

## Planning Begins for Final High Mountain Lakes Stabilization – Uinta Basin Replacement Project

In March planning meetings began for the re-construction of Deer and East Timothy Lakes in the High Uintas Wilderness Area, Duchesne County, Utah, as environmental mitigation for the Uinta Basin Replacement Project. These former irrigation reservoirs will be reconstructed as natural lakes in wilderness to improve recreational fishing and improve the wilderness experience for hikers and backpackers in the High Uintas. Irrigation storage for these lakes has already been moved down to the enlarged Big Sand Wash Reservoir, a main component of the Uinta Basin Replacement Project of the CUP. The lake reconstructions are being planned and implemented by the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Provo Area Office will undertake the reconstruction of Deer Lake. The Duchesne County Water Conservancy District will complete reconstruction of East Timothy Lake.

Due to wilderness status of the two lakes, reconstruction must proceed using only the minimum necessary modern tools and equipment. As much as possible only primitive tools, such as hand tools, are to be used in the work. The U.S. Forest Service, which manages the High Uintas Wilderness Area where the two lakes are located, has reviewed and approved all reconstruction plans, methods, tools and equipment needed to complete this work under the authority of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

A "minimum tool analysis," required under the Wilderness Act, has been completed by the Forest Service to help define what, if any, modern tools are required to complete the necessary work at the two lakes. In this case, due to the size of the dams that impound the lakes, some heavy equipment, such as a trackhoe and small bulldozer, will be required. These materials, along with other equipment, materials and supplies will be flown in by helicopter to the two lakes. Work crews will hike in or ride in on horseback and camp at the job sites. Work is expected to begin in mid-June when snow has melted and will continue through the summer and early fall. All work must be completed before snows come again in fall 2010.

For further information, visit the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission Website at [www.mitigationcommission.gov](http://www.mitigationcommission.gov).