

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Hex Trail Road Access, Wenatchee National Forest, Kittitas County, WA**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Cancellation of an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** On May 19, 1994, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Hex Trail Road Access on the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest was published in the **Federal Register** (59 FR 26204). Forest Service has decided to cancel the environmental analysis process. There will be no EIS for the Hex Trail Road Access. The NOI is hereby rescinded.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Direct questions regarding this cancellation to Susan Carter, Environmental Coordinator, Wenatchee National Forest, 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee, Washington 98801 or telephone 509-662-4335.

Dated: May 27, 1997.

**Sonny J. O'Neal,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 97-14733 Filed 6-4-97; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Sasse/Bell Ridge Road Access, Wenatchee National Forest, Kittitas County, WA**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Cancellation of an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** On May 19, 1994, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Sasse/Bell Ridge Road Access on the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest was published in the **Federal Register** (59 FR 26202). Forest Service has decided to cancel the environmental analysis process. There will be no EIS for the Sasse/Bell Ridge Road Access. The NOI is hereby rescinded.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Direct questions regarding this cancellation to Susan Carter, Environmental Coordinator, Wenatchee National Forest, 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee, Washington 98801 or telephone 509-662-4335.

Dated: May 27, 1997.

**Sonny J. O'Neal**

*Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 97-14734 Filed 6-4-97; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Kalispell; Idaho Panhandle National Forests; Bonner County, Idaho and Pend Oreille County, WA**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice; intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of salvage thinning, reforestation, site preparation and use of prescribed fire in an ecosystem management project in the Kalispell Creek drainage. The area is located west of Priest Lake in the northern Selkirk Mountains, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Priest Lake Ranger District, Bonner County, Idaho and Pend Oreille County, Washington. Part of the proposed activities are within the Hungry Mountain Roadless Area (01-156). The project area is within the Kalispell-Granite Grizzly Bear Management Unit.

The purposes of this project are to improve the health and vigor of stands, to salvage dead and dying timber, to rehabilitate 50- to 70-year-old plantations of off-site ponderosa pine and white pine which is not blister-rust resistant, to reintroduce the role of fire into dry-site ecosystems, and to contribute to meeting society's demand for wood products. The proposal's actions to harvest and reforest stands and utilize prescribed fire are being considered together because they represent either connected or cumulative actions as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.25).

This project-level EIS tiers to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and Final EIS (September, 1987), which provides overall guidance of all land management activities on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, including timber and access management.

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before July 21, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Kent Dunstan, District Ranger, Priest Lake Ranger District, HCR 5, Box 207, Priest River, ID 83856; or e-mail comments to [cjary/rl\\_ipnf@fs.fed.us](mailto:cjary/rl_ipnf@fs.fed.us).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Contact Bob Stutz, EIS Team Leader; telephone (208) 443-2512.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Ecosystem management activities are proposed on a total of approximately 5,050 acres within the Kalispell Creek drainage. Existing roads, 15.6 miles of temporary winter roads constructed from snow, and 11 helicopter landing sites would provide access for vegetative treatments. No new road construction would occur. The proposal includes 4,094 acres of salvage in plantations which are 50 to 70 years old, followed by planting on 3,803 acres within those plantations; prescribed burning on 206 acres of dry-site ecosystems; prescribed burning on 1,049 acres for fuel breaks and/or site preparation; thinning on 245 acres of immature, overly-dense stands; and reforestation on 505 acres which would not be harvested before planting.

The Kalispell drainage has experienced a series of significant natural and human-caused disturbances within the last 70 years. The major disturbances include a wildfire in 1926 and a subsequent reburn in 1939. Logging occurred from 1927 to 1932, including salvaging in a portion of the area burned by the 1926 fire. Following these events, approximately 9,000 acres of ponderosa pine and white pine were planted, as well as a scattering of Douglas-fir and spruce. The ponderosa pine seedlings were from a seed source not suited to this area, and the white pine seedlings were not rust-resistant stock, resulting in uncharacteristically high levels of insects and diseases. Current mortality is high, and ongoing mortality in the non rust-resistant white pine is estimated to be three percent per year.

The goal of this project is to restore the vegetation in the analysis area towards historic stocking levels and species compositions. This would create conditions that more closely resemble the historical stands that were adapted to the site, climate, and fire regimes in this ecosystem and that are sustainable over time.

The purpose and need for ecosystem management in this area is four-fold, as follows: (1) To salvage and rehabilitate high mortality stands that were planted with "off-site" ponderosa pine and non blister-rust-resistant white pine; (2) to reintroduce the role of fire in the ecosystem, where it has been disrupted through fire suppression, in a way that will emulate effects of mixed severity fire under a natural fire regime; (3) to provide tree species and stocking levels that existed historically; (4) to contribute to the short-term supply of