasive Plant Species – Non-native (Very High)

Strategies for management include:

- If wildfires do occur, ensure that revegetation seed mixes are appropriate, so as to not create additional issues, and ensure that seed mixes contain appropriate sagebrush seed.

Wildlife Species Management Plans

The Little Montes Creek WMA is in the South Slope Wildlife Management Unit. As such, management of the WMA will be consistent with the objectives and strategies within herd unit management plans (for big game), outlined below. The state does not have unit level management plans for upland game; relevant objectives from the statewide management plans are listed below.

Mule Deer

The South Slope Deer Herd Unit Management Plan (2020) contains the following habitat management objectives:

- Protect, maintain, and/or improve deer habitat through direct range improvements to support and maintain herd population management objectives.
- Work with federal, private, and state partners to improve crucial deer habitats through the Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) process. Priority will be given to areas affected by the 2003 sagebrush die off and burned areas that are now dominated by cheatgrass.
- Maintain and protect critical winter range from future losses. Preserve, protect and/or acquire critical winter range when the opportunity arises.
- Minimize and mitigate impacts from energy development activities. Minimize deer vehicle collisions along highways on the unit.

These objectives are to be met by specific strategies. Those that may be relevant to the Little Montes Creek WMA include:

- Continue to improve, protect, and restore sagebrush steppe habitats critical to deer.
- Work with land management agencies and energy companies to minimize and mitigate impacts of energy development activities.
- Manage vehicle access on DWR lands to limit human disturbance during times of high stress, such as winter and fawning.
- Manage riparian areas in critical fawning habitat to furnish water, cover and succulent forage from mid to late summer.

Turkey

The Utah Wild Turkey Management Plan contains the following relevant goals, objectives, and strategies:

- Conduct habitat projects to address limiting factors [relative to population declines]
- Conduct habitat improvement projects in limiting habitat(s).
- Improve habitat to draw wild turkey populations away from conflict areas.

Local Resource Management Plans

In 2015 the Utah Legislature passed H.B. 323, which required each county to develop a resource management plan (RMP) as part of the county's general plan. The State of Utah aggregated the land use decisions and directives that emerged from the county plans and, in 2018, published a resource management plan for the state of Utah. These local resource management plans were created to address and remedy a disconnect between local land use needs and desires and federal land use planning. The county and state RMPs are intended to provide a basis for coordinating with the federal government. Counties also utilize their RMP's as a basis for coordinating with state planning activities.

Under Utah State Code 63L-10-104, “State agencies and political subdivisions shall refer to and substantially conform with the statewide resource management plan when making plans for public lands or other public resources in the state.”

Local Resource Management Plans applicable to the Little Montes Creek WMA include the statewide RMP and the RMP for Uintah County. Management of the Little Montes Creek WMA will be consistent with these local resource management plans to the extent possible.

URMCC Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan

In 2006, the Utah Reclamation Mitigation & Conservation Commission (URMCC) constructed several ponds on the lower end of the Little Montes Creek WMA, as mitigation for wetland impacts associated with the Big Sand Wash Reservoir project. The URMCC prepared a wetland mitigation and monitoring plan to describe the success criteria that would be used to evaluate the wetlands. The wetlands were monitored for a period of six years, at which time it was determined that the created wetlands had achieved the goals in the plan, and that further monitoring was not necessary.

While formal monitoring of the wetlands has been discontinued, it is the intent of the DWR to maintain these wetland areas in perpetuity. The plan developed by the URMCC suggests several relevant, long-term maintenance actions, including:

- Riparian wetland enhancement by Russian olive tree removal
- Wetland enhancement by controlling noxious and invasive weeds
- As needed, provide additional water to the wetlands through an irrigation valve to the north of the wetlands.

Strategies for Property Management

Development Activities

Development activities will be focused on maintaining a community-style family fishery and upland game hunting area. Project proposals will be developed as needed, and submitted to the Habitat Council and/or Watershed Restoration Initiative for funding consideration.

Annual Maintenance Activities

Annual maintenance on the Little Montes Creek WMA primarily consists of dam maintenance, weed control, irrigation, and monitoring for other areas of concern.

The Little Montes Creek Dam is a low hazard dam with no piezometers and no drains to manage. The DWR is responsible for operation and maintenance of the dam and for the outflow. DWR personnel inspect the dam monthly, checking water levels and inspecting for areas of concern. The outflow gate is operated annually to make sure everything is working correctly.

The DWR hires a private contractor to clean the vault toilet once a month from April through November. The toilet is pumped every other year or as often as needed. Irrigation, and maintenance of the irrigation system, will be conducted by DWR staff or by a private individual through a share-crop agreement.

DWR biologists will monitor for weeds and implement control measures as needed. Biologists will monitor the entire WMA during the summer months to determine what specific weed control is needed. If a larger weed control project is warranted (e.g. for Russian olive removal), a proposal may be developed and submitted to the Habitat Council and/or Watershed Restoration Initiative for additional funding.

Other maintenance priorities include: maintaining signs to show ownership, maintaining fencing around property boundaries and sensitive areas, maintaining parking areas and public access points. DWR personnel will periodically monitor the WMA and maintain these resources–as needed.

Strategies for Habitat Management

Access Management Plan

Public access on the WMA will be maintained through the main access road and parking area, on the south side of the lake. Other roads on the WMA are for administrative access only. The remainder of the WMA is publicly accessible by foot only; motorized vehicles and bicycles (including ebikes) are prohibited.

Fishing access will be maintained through a foot path and fishing pier on the south side of the reservoir, as well as an unimproved trail on the north side of the reservoir. A small boat launch (for kayaks/canoes) was recently constructed to expand fishing access.

Appendix B, Maps 1 and 2 show all the public access points on the WMA. No other trails or roads are open to motorized vehicle use.

Fire Management Plan

Fire management will be carried out in partnership with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL), Uintah County office of Fire and Emergency Management. Fire suppression plans are developed in coordination with FFSL.

The DWR currently has no plans to use prescribed fire as a management tool on the Little Montes Creek WMA. Wildfires will be managed to protect life and property and protect vulnerable habitats.

To reduce the risk of wildfire, target shooting is not permitted on the WMA. Shooting may only occur during valid hunting seasons with a valid hunting permit. The use of tannerite or other exploding targets is strictly prohibited.

Wood Products

There are no opportunities for the development of wood products on the Little Montes Creek WMA.

Livestock Grazing Plan

Under DWR policy, carefully planned grazing may be used as a tool in managing wildlife habitat. To maximize feed for wildlife and protect the sensitive wetland habitat, the WMA is not currently being grazed. Regional DWR personnel will periodically evaluate the property and determine if the WMA could benefit from grazing.

Summary Statement of Proposed Uses

The Little Montes Creek WMA will be used to provide aquatic and wetland habitat and as a fishery for the public. It will also provide habitat for both game and nongame wildlife. Public uses that will be allowed include fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.

Destruction and/or degradation of habitat from any of these uses may result in further restrictions to protect the resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As priorities allow, regional aquatics and habitat biologists will assess the aquatic and wetland habitat on the WMA and make recommendations for improvement projects. Wildlife biologists, with help from the Habitat Section, will perform periodic evaluations of terrestrial habitat conditions and prepare any habitat improvement proposals. The district Conservation Officer, along with help from other biologists, will monitor public use and trespass livestock grazing. If necessary, the officer may propose management modifications where problems are occurring, with input from regional aquatics, wildlife, and habitat biologists. The Habitat Section of the northeastern region of the DWR will present improvement projects to the Habitat Council and/or the Watershed Restoration Initiative for approval and funding.

Appendices

Appendix A – Property Description

Parcel 1: USM, Township 2 South, Range 1 East, Section 6: Lot 2; SW4NE4. Said parcel contains 80.81 acres, more or less

Parcel 2: USM, Township 2 South, Range 1 East, Section 6: Beginning at a point East 1320.00 feet from the northwest corner of said section; thence South 49.35 feet; South 18º33' East 518.98 feet; thence South 40º09' East 490 feet; thence South 56º34' East 1008.5 feet; thence Northerly along ¼ section line 1470.50 feet; thence West 1336.56 feet to the beginning. Said parcel contains 29.43 acres more or less.

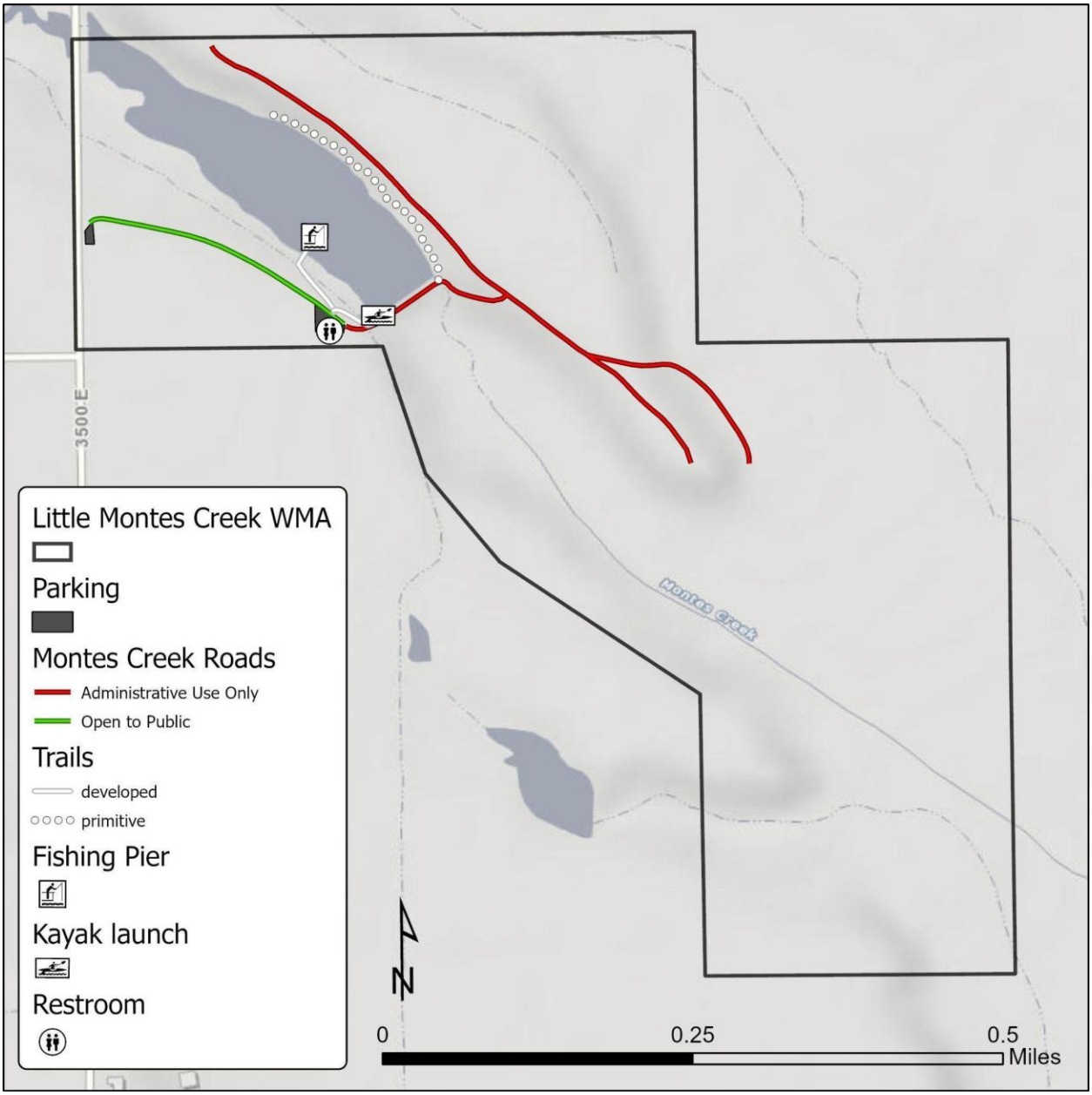
Parcel 3: USM, Township 2 South, Range 1 East, Section 6: Beginning at a point East 1292.20 feet from the northwest corner of said section; thence South 18º33' East 52.05 feet; thence North 49.35 feet; thence West 16.56 feet to the point of beginning. Said parcel contains 0.009 acre, more or less.

Parcel 4: USM, Township 1 South, Range 1 East, Section 31: Lot 4; SE4SW4. Said parcel contains 80.00 acres, more or less.

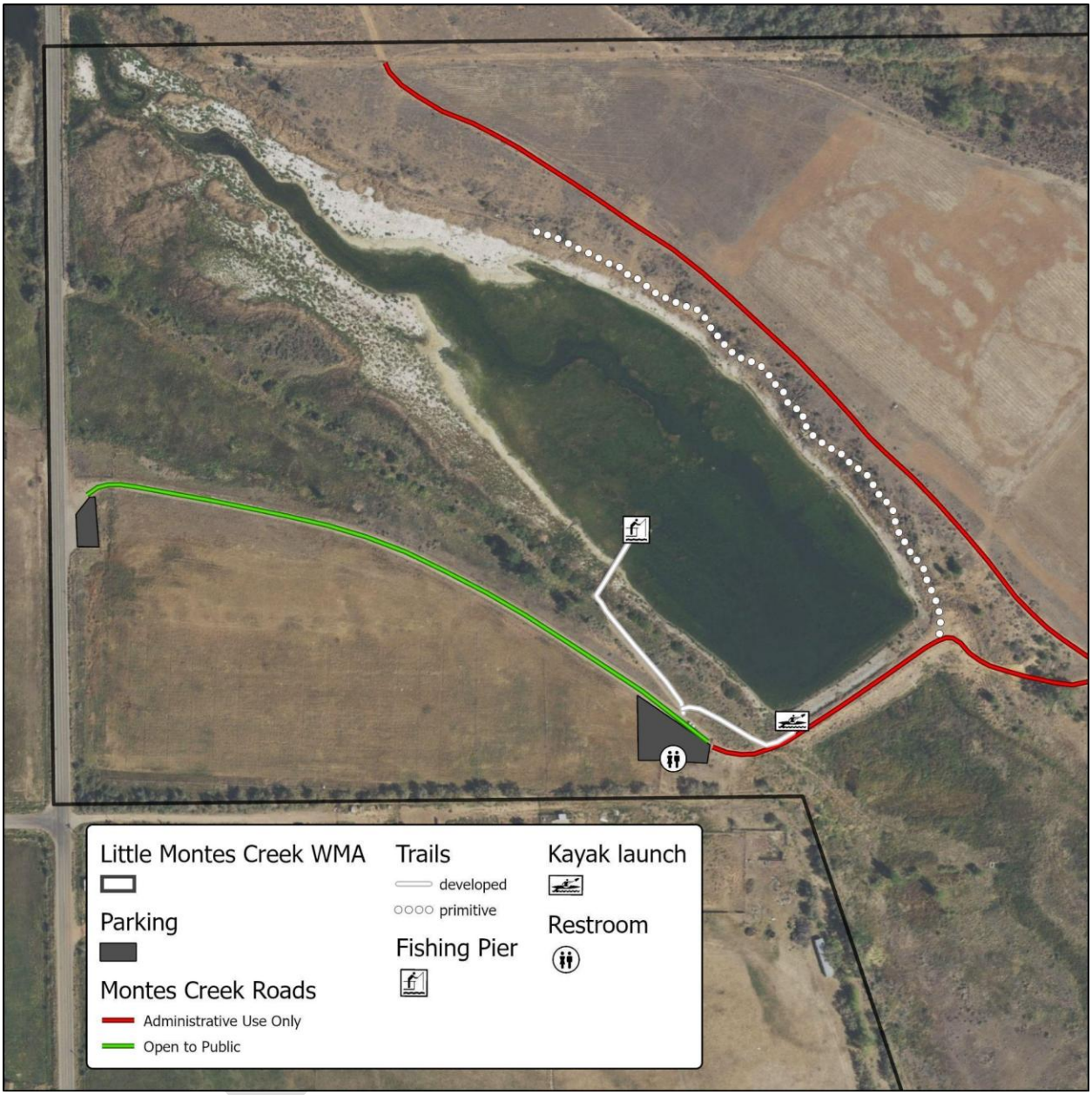
Copies of deeds associated with the Little Montes Creek WMA can be found at the Northeastern Regional Office of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, 318 N. Vernal Ave., Vernal, UT 84078.

Appendix B – Maps

Map 1 – Access Roads



Map 2 – Access Map, Detail



Appendix C – Definitions for State and National Ranks

N- Ranks designated at a national level (N-rank) for a particular nation.

S- Ranks designated at a subnational or state level (S-rank).

1- Critically imperiled (typically having 5 or fewer occurrences, or 1,000 or fewer individuals).

2- Imperiled (typically having 6 to 20 occurrences, or 1,001 to 3,000 individuals).

3- Vulnerable (rare; typically having 21 to 100 occurrences, or 3,001 to 10,000 individuals).

4- Apparently secure (uncommon but not rare, but with some cause for long-term concern; typically having 101 or more occurrences, or 10,001 or more individuals).

5- Secure (common, widespread, abundant, and lacking major threats or long-term concerns).

B- Breeding, conservation status refers to the breeding population of the species. Follows the numeric part of the rank, if used.

N- Non-breeding, conservation status refers to the non-breeding population of the species in the nation or state/province. Along with “B”, used here for migratory birds and bats. If a conservation status rank does not include “B” and/or “N” after the number, or after one of the letters or marks below, the species resides within that level (whether G, N, or B) all year.

H- Of historical occurrence but not known recently extant. Possibly extinct or extirpated, but with some reasonable hope of rediscovery. Routinely applied after 20 years of no observations (whether or not any surveys were conducted). Used instead of a number.

NR- Not ranked, i.e. not yet assessed. Used instead of a number.

U- Unrankable, due to conflicting or inadequate information. Used instead of a number.

X- Presumed extinct or extirpated, with rediscovery not reasonably expected. Not located despite extensive and intensive searches. Extinction is a global (range-wide) phenomenon, while extirpation applies to loss within a particular national or subnational area, with the entity still extant elsewhere. Used instead of a number.

#/#- Range of ranks due to uncertainty, e.g. S2/S3 indicates a state rank ranging from S2 to S3.

?- Recorded within a nation or state, but local status not available, not yet determined, or ‘Indeterminate’. Used instead of a number.

Little Montes Creek Wildlife Management Area

Habitat Management Plan

RDCC Project Number and Submission Date: #86333; Oct 2, 2024

Habitat Council Review Date: Feb 28, 2024

RAC Review Date:

Director's Approval: _____ Date: _____

Michael F. Canning, Deputy Director