

## **Scoping Notice**

### **New Fork - East Fork Confluence Boat Ramp Improvement project**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Pinedale Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the improvement of the New Fork - East Fork Confluence Boat Ramp Improvement project. The BLM is specifically soliciting input on improvement of this river access point.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Bureau of Land Management proposes to upgrade the existing river access to eliminate resource problems, and improve boating access for river floating and fishing. Anglers are currently using a site near the confluence of the New Fork and East Fork Rivers to launch and retrieve boats. The site is a convenient take-out point for floaters coming down from the Boulder Bridge. It is also a good place to put in for those going down to the “Gas Wells” area, or the bridge on Highway 351. This site is currently undeveloped, and consists of several two-track roads and an area that is devoid of vegetation that is used for parking, and an eroding bank that is used for launching boats. Vehicles and trailers with low clearance cannot gain access to the site, and the boat launching area can be problematic for any vehicle.

The primitive roads and parking area are passable during good weather, but become extremely soft when wet. Anglers trying to access the river when the roads are wet often become stuck, and they have dug multiple ruts while trying to get free. In addition, the road surfaces tend to channel water, which leads to the formation of ruts. After the depth of the ruts become excessive, people tend to pioneer a new road, which leads to additional erosion problems. Currently, five roads branch off from the main road and terminate at essentially the same point at the river's edge.

Sublette County Road & Bridge has used the location in the past for water hauling when they work on the South Boulder Road 23-106. The Sublette County is planning on partnering with the BLM in the improvement of this location in order to continue the use of the site as a water haul location when they work on South Boulder Road.

#### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of this project is the improvement of the river access at the New Fork – East Fork Confluence for boating and fishing.

Existing conditions in the analysis area present opportunities for improvements. The following need for the proposed action was identified:

1. There is a *need* to develop the existing river access site to prevent future resource damage and continue access at this location for recreationists using the river.

The goals and objectives are to:

1. Improve river access at this location.
2. Prevent future soil and stream bank degradation.

This responsibility and authority evolves from a series of legal mandates, including the Taylor Grazing Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse

and Burro Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act.

### PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action includes these activities (Figure 1.):

1. Reclaim 29,500 square feet of degraded habitat
2. Harden with gravel 12,100 square feet for parking, turn around, and boat ramp
3. Refurbish 425 feet of road within the boat ramp area
4. Build 360 feet of rock barriers
5. Install signs at the county road, parking area, and boat ramp
6. Install Comfort Station
7. Upgrade 1,690 feet of road from the Boulder South Road to the ramp area
8. Contour bank to include bank full bench
9. Plant trees

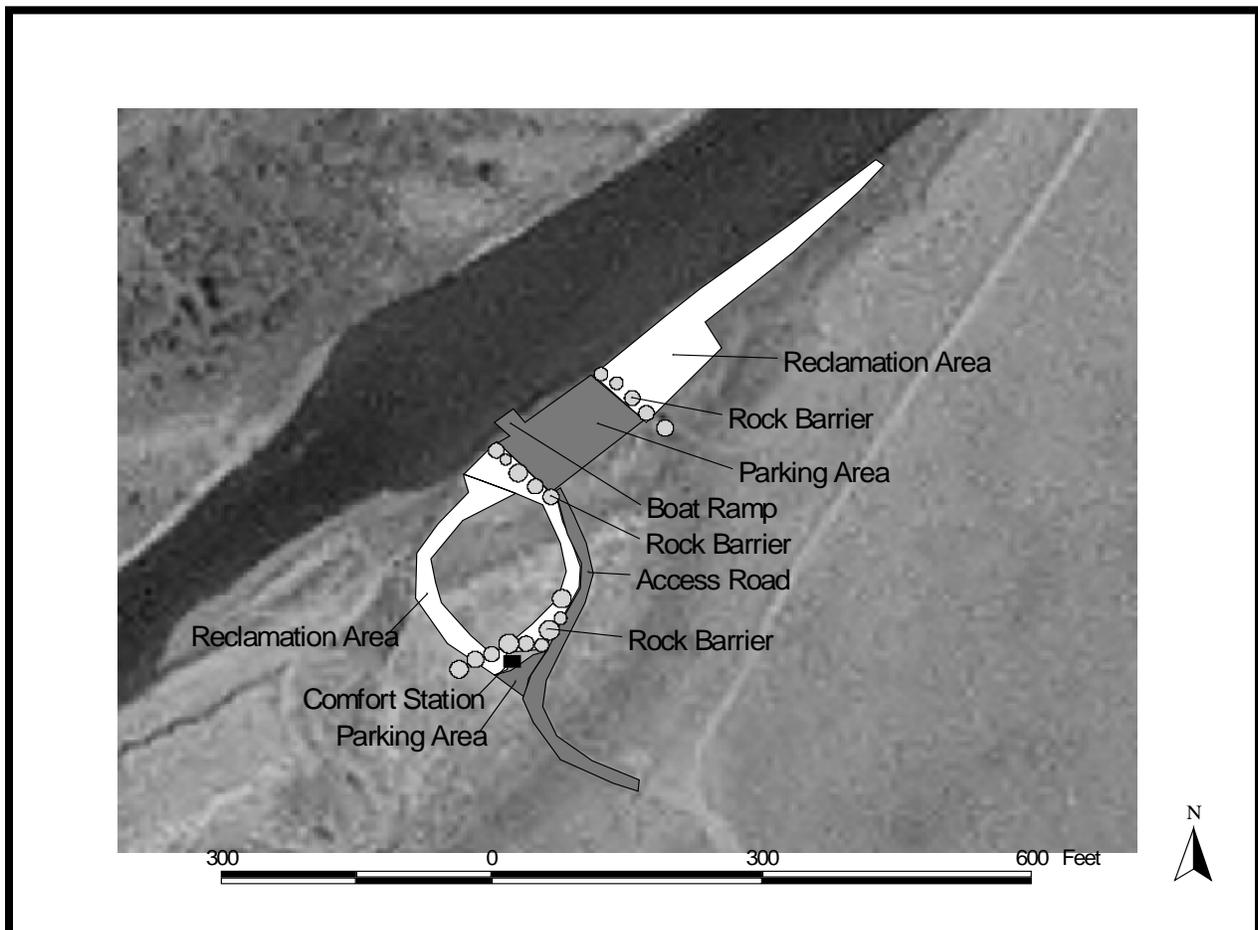


Figure 1. Diagram showing site development design.

The BLM would like your comments relative to improvement on the New Fork - East Fork Confluence Boat Ramp.

If you are interested in commenting regarding this proposal, we request you respond by sending your written or e-mail comments or concerns by September 15th, 2009.

Written comments should be mailed to:

Bureau of Land Management Attn. Cara Farr, Pinedale Field Office, 1625 West Pine, PO Box 768, Pinedale, WY 82941

Comments may also be e-mailed to: [Cara\\_Farr@blm.gov](mailto:Cara_Farr@blm.gov)

Your comments are important and will be considered in the environmental analysis process. If you do comment, we will add your name to a mailing list for this proposal in order to provide you future information regarding the EA.