

In 2014, the Trust built a new boundary fence for White Mesa Cultural and Conservation Area to decrease risk of cattle trespass and allow for wildlife crossings. The Trust will maintain the boundary fence at least through 2022.



The Manti-La Sal National Forest is conducting an extensive North Elk Ridge Forest Health Project to restore both aspen and ponderosa pine on WMCCA. A 10-year rest from cattle grazing will allow young aspen trees to grow and reveal the impacts of elk and deer browsing apart from cattle grazing.



Several tall, old Bebb's willow (*Salix bebbiana*) remain at Duck Lake, but cattle and elk browse them as high as their mouths can reach, devouring new willow sprouts before they grow tall. The Trust will use tall mesh fencing to protect three areas of willow sprouts until they reach a height of at least six feet.



In partnership with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Utah Valley University, the Trust is identifying spring locations and opportunities for springs restoration throughout the WMCCA and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's lands.



As part of University of Utah's masters' program in Botany, long-time Trust volunteer Sue Smith is assessing native grass diversity within the WMCCA. The results will then be compared with native grass diversity and changes both inside WMCCA and in adjacent livestock allotments over the next eight years. Trust interns and volunteers will be crucial to the effort.

Grand Canyon Trust Utah Forests Projects White Mesa Cultural and Conservation Area

White Mesa Cultural and Conservation Area (WMCCA) is a 28,000-acre area on North Elk Ridge, in the Abajo Mountains in the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Through a Grand Canyon Trust collaboration with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and U.S. Forest Service, this area will be protected from cattle grazing through 2022, offering opportunities for restoration, research, and recreation. It will also serve as a point of comparison with surrounding actively-grazed allotments.

Map by Stephanie Smith



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