

contributing factors for program eligibility.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jean-Louis Pajot, Coordinator, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers, FAS, USDA, (202) 720-2916, e-mail: trade.adjustment@fas.usda.gov.

Dated: October 6, 2005.

A. Ellen Terpstra,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Fuel Reduction Activities Within the City of Bozeman's Municipal Watershed on the Gallatin National Forest and City of Bozeman Lands, Montana; Gallatin National Forest; Gallatin County, MT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of a proposed fuels reduction project that will help maintain the water supply to the City of Bozeman. The project's purpose and need is to begin reducing the potential severity and extent and future wildland fires in the Bozeman and Hyalite Municipal Watersheds, begin creating vegetation and fuel conditions that will reduce the risk of excess sediment and ash reaching the municipal water treatment plant in the event of a severe wildland fire, begin creating vegetation and fuel conditions that will provide for firefighter and public safety by modifying potential fire behavior, and reduce fuel conditions in the wildland/urban interface (WUI). A range of 3 to 5 alternatives are targeted for consideration in this planning process.

DATES: Initial comments on this proposal should be received by November 11, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Jim Devitt, Gallatin National Forest Supervisors Office, P.O. Box 130, Bozeman, Montana 59771-0130.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Devitt, Bozeman Municipal Watershed Project Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Gallatin National Forest Supervisors Office, (406) 587-6749.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this project, as identified by the Gallatin National Forest and the City of Bozeman, is to maintain a high-

quality, long term, and predictable water supply for Bozeman area residents. The Bozeman Municipal Watershed analysis area is a landscape dominated by steep canyons and timbered slopes. The two drainages are very popular and receive heavy use for outdoor recreation activities such as pleasure driving, hiking, biking, camping, picnicking, fishing, and hunting, to name a few. The Bozeman Municipal Water project will apply to portions of National Forest System Lands and City of Bozeman land within the Bozeman and Hyalite Watersheds. There are several homes and subdivisions within one half mile of the forest boundary or within the WUI. Fire simulation models showed that a large fire started in either Bozeman Creek or Hyalite Creek could easily burn into the adjacent drainage, resulting in a situation where both major sources of city water supply are simultaneously impacted. The Forest Service and City of Bozeman believe it is timely to begin addressing this project's purpose. The purpose and need for this project would be achieved by (1) Maintaining low fire severity conditions through prescribed burning. (2) Maintaining the effectiveness of the riparian filtration zone by removing or cutting conifers to invigorate shrub communities. (3) Treating invasive weed species to maintain native communities and allow the riparian area to function as efficiently as possible.

The Forest Service is looking for ways to do innovative treatments to address this project's purpose and need. Potential fuel activities being considered include treating up to 6,000 total acres, including a small portion of the Gallatin Divide Inventoried Roadless Area in the Bozeman Creek watershed, and treating up to 3,000 acres in the Hyalite Creek watershed with a combination of prescribed burning, thinning, brush cutting, and commercial tree harvest.

To facilitate public comment, the Forest Service has prepared a scoping document. This document identifies a one possible set of treatment options and can be viewed on the Gallatin National Forest Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>. A copy can be also be obtained by calling or writing the contact person identified above. The scoping comment period will end November 11, 2005.

Comments on the scoping document from the public and other agencies will be used in preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). More specifically, comments will be used to modify and refine the alternatives and identify potential

resources issues (environmental effects) that should be considered in analysis.

The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in June of 2006. At that time, the EPA will publish a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the Draft EIS is estimated to be 45 days from the date the EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. The Final EIS is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2007.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, comments should be specific to concerns associated with the fuel reduction activities within a municipal watershed. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in structuring comments.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 533 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate during comment periods provided so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when they can meaningfully consider them. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, comments should be specific to concerns associated with the management of roads and trails on the Gallatin National Forest. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in structuring comments.

I am the responsible official for this Environmental Impact Statement and

the ultimate decision for a Bozeman Watershed Project. My address is Forest Supervisor, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 130, Federal Building, Bozeman, MT 59771.

Dated: October 7, 2005.

Rebecca Heath,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Mountain City Ranger District, Mountain City Ranger District Rangeland Management Project; Environmental Statements; Notice of Intent

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Mountain City Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on a proposal to authorize continued livestock grazing on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the boundaries administered by the Ranger District. The Project Area is located in Elko County, Nevada.

DATES: In order to be most effective, comments concerning the scope of the proposed analysis should be received within 30 days from the date that this Notice of Intent (NOI) is published in the **Federal Register**. The draft EIS is expected to be completed in March 2006, and the final EIS is expected to be completed in September 2006.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: District Ranger, Mountain City Ranger District, 2035 Last Chance Road, Elko, NV 89801.

Electronic comments may be sent via e-mail to: *comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-mtn-city@fs.fed.us*.

Please put "Grazing EIS" in the subject line of e-mail transmissions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Douglas Clarke, Project Coordinator, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, 2035 Last Chance Road, Elko, NV 89801, Telephone: 775-778-6127.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of and Need for Action

The Mountain City Ranger District Rangeland Management Project is an opportunity to provide for livestock grazing that is managed in a manner that will maintain areas that are currently

ecologically satisfactory, according to Forest Plan direction (desired functioning conditions), or that will improve specific areas identified through this analysis or in the future as ecologically unsatisfactory (less than functioning condition).

Given the focus on this need, the purpose of the project is to bring current improper livestock grazing practices into alignment with the requirements of wildlife and other natural resources where needed in the Project Area. Also included in this project is the need to be able to apply the use of adaptive management when managing livestock and the affected natural resources. Currently, term grazing permits provide for little flexibility or ability to change management when monitoring shows a need or opportunity for change.

In the time since the Forest Plan goals were identified in 1986, wildlife science, range science, and natural resource management science have continued to evolve. More is known now about the relationship between species and the environments in which they live, resulting in changes in management direction for specific species over the last decade. Range scientists within both the Forest Service and the academic community have also conducted research and published scientific papers regarding the influences that livestock grazing has on the environment. In many areas across the American West, the results of this research have been applied in the design and implementation of effective adaptive management strategies. Much of this current science and knowledge should now be incorporated into grazing management within the Project Area.

The primary emphasis will be an ecological based approach rather than livestock administration. However, the emphasis will also include reponding to improper livestock management.

In addition to the need to incorporate new or updated research into existing grazing management strategies, the Mountain City Ranger District has gathered an extensive collection of historic and current photographs taken from the same places in different decades throughout the District. These photographs, known as "repeat photo sets" show that, in general, rangeland ecological conditions throughout the District have improved from the early 1900's to now, or maintained themselves at an acceptable level for the most part. In many instances there is a pronounced improvement from the 1960's and 1970's until now, which is a timeframe when many of the grazing management improvements in place today (rotational or improved grazing

systems, infrastructure improvements such as division fences and water developments, and improved herding or animal husbandry practices) were originally implemented. The information gleaned from advances in science since the original Forest Plan was implemented, the inferences to ecological condition available from the repeat photo sets, and existing site-specific information were used to develop the proposed action for this analysis. The proposed action is designed to be able to specifically address, either currently if known during the course of this analysis, or identified through future monitoring or subsequent advances in knowledge about ecological relationships, the impacts from improper grazing practices.

Proposed Action

The Mountain City Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is proposing to authorize continued livestock grazing on grazing allotments within the District under updated grazing management direction. The proposal encompasses approximately 490,500 acres of NFS lands in Elko County, Nevada. This updated management direction would be incorporated into all livestock grazing permits and associated allotment management plans as needed. This direction would guide livestock grazing management within the Project Area during the coming decade, or until amendments are warranted based on changed condition or monitoring results.

Other Possible Alternatives

In addition to the Proposed Action detailed above, we have tentatively identified two (2) additional alternatives that will be analyzed in the EIS:

(1) No Action Alternative: A continuation of the current grazing management without updated direction.

(2) No Grazing Alternative: New grazing permits would not be issued when existing permits expired.

Responsible Official

The responsible official is: Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, 1200 Franklin Way, Sparks, NV 89431.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

Based on the environmental analysis presented in the EIS, the Forest Supervisor will decide whether or not to continue grazing on the allotments within the Project Area in accordance with the standards in the Proposed Action or as modified by mitigation