

Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Project
Summary of Public Comments
First Informal Scoping- December 2005

Nearly 800 scoping notices dated October 28, 2005, were sent to private landowners in the vicinity of the Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Project area, as well as individuals and groups who have expressed interest in these types of project activities. We received nearly 80 responses to that first informal scoping including letter, email, and fax formats, as well as face-to-face and phone contact records. Of those, five responses were on behalf of environmental organizations, two responses were submitted by outside state or federal agencies, and the remainder were submitted by area landowners and National Forest System users. Thirty-one responses expressed outright support of the project, one response opposed the project, and the remainder did not state an opinion of the project as a whole.

A content analysis was completed for the first Lakeview-Reeder scoping, and all substantive comments were documented and analyzed according to their subject matter. Those comments were recorded into a spreadsheet and published on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Website, so that the public could review them and ensure accuracy, as well as gain a better understanding of the wide range of opinions. This document serves as a summary of those first informal scoping responses, as well as possible solutions to the scoping comments or mitigation for potential impacts. Similar comments were grouped and summarized. Then, solutions and/or design features are herein discussed for each synopsis.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
NEPA	Due to scope, size, and complexity of project, we feel an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be developed.	Preliminary discussions within the District's interdisciplinary team have pointed the team towards pursuing this project's development with an EIS.
NEPA	Who will make project-specific decisions, and what qualifications do agency personnel have for analyzing the project activities?	The Forest Supervisor for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests would likely make any decisions regarding the Lakeview Reeder Fuel Reduction Project. The decision-maker often bases decisions upon recommendations made by natural resource specialists. Those natural resource specialists, including foresters, hydrologists, wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists, botanists, soil scientists, etc. (with specialties and degrees in different disciplines) comprise the District's interdisciplinary team. Proposed actions for the project area, as well as any effects those actions may have, are analyzed in detail by these specialists.
Alternatives	We are concerned that the FS is misinterpreting direction in HFRA, and we urge the FS to develop and analyze a range of alternatives.	The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) resulted in the ability to expedite the analysis process for community wildfire protection projects by allowing the analysis of just one "action" alternative in addition to the "no-action" alternative.
Regulations	This project must be in compliance with NEPA. In addition, all communities-at-risk need to be clearly defined and any Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) need to be included as part of the official record.	All projects proposed or implemented by the USDA Forest Service, including this Lakeview- Reeder Fuel Reduction Project, must follow all laws and regulations, including NEPA, NFMA, as well as Forest Service manuals and handbooks. The Bonner County Wildland Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan is already part of the supporting documentation for this project.
Public Involvement	This project needs to emphasize homeowner education and responsibility to make homes more fire resistant.	The District has already and will continue to make a concerted effort towards educating private landowners in the area about fuel reduction, wildfire hazards, and forest ecology.
Purpose & Need	We are concerned that the project may not be an efficient and effective approach to addressing the stated purpose.	The project proposed action will be analyzed to determine that it will meet the purpose and need.
Issues	Please add "long term forest health" to your list of primary issues.	Long-term forest health will be an integral part of the development of this project. Silvicultural prescriptions will strive to improve not only the fire resistance and/or resilience of the forest stand, but will also work towards improving long-term forest health.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Scope of Project	What is the proposed time line for the project, and can the FS also add some other areas in the project area, including Kalispell Island and Distillery Bay?	The FS will likely need another 1-2 years to complete the environmental analysis prior to any project implementation. Due to the large size of the project area, project implementation may need to be completed over the course of several years (i.e 5-12). Areas like Kalispell Island and Distillery Bay are not part of the affected community or geographic area and would require separate analysis.
Outside the Scope	I would like to understand more about the National Forest's assessments of the rest of the Priest Lake Basin.	An assessment of the entire Priest Lake Basin is outside the scope of this project.
Future Projects	What are the FS plans for future projects north of the Lakeview-Reeder project area?	Within the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) the FS also has plans to work on fuel reduction projects in the Beaver Creek Campground area within the next few years.
Forest Plan Consistency	The EA/EIS must demonstrate that the proposed activities would be in compliance with all of the IPNF Forest Plan Standards.	All FS activities must be in compliance not only with the IPNF Forest Plan Standards, but also with all pertinent laws and regulations including NEPA, NFMA, and HFRA.
Maintenance	How will this project fit into a longer-term forest management strategy?	Some proceeds from this project will help fund prescribed burning, underburning, site preparation, and planting of regeneration units and may help fund precommercial thinning, noxious weed control, and future maintenance of prescribed burning units.
Monitoring	The EA/EIS should include a monitoring plan that covers important, affected resources such as wildlife, soils, watersheds, fuels, and fire risks.	The IPNF Forest Plan requires certain resource monitoring to be performed, and specialists will document which resources need to be monitored related to the project, as well as design and analyze the monitoring results.
Cumulative Effects	We request that a cumulative effects analysis, including private & state land, as well as previous FS logging and burning activities, be completed with respect to water quality, soils, motorized recreation use, quality of wildlife habitat blocks, winter range, and wildlife.	Cumulative effects analyses are regularly part of EIS development and include effects from past activities as well as those ongoing and expected activities on adjacent private and state land within the cumulative effects analysis area.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Historical Data	We request detailed disclosure of the historical data used to arrive at your "desired conditions".	Historical data is not used to determine future desired conditions. Rather, Foresters and Fuels Specialists have used historical data to compare past and present conditions. Rather than try to emulate historic stand conditions, our hope is to improve the long-term health of forest stands. By using appropriate land management techniques, we can mimic some of nature's disturbance processes (i.e. fire) with less widespread damage.
Scientific Research	Please consider the large body of research that indicates logging, roads, and other human caused disturbance promote the spread of tree diseases and insect infestations.	Silviculturists and Foresters are well aware that logging can exacerbate specific root disease problems. Silvicultural prescriptions are developed for each stand and are adjusted depending on conditions present and the desired future state.
Oppose Project	I agree with the need to reduce fire fuels; however... from past experience, I have little hope with the USFS.	This comment was part of a longer letter. Other comments in the letter suggested this individual had poor experiences dealing with the Forest Service in other regions in the country. While we are sorry to hear this, we cannot respond to this comment as we do not know the situation.
Support Project	I am all in favor of this new Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Project.	We appreciate the support for this project.
Local Economy	Local lumber mills are in need of timber from state and federal forests.	As is directed by the Forest Service Handbook, one of our directions is to ensure that National Forest System (NFS) lands provide some of the wood supply to local mills.
Financial	Making cost effective decisions about how to accomplish the goals will be the difference between a good project and a great project.	Due to the changing climate in which we all work, the FS and private contractors continually look for cost effective methods in which to accomplish the required work.
Health/Safety	Please consider creating "greenbelt" areas free of trees adjacent to state highway systems to provide safer evacuation routes.	Roadside clearing will likely be considered as a potential treatment adjacent to Highway 57 and other frequently traveled roadways and evacuation routes.
Private Property	This project will help protect private property from the threat of wildfires. What can private landowners do to further reduce that risk?	Within this first scoping effort and in the earliest planning meetings regarding this project, the FS has worked to inform private landowners of the BonFIRE program and associated Steven's Grant funding which helps landowners reduce fuel hazards on their own land. We will continue to educate landowners about reducing fire risks to their homes and property, through both future scoping notices and in collaborative meetings.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Grazing	The EA/EIS must present information on the effects of livestock grazing on lands within the project area.	Any environmental document created will address potential effects of livestock grazing on activity areas within the project area.
Wildlife	We are concerned that the potential intensity of the project may have undesirable impacts to wildlife, specifically Grizzly Bear, American Marten, Fisher, Wolverine, Moose, Elk, and Canada Lynx.	Wildlife Biologists will analyze the potential impacts this project could have on the wildlife species listed.
TES Species	We feel it necessary for the IPNF to complete a thorough field survey for threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants and animals as part of a biological assessment and evaluation, and that the IPNF needs to consult with the US Fish & Wildlife Service through a Biological Opinion.	Specialists (Wildlife Biologists and Botanists) will complete surveys and analyze potential impacts to threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants and animals. Documentation will be prepared in a biological assessment and evaluation. Consultation with US Fish & Wildlife Service will also likely occur.
Sensitive Species	The EA/EIS must disclose a baseline or quantitative population data for sensitive species and their habitats.	See above. Such an analysis would include data on populations and sensitive species habitats.
Management Indicator Species	MIS species, such as marten, fisher, goshawk, flammulated owls, and pileated woodpeckers, as well as their habitat, should be analyzed thoroughly and any effects disclosed.	See above. Such an analysis would include management indicator species and their habitats.
Habitat	The EA/EIS should disclose the historic range and spatial arrangement of important habitats. In addition, habitat fragmentation, edge effect, travel corridors, landscape fire, and logging effects should all be analyzed.	See above. Such an analysis would include discussion of habitat fragmentation, edge effect, travel corridors, as well as the effects both fire and proposed treatment activities could have on wildlife.
Other Species	I would like to understand the potential effects on grouse-type birds.	Wildlife Biologists will either include such an analysis in the document and/or will contact this stakeholder individually to discuss this.
Snags	The EA/EIS should consider that snags may be cut down during harvest due to safety concerns and should disclose snag loss and expected effects to wildlife.	See above. Such a wildlife analysis will include potential effects to wildlife associated with both existing and post-treatment snag levels.
Fuel Management	Please consider fuel management options other than burning, including chipping, composting, etc.	Fuel specialists will consider fuel reduction opportunities, including burning, chipping, composting, etc. to determine effectiveness, efficiency, and potential side-effects.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Fuel Management	Please consider "fire refugia" and untreated riparian corridors, as well as the other potential effects from thinning forest stands, including the potential for faster fire spread, increased sunlight and drying, increased ladder growth, etc.	These items will be addressed in the environmental analysis.
Thinning	Caution should be utilized when designing this project since little science has been produced to show which thinning techniques are most effective.	Science, as well as professional judgement and experience, will be used to determine which fuel treatment activities should be proposed for certain areas.
Prescribed Burning	Removal of slash should not be done solely through prescribed burning.	Fuels Specialists will discuss which methods are the most efficient, least costly, and least impactful for dealing with slash from fuel reduction treatments.
Air Quality	Please ensure that this project does not have negative air impacts to the public use of the airstrip across the highway from the ranger station.	This potential impact will be addressed in the environmental analysis. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests are partners in the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, which regulates how much burning can take place based on predicted smoke emissions and expected smoke dispersion.
Fire History	Please disclose what fire history methodology the FS uses, including limitations and project-specific data.	Data and methodology used to determine fire history for the project will be discussed in the environmental analysis, as well as limitations associated with that methodology.
Fire Control	Fuel reduction activities and prescribed burns need to be carried out in such a way as to reduce accidental wildfires, and improved or increased access for fire suppression should not be a means for increasing access to other vehicles which may be potential fire ignition sources.	We recognize the potential for trade-offs which could occur between maintaining access to areas for fire suppression purposes and the potential that the public access could increase the probability of human-caused wildfires. Those trade-offs will be discussed in the environmental analysis.
Fire Risk	I have observed the accumulation of fuels in the project area and have been concerned about the fire risk they create.	Our fire and fuels management specialists agree with this statement, and this is one of the primary reasons for proposing this project.
Recreation	Please consider designing trail corridors to protect the integrity of trails, and provide recreationists alternate routes during treatment activities.	Potential impacts to recreational users will be analyzed and discussed in the recreation report for this project. Design criteria will be created and included in project implementation to reduce potential negative impacts to recreational users.
Recreation	The EA/EIS must disclose the complete picture of the entire spectrum of recreation use in the project area.	The Recreation Report will discuss all potential types of recreational use in the project area.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Trails	Please consider cleaning up the entire length of the Lakeshore Trail from Copper Bay to Beaver Creek Campground.	A portion of the area mentioned is outside of the proposed Lakeview-Reeder project area (which was determined based on appropriate geographic and environmental considerations.) Therefore, that area will not be considered for this project. However, that area may be considered at a later date in another project.
Trails	I'm hesitant to support any fuel reduction treatments because it may result in "outlaw" trail building.	ATV or off-road trail building is an issue which will be analyzed and discussed.
Visuals	Please maintain scenic integrity along roads, trails, and private property.	Specialists will develop a visual quality management plan to ensure the Idaho Panhandle National Forests' Visual Quality Objectives are met. Such a plan develops design criteria for reducing potential negative impacts to private landowners, as well as along roads and trails.
Watershed	Please analyze and reduce potential negative impacts (i.e. siltation, erosion) to the watershed and local wells in the project area.	The Hydrologist assigned to this project will have to analyze all of the potential effects and cumulative effects to aquatic resources in the project area, including private wells. This hydrological report will not only document potential effects, but will also identify design criteria to minimize those impacts and will discuss potential restoration or watershed improvement opportunities.
Fisheries	The FS should consult with USFWS regarding potential impacts to bull trout. Please consider stockpiling large woody debris for future placement in deficient streams.	The determining factor whether a FS Fisheries Biologist must perform an informal consultation with the USFWS regarding potential impacts to bull trout related to this project will be decided based on what watershed effects the Hydrologist predicts will take place. Specialists can certainly consider whether stockpiling some large woody debris for future placement in deficient streams is necessary and/or efficient.
Vegetation	Logging disrupts the natural forest succession. Please disclose how much forest, including old growth and mature forest, by type and successional stage has been clearcut, salvaged, intermediate cut, thinned, etc. in the project area.	Logging, as with any disturbance (natural or man-caused), does restart (at least temporarily) the natural vegetative succession processes. The silvicultural and old-growth analyses will discuss past management within the project area and will address the quantities of forest stands in different successional stage classes (including old-growth.)
Trees	When issuing firewood cutting permits, tag trees you would want thinned/ removed.	Tagging trees for firewood gatherers to remove would be impractical and extremely costly. In certain stands, there could literally be hundreds of standing or down dead trees per acre which may be deemed a fuel hazard. However, certain efforts can be made to inform firewood permittees of areas which have an abundance of dead or down wood and need some form of fuel reduction treatment.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Insect/Disease	Please be specific when identifying insects and diseases in the project area, and ensure treatments will not exacerbate pathogen levels.	Silvicultural prescriptions are developed specifically for each stand and are adjusted depending on conditions present and the desired future state. Within each unit's prescription, the silviculturist lists which insect or disease pathogens are present or problematic.
Sensitive Plants	Please survey and protect sensitive plant populations.	A botanical survey and design features to protect threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant populations will be included within the botanical biological assessment and evaluation.
Other Vegetation	Please analyze and limit potential detrimental effects to native fungi (i.e. chanterelles and matsutaki) especially near Kalispell Creek.	This issue will probably not be analyzed in the environmental analysis.
Noxious Weeds	The EA/EIS must disclose how this project will affect noxious weed importation, establishment, and related land productivity, as well as how the FS plans on monitoring and mitigating those effects.	The potential effects of the this project on noxious weeds will be analyzed in the environmental document.
Old Growth	All areas proposed for treatment should be surveyed specifically to determine if they meet old growth characteristics. Accurately describe what effects the project could have on current and future levels of old growth and indicate how the proposed activities would be in full compliance with old growth and large tree requirements of section 102 (e) and (f).	The old-growth report will provide an analysis of forest inventory surveys within the project area. The report will include the quantity of old-growth and old-growth recruitment forest stands in the project area, as well as potential effects the project could have on that old-growth and whether or not the project complies with all of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests' Forest Plan standards and guidelines regarding old-growth.
Other Resources	We are concerned that the potential intensity of the project may have undesirable impacts to other resources.	With no specific resources listed, we cannot be certain what the commenter was referring to; however, interdisciplinary specialists will be analyzing and disclosing potential impacts to many different resources.
Soils	The EA/EIS must disclose all potential effects to soil resources, including log landing size, soil productivity, erosion, compaction, displacement, fine and coarse woody debris, landtype limitations, and soil nutrients, as well as mitigation measures and monitoring techniques (including scientific methodology and associated errors.)	The Soils Report will analyze and discuss all potential impacts to soil resources in the project area as a result of this project, as well as the potential cumulative effects based on past and reasonably foreseeable activities. Design criteria which will reduce potential negative impacts to soils will be included as part of that analyses.
Erosion	The east side of Lakeview Mountain is very steep. How will the FS avoid creating erosion problems?	The soils analysis within the environmental document will disclose how the proposed actions will affect erosion potential.

Category	Synopsis of Comment / Issue	Potential Response / Resolution
Roadless	Please include a map that clarifies roadless boundary issues. It is not adequate to merely accept previous roadless inventories.	When a proposed action is formalized and a draft environmental document is issued, maps (which provide adequate detail for review) will be included or made available via the IPNF website. No roadless areas exist within the project area boundary.
Infrastructure	How will the project affect road use during treatment operations?	Road use will be considered in the environmental document.
Roads	The Roads Analysis Process (RAP) should be subject to full public review process, and the EIS should include road decommissioning and obliteration to rid the area of high-risk roads and to reduce road density in the project area.	Any Roads Analysis Process (RAP) which may be completed regarding roads in this project area is public information and is available upon request. Some roads may need to be closed, decommissioned, or realigned to meet objectives for reduced road density in Grizzly Bear Management Units and to improve water quality in TMDL streams.
Roads	Please don't use this project as an excuse to close more FS roads. Please upgrade and improve the roads present to provide for feasible access for forest use and fire suppression activities.	Many National Forest System roads in the project area will likely need to be improved and/or maintained as part of this project. However, due to restrictions on the Forest Service regarding security for Grizzly Bears and water quality improvements, some roads may need to be realigned, closed, or decommissioned. A Roads Analysis Process will work to maximize both meeting those objectives and fulfilling the needs and desires of NFS users.