

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-2

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CASTLE VALLEY, UTAH, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE COMPLAINT FILED BY ALLIANCE FOR THE WILD ROCKIES, ET AL., AGAINST THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE REGARDING THE MANTI-LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST RESTORATION AND FUELS REDUCTION PRESCRIBED FIRE PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Manti-La Sal National Forest encompasses over 1.4 million acres of ecologically significant public lands that provide essential habitat for wildlife, protect watershed integrity, and support recreational, cultural, and economic opportunities for communities in Utah and surrounding states;

WHEREAS, the La Sal Division of the Manti-La Sal National Forest includes a significant portion of the lands within the Castle Valley Watershed which replenishes the EPA certified Sole Source aquifer that Castle Valley residents rely on for culinary and irrigation water;

WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service adopted the Manti-La Sal National Forest Restoration and Fuels Reduction Prescribed Fire Project (“the Project”) on December 16, 2024, which significantly increases prescribed burning acreage and allows for unrestricted vegetative treatments on 952,115 acres including nearly 450,000 acres in Inventoried Roadless areas;

WHEREAS, the plaintiffs—Alliance for the Wild Rockies, Native Ecosystems Council, Council on Wildlife and Fish, and Wildlands Defense—filed a complaint in the United States District Court for the District of Utah (Case No. 2:25-cv-00116), alleging that the Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Administrative Procedure Act and the Roadless Rule in adopting the Plan;

WHEREAS, the complaint identifies serious concerns with the Forest Service’s failure to adequately assess environmental impacts, protect wildlife corridors and old-growth forests, consider reasonable alternatives, and incorporate the best available science;

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Castle Valley is a Cooperating Agency with the Forest Service Land Management Plan for the Manti-La Sal National Forest and submitted comments on the Project in July 2021 stating that they were concerned with the lack of specificity in the plan and with the lack of public input;

WHEREAS, in their July 2021 comments, the Town Council of Castle Valley suggested that this Project required a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement followed by Environmental Assessments to cover specific parts of the Project;

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Castle Valley believes that judicial review of the Restoration and Fuels Reduction Prescribed Fire Project is necessary to ensure compliance with federal environmental law and to protect public trust resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF CASTLE VALLEY, UTAH:

- The Council hereby expresses its formal support for the plaintiffs' lawsuit challenging the U.S. Forest Service's adoption of the Restoration and Fuels Reduction Prescribed Fire Project for the Manti-La Sal National Forest.
- The Council urges the United States Forest Service to reconsider its approval of the Revised Plan and to fully comply with NEPA, NFMA, and APA requirements in managing the Manti-La Sal National Forest.
- The Council directs the Town Clerk to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the plaintiffs' legal representatives and to the Forest Supervisor of the Manti-La Sal National Forest.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 16th day of April 2025.

Those voting AYE: Mayor Duncan, Council Members: Gibson, Hill, Holland and O'Brien

Those voting NAY: None

Absent: None



Mayor Jazmine Duncan
Town of Castle Valley

ATTEST:



Jocelyn Buck
Town Clerk