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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Six Rivers National Forest, Mad River Ranger District, Ruth, CA; Kelsey Peak Timber Sale and Fuelbreak Project**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

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

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service is proposing the Kelsey Peak Timber Sale and Fuelbreak Project to provide timber products to local economies, reduce tree densities, improve watershed conditions and provide defensible space to improve fire protection and human safety. The Kelsey Peak planning area encompasses approximately 19,245 acres; 18,858 acres are National Forest System (NFS) lands and 398 acres are in private ownership. The project would treat approximately 4,789 acres of NFS lands by harvesting timber through thinning

on approximately 2,249 acres and create 2,540 acres of fuel corridors.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by October 13, 2009. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected March 2010 and the Final Environmental Impact Statement is expected June 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Thomas Hudson, Mad River Ranger District, 741 State Highway 36, Bridgeville, CA 95526. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to *comments-pacificsouthwest-six-rivers-mad-river@fs.fed.us*, attention to the Kelsey Peak Project, or via facsimile to (707) 574-6273.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a way that they are useful to the Agency's preparation of the EIS. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the respondent with standing to participate in subsequent administrative or judicial reviews.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Thomas Hudson; Mad River Ranger District, 741 State Highway 36, Bridgeville, CA 95526 or by telephone at (707) 574-6233.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed project would take place within the Upper Mad River watershed on NFS lands administered by the Mad River Ranger District in Trinity County, California. The legal location includes portions of the following areas: T. 20 S., R. 8 E.; T. 30 S., R. 8 E.; and T. 28 N., R. 12 W.; and T. 27 N., R. 12 W.

The Kelsey Peak Project is designed to contribute timber commodity outputs in support of the Six Rivers Forest National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). One of the goals of the LRMP is to provide a stable supply of outputs and services that contribute to local, regional, and national social and economic needs. The Six Rivers National Forest seeks to

provide a sustainable, predictable, long-term timber supply for local economies.

Tree densities within many stands greatly exceed desired stocking levels. Overstocked stands can be unhealthy with low resistance to insect and disease outbreaks. Overstocked small young stands will take much longer to grow into larger mature trees, increasing the amount of time needed to balance size classes across the landscape.

The project area lies within the Mad River Watershed, which has been listed as water quality impaired. The primary sources of sediment are thought to be the current road conditions.

The project planning area occurs within portions of the wildland-urban interface for the communities of Ruth and Three Forks, CA. Numerous homes and several businesses contribute to the high economic value ranking in the area. Fuel hazards here are moderate, but fire risk is high due to the number of people in the area.

Sensitive wildlife and plant species and survey and manage botanical species are known to occur within the planning area.

**Purpose and Need for Action**

Given Forest goals, and environmental conditions within the planning area, the purpose and need for the proposed action is:

- Provide timber commodities that contribute towards the Forest's Allowable Sale Quantity as part of the Forest's obligation to sustain the local rural economy.
- Where stands are overstocked, reduce tree densities to increase stand vigor and resilience to fire and disease and increase growth rates that would lead to a more balanced age/size class distribution.
- Improve water quality within the watershed.

- Provide defensible space along strategic road corridors to improve fire protection and human safety for both the Forest and adjacent communities.

Within the context of meeting the purpose and need, there would be opportunities for fuelwood or biomass utilization associated with proposed activities.

**Proposed Action**

The proposed action is designed to meet the project's purpose and need while meeting the standards and guidelines of the LRMP. The Kelsey Peak Timber Sale and Fuelbreak Project would treat vegetation to meet the purpose and need.

1. Approximately 20 million board feet (MMBF) of timber would be harvested from approximately 2,249

acres within 98 treatment units. Harvesting would be accomplished by utilizing ground-based, skyline, and helicopter logging systems. Actions connected with commercial timber harvest include:

- a. Treating harvest activity generated fuel;
  - b. Constructing approximately 1.9 miles of new temporary road, and re-opening/re-utilizing approximately 5.1 miles of existing non-system roads;
  - c. Constructing new landings and reutilization of existing landings;
  - d. Hauling of commercial timber products on County Road 501 and Forest Service System roads within the planning area;
  - e. Felling and removal, where appropriate, of hazard trees along haul routes; and
  - f. Decommissioning, maintaining, and reconstructing roads as needed.
2. Fuelbreaks or corridors would be strategically placed along 39 miles of road.

#### Responsible Official

The responsible official is the Forest Supervisor, Six Rivers National Forest.

#### Nature of Decision To Be Made

The responsible official will decide whether to implement the proposed action, no action or other alternatives considered under analysis. He will consider the comments, responses, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the decision and stating the rationale in the Record of Decision.

#### Scoping Process

This Notice of Intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the Environmental Impact Statement. Public scoping will include notices in the newspaper of record and mailings of the scoping package to interested and affected parties and posting of the project on the Six Rivers National Forest project planning web page and notice in the Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions. The submission of timely and specific comments can affect a reviewer's ability to participate in

subsequent administrative appeal or judicial review.

Dated: September 2, 2009.

**Nancy J. Gibson,**

*Acting Forest Supervisor, Six Rivers National Forest.*

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**BILLING CODE 3410-11-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Gila National Forest; New Mexico; Gila National Forest Travel Management Rule Implementation

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Gila National Forest will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate a proposed action that would implement the agency's Travel Management Rule (TMR). The proposed action would eliminate cross country travel by motorized vehicle and designate a system of roads, trails and areas open for motorized vehicle use. Motor vehicle access for purposes such as motor vehicle-based dispersed camping and big game retrieval of deer and elk are also described. The Rule provides for certain exemptions such as emergency use, law enforcement, those holding a specific written authorization, and limited Forest Service administrative use.

The full text and maps of the proposed action will located on the Forest's Web site at <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> (Click on the link to Travel Management Rule).

The designated routes and areas will be published on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) available free of charge to the public in accordance with the Travel Management Rule. The MVUM will be the primary tool for compliance and enforcement.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by October 26, 2009. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected in May 2010 and the Final Environmental Impact Statement is expected September 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Gila National Forest, Attn: Travel Management Coordinator, 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to [r3\\_gila\\_travel@fs.fed.us](mailto:r3_gila_travel@fs.fed.us), or via facsimile to (575) 388-8222. Electronic attachments must be in one of the following formats: .doc, .rtf, .txt, or .pdf.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a way that they are useful to the Agency's preparation of the EIS. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lisa Mizuno, Travel Management Coordinator, at (575) 388-8267 or [r3\\_gila\\_travel@fs.fed.us](mailto:r3_gila_travel@fs.fed.us). The proposed action, maps, and other pertinent information about this project can be found on the Forest's Web site: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> (click on link to Travel Management Rule).

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

#### Purpose and Need for Action

There is a need to comply with 36 CFR 212.51(a) which requires the forest to designate a system of roads, trails and areas for vehicle use by vehicle class, and if appropriate by time of year.

- There is a need to manage motorized vehicle use on NFS lands on the Gila National Forest in accordance with the provisions of the Travel Management Rule and 36 CFR parts 212, 251, and 261.

- There is a need to comply with 36 CFR 261.13 which requires that forests prohibit motor vehicle use off the system of designated roads, trails and areas (close the forest to motorized cross-country travel).

- There is a need to amend the Forest Plan to comply with the Travel Management Rule.

#### Proposed Action

During 2009-2010, the Gila National Forest will evaluate the proposed action and alternative(s), with a decision expected in September 2010.

As required by TMR, the Forest utilized the following information in developing the proposed action: Public input on needs and desires; resource resilience and sensitive areas; traditional uses and forest access; and effects to natural resources. Maps and tables show the elements of the proposed action that is described below: Maps can be found at <http://fs.usda.gov/>