

**Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Project
 Summary of Public Comments
 Second Informal Scoping- April 2006**

On April 4, 2006, the Priest Lake Ranger District sent out a second informal scoping regarding the Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Project. This second informal scoping was designed to gain a better understanding of the public concerns pertaining to the project, the scope and need for the project, as well as to refine a proposed action. The scoping was sent out to approximately 95 individuals, agency representatives and environmental organizations who either responded to the first scoping or previously stated they were interested in this particular project or similar project activities. In conjunction with the scoping document which was mailed, we provided a Lakeview-Reeder presentation to seven area public groups at which we solicited feedback. Those seven groups included the West Priest Lake Volunteer Fire Department, Priest Lake Chamber of Commerce, Priest Lake Trails & Snowmobile Club, Lakeface Lamb Monitoring Committee, Kaniksu Lion's Club, Priest Community Forest Connection, and the Selkirk Conservation Alliance. We received 37 responses to this second scoping, along with responses as to what level of treatment the general public would like us to pursue.

A content analysis was completed for this second, informal 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, ensure accuracy, and gain a better understanding of the wide range of opinions. This document serves as a summary of those responses to the second informal scoping, 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	The EIS should include accurate scientific analysis, high scientific integrity, and expert agency comments, during both project-specific and cumulative effects analyses and trade-off discussions.	This will be performed commensurate with the issues that are identified for analysis in the environmental document.

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NEPA	What administrative oversight will there be to ensure both contractual and environmental compliance with the project plan?	A Sale Administrator or Contracting Officer will act as the agency representative during project implementation. This individual performs inspections during different stages of implementation to ensure contract compliance. The contract is the "vehicle" the FS uses to both complete timber harvest and fuel reduction activities, as well as those mitigation measures and opportunities which were deemed appropriate by interdisciplinary specialists to sustain or improve certain environmental conditions and were approved by the deciding officer.
EIS	So that the public can evaluate all the available scientific information regarding the impact and effectiveness of the proposed action, the information should be disclosed in the body of an EA or EIS.	Preliminary discussions within the District's interdisciplinary team have pointed the team towards pursuing this project's development with an Environmental Impact Statement. Research studies, scientific findings, as well as professional judgement and experience will all be used to determine the environmental effects of the proposed action. Any literature used in the analysis will be cited.
Scope of Project	I believe you should add the areas around the Priest Lake Ranger District Administrative Site and Highway 57 between mile marker 33 and 34 to the Lakeview-Reeder project.	The area mentioned between mm 33 and 34 near Highway 57 is being considered for addition into the proposed action, and many areas near the ranger station are already being considered.
Public Involvement	Thank you for your efforts and desire for public participation.	

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Public Involvement	We are concerned that the second scoping sets up division and bias within the community by presenting local landowner quotes as direct antithesis to conservation group comments.	We merely were trying to illustrate that on many issues there are strong and widely-divergent opinions. Neither the names of individuals nor environmental organizations was associated with specific quotes, although that information is publicly available on the complete spreadsheet of substantive comments on the IPNF website. If the presentation of the scoping documents showed division between local property owners and conservation groups, that's only because the differences are real.
130 Public Involvement	Please include better maps and photos of treatments.	Once a proposed action is refined, more photos can be included in the documentation. Although we try to limit printing costs by including a smaller map with the proposed action, we will post a higher resolution map, with the pertinent GIS layers on the IPNF website.
Purpose & Need	Please ensure that the project is an efficient and effective approach to addressing the stated purpose, and expand the purpose and need to include Grizzly Bear habitat security improvement.	Fire and fuels analyses will determine the proposed actions' effectiveness at fulfilling the purpose and need. In addition, because we need to attain certain core habitat and road density improvements within the Kalispell-Granite Grizzly Bear Management Unit (which is within the project area) by 2013, we will pursue attaining those objectives as opportunities in conjunction with this fuel reduction project.

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Cumulative Effects	The EIS must consider the cumulative impacts on resources in the project area of all past, current and foreseeable timber sales, including Lakeface Lamb, Outlet and High Bridge, etc.	Each resource (and different wildlife species) has a different cumulative effects analysis area as determined by the specialist in that field. Some resources' analysis area will likely overlap with other ongoing project activities (like Lakeface Lamb); others will not. If a specialist determines that Lakeview-Reeder will cause a significant effect to a particular resource, then a thorough cumulative effects analysis will be completed for that resource, including all known past, ongoing, and foreseeable, future activities in the cumulative effects analysis area. The depth of cumulative effects analysis for each resource will be determined based on the potential significance of effects.
Methodology	Please disclose what fire history methodology is used, acknowledging the limitations of that methodology and disclosing what project area data is used.	The fire/fuels analysis will disclose the data, methodology, and limitations of the models used to arrive at fire history, condition class, and fire behavior for this project.
Appropriateness of Use	We question whether this project qualifies as an authorized project under HFRA and whether the Bonner County Wildland Urban Interface Fire Mitigation Plan meets direction from HFRA.	Although the appropriateness of this project under Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) has previously been discussed in the two informal scoping notices already sent out, the environmental document will also address these topics.
Alternatives	If either of the two more extensive levels of treatment are selected for a proposed action, analysis of a more conservative alternative will be necessary for comparison, as required by NEPA.	HFRA requires the analysis of a "no-action" alternative in addition to one action alternative when the proposed treatment activities are adjacent to an at-risk community.
Economics/Social	What will be the contractors, subcontractors, and Forest Service's responsibilities, respectively in the process?	The Forest Service has the ultimate responsibility of ensuring the project is implemented as described in the environmental and decision documents. The FS ensures that contractors, and in turn their subcontractors, follow all the terms and conditions of the contract(s) used to implement the project.

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Economics	Has a cost to benefit ratio been calculated? Please disclose to the public the long-term implications of this project, including necessary funding. Will the potential timber harvest in this area be used to offset costs of fuel reduction in other areas?	A financial analysis will be completed for this project, which will address this request.
Favor for project	We read all three treatment levels carefully, and felt we could support any of the three.	
Favor Level 1	I would only be supportive of Level 1 Treatment.	
Favor Level 2	Level 2 treatment is a good balance between safety of firefighters, private property protection, and scenic views.	
Favor Level 3	I support the Level 3 treatment because it would allow for the possibility of safe, prescribed burns or natural burns that would return the forest to a more natural ecology.	
Opposed to project	We would not support Level 1 treatment.	
Wildlife	I do believe that wildlife may be adversely affected by mechanical fuels treatment.	Any management activity or natural disturbance could widely be interpreted as having some negative impact on certain wildlife species, while providing a positive impact on others. Not all wildlife species have the same habitat and biological requirements, and so will be affected accordingly. A wildlife biological evaluation and assessment will consider potential beneficial and negative impacts to threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.
Wildlife	Please consider mechanical treatments adjacent to Highway 57 to clear the area, as a means of reducing vehicle/wildlife collisions.	Vehicle/wildlife collisions are a very real concern for drivers on Highway 57, and this very topic has been raised by Idaho Transportation Department. This request will be considered.

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Wildlife	Snags should be left in a widely-scattered pattern.	A wildlife biological evaluation and assessment will include analysis of snags in the proposed treatment areas, including feasibility and recommendations for snag retention.
Wildlife	Prescribed burning is very beneficial to wildlife.	Certain wildlife species do benefit from prescribed burning, which will be discussed within the wildlife biological evaluation and assessment.
Threatened, Endangered, & Sensitive	Please consider and disclose the effects of treatment activities on Grizzly Bear, including potential for displacement, mortality, hiding cover (especially near Bismark Meadows), as well as the Kalispell-Granite and Lakeshore Bear Management Units status.	All of the potential effects to Grizzly Bear caused by the Lakeview-Reeder project will be analyzed in detail.
410 Threatened, Endangered, & Sensitive	Please consider and disclose the effects of treatment activities on Caribou, including those areas which are "capable" early winter range, as well as how changes in cover could result in changes to the predator-prey dynamics which could negatively impact caribou populations.	The project area does not occur within the designated caribou recovery area; however, potential effects to caribou caused by the proposed actions will be considered and analyzed commensurate with their potential significance.
Threatened, Endangered, & Sensitive	Please consider and disclose the effects of treatment activities on black-backed woodpecker, including how project treatment activities may prevent this species' habitat from developing.	The projects' potential effects on black-backed woodpecker will be analyzed in the environmental document.
Threatened, Endangered, & Sensitive	Please consider the effects of increased motorized use on grizzly bear, lynx, caribou, wolverine, and ungulates.	Wildlife analysis will consider the effects of both certain and potential increases in motorized use on certain wildlife species.
Habitat	I think that Level 3 Treatment would be best for grizzly bear, moose, elk, and deer habitat.	

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Corridors	The environmental document should identify and assess the potential for negative impacts to existing and potential wildlife corridors.	The wildlife analysis will consider treatment activities' impacts to existing wildlife corridors.
Big-game Winter Range	Please consider protecting mature and old-growth stands in white-tailed deer winter range along the lakeshore.	Because white-tailed deer is a management indicator species for the IPNF, the impacts of proposed activities on white-tailed deer will be analyzed and considered. White-tailed deer populations and habitat will be discussed in the wildlife analysis.
Fire/Fuels	The fire/fuels analysis should include analysis of the scientific studies that have reached opposite conclusion regarding the effects of logging on aquatics, reductions of fire risk, and impacts wildlife.	The fire/fuels analysis will include discussion of scientific studies pertaining to the effects of logging on fire risk reduction. Effects of logging on aquatics and wildlife will be analyzed by the appropriate specialist.
Level of Risk	Please assess and disclose the current fire/fuel hazard situation across land ownerships within the WUI in this area, as well as the threat to private structures and people under all alternatives.	The Forest Service relies on both the West Priest Lake Volunteer Fire Department and the Bonner County WUI Fire Mitigation Planning Committee to determine existing fuel hazards pertaining to private structures and threats to people. However, under any alternatives analyzed, potential fire behavior model runs will be performed and discussed to illustrate how certain treatment activities, carefully-placed on the landscape, could have different effects for different properties.
Validity of Treatments	All potential levels of treatment appear to call for significant amounts of timber harvest under the guise of fuel reduction. Please provide the scientific basis for statements that the type of treatment proposed will reduce fire risks in the areas treated and science-based estimates of how long the risk of fire will be reduced by the treatments.	The fire/fuels analysis will discuss the scientific bases for different fuel reduction treatments and the analyst will provide an estimate as to the length of treatment effectiveness.

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FRCC/ Ecological Necessity	We question the propriety of carrying out large-scale fuel reduction activities in moist forests, under mixed and high-intensity fire regimes.	Moist forests also undergo fires, even stand-replacing fire events. However, severe fires are less frequent. Most of the "moist" forest stands within the project area have not experienced a fire since 1926 or 1889, resulting in 80-year old plus stands which are now prime for a mixed, mosaic or high intensity fire, depending on species composition and site conditions.
Slash/Logging Debris	What are the long-term prescriptions for these areas, including the handling of "logging debris".	Logging slash can be utilized or disposed of in many ways, depending on site-specific requirements. If the site is deficient in coarse, woody debris on the forest floor, some larger, less hazardous debris may be left scattered. Otherwise the slash may be excavator-piled and burned, prescribe burned, hand-piled and burned or chipped. Economic feasibility of different options may also be a consideration in disposal.
Prescribed Burning	When prescribed burning large blocks, please consider treating them at different intervals so that portions are still available for wildlife use.	Prescribed burning of all proposed prescribed burning blocks would be difficult, if not impossible, to perform in one year's time. Therefore, prescribed burning operations across the project area would likely be performed over a several year period.
Prescribed Burning	Please consider using fire to increase aspen clones, and verify if there are enough aspen clones on the landscape to slow the spread of a large fire without regenerating aspen on a large scale.	A fire/fuels analysis can discuss the quantity of aspen clones and shrub fields on the landscape as it relates to potentially slowing landscape fire spread. Certain aspen clones are under consideration for regeneration treatment. Regeneration of aspen is most effective when initiated through cutting the trees and prescribed burning which results in coppice sprouting.
Aquatics	We are concerned that the potential intensity of the project may have undesirable impacts to water quality and fish habitat.	A Hydrology Analysis and Fisheries Biological Evaluation and Assessment will determine the extent and intensity of either negative or positive effects resulting from project implementation.
Watershed	Please consider implementing this project during the winter when there is less potential for damage to local springs/ wetlands.	A hydrology analysis will determine what design criteria and mitigation measures are necessary to minimize impacts to watershed features, including springs and wetlands.

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Watershed	Within the aquatics analysis section, please include an analysis of the scientific studies that have reached opposite conclusions regarding the effects of logging and road-building activities on aquatics, reductions of fire risks, and impacts to wildlife.	The hydrology analysis will include discussion of differing scientific opinion or conclusions regarding the effects of logging on aquatic resources, and may offer a professional opinion for particular sites.
TMDL	Increased road-use by logging trucks and fuel reduction treatments in riparian areas may negatively impact Kalispell and Granite Creeks, which are 303(d) listed TMDL streams.	The hydrology analysis will include an effects determination on aquatic resources, including those streams which are 303(d) listed TMDL streams. In TMDL watersheds, we cannot have a net negative effect and will seek opportunities for watershed improvements.
635 Fish, TES species	Granite Creek and other streams in the project area currently or historically supported bull trout. Care must be taken to avoid impacts to stream channel stability, morphology and water quality, including temperature.	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 will likely consider those stream characteristics listed and will develop design criteria and mitigation measures to reduce potential negative impacts.
Vegetation	What harvest methods, silvicultural prescriptions, timeline, and long-term management strategies are planned for the project area?	The proposed action will outline proposed treatments for each stand within the project area, and a long-term silvicultural prescription will also be developed.
Forest Health	We are concerned about forest health. Please consider insect and disease pathogen findings in the following papers. (See letter.)	The silvicultural analysis and prescriptions will consider and take into account the best available science regarding forest insect and disease pathogens as well as appropriate management techniques.
Silvicultural Prescriptions	What are the long-term prescriptions for the treatment areas, including reforestation, future thinning, and future fuel reduction needs?	The proposed action will outline proposed treatments for each stand. After more thorough analysis, a silvicultural prescription will be developed for stands, including a full cycle or generation of forest growth, from thinning or regeneration treatments through to the next stand replacement.

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Old Growth	Areas that are naturally resistant to fire (fire refugia), for example old growth, should be included on maps of the proposed action alternative and left undisturbed.	A map layer for old-growth can be included in those made available to the public on the IPNF website following publishing of the proposed action. In a single old growth stand (835-02-101), are we proposing to conduct some fuel treatment activities. In this instance, some of the smaller trees would be cut, and the fuels piled and burned. Only a small portion of the stand would be treated and it would occur adjacent to the roads that serve a subdivision and the Beaver Creek road.
Noxious Weeds	Off-road motorized use and road building have the potential to impact the establishment of noxious weeds in the project area. Please inventory existing populations and provide an assessment of how the proposed actions will impact weed spread and the resulting impacts to soils, wildlife forage, erosion and sedimentation, and loss of native biodiversity.	A Noxious Weed Environmental Impact Statement is already in effect for the Priest Lake Ranger District, and directs the monitoring and treatment of noxious weed infestations on the District. Each specialty will analyze noxious weed spread as appropriate and will develop mitigation measures to reduce the potential for noxious weed spread and establishment.
TES Rare Plants	The botanic ecosystem of Priest Lake basin is unique. Please ensure that a careful botanic analysis will be part of the next step in your planning process.	A botanic evaluation and assessment will be completed for this project, to identify threatened, endangered, sensitive, or rare plant populations and to provide protection measures (in the form of design criteria or mitigation measures) to minimize detrimental impacts to those individuals or populations.
Other Forest Products	Please consider utilizing winter treatment activities as a method of reducing damage to ground vegetation, such as edible mushrooms and huckleberries.	Although winter treatment activities are not feasible in every location, every effort will be put forth minimize detrimental, ground-disturbing activities.
Roads	What considerations are being taken to correct the potential impact of hauling on the Kalispell Creek Road?	The Forest Service will likely have to work with Bonner County Road Department to minimize negative impacts and/or improve that portion of the Kalispell Creek Road which is county-maintained.

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Access Management	Opening the forest stands has the potential to increase off-road motorized recreation.	The potential for increased off-road motorized recreation, as a result of project activities will be analyzed relevant to many different resources, including soils, weeds, wildlife, etc.
Temporary Roads	What is the long-term need for roads in the project area, for example termination and rehabilitation of temporary roads needed to complete the timber harvest?	A Roads Analysis Process will analyze what roads-- existing, new construction, or temporary-- are needed for project implementation, including which of those may require obliteration, realignment, reconstruction, or rehabilitation.
Soils	Treatment activities could potentially impact soils in many ways, including Potassium deficiencies, compaction, nutrient dynamics related to biomass, and the potential for increased nutrient demands with thinned, fast-growing forest stands. Please assess and disclose potential effects, including cumulative effects of detrimental existing conditions, as well as present and foreseeable activities.	A complete soils analyses will be completed for this project, including a background assessment of landtype characteristics, mass failure potential, erosion potential, parent materials as it relates to potential nutrient capitals, and past management activities as it relates to compaction and soil displacement. If a site shows signs of past management activities, a field test will be completed to determine the percent of compacted soils on the site. In addition, a model will be used which can estimate how much impact different harvesting and slash disposal methods will add to the existing conditions.
Trails	We are concerned about the impacts to developed recreation facilities and trails.	Impacts to trails will be considered and may be mitigated by timing of activities, alternate routes, etc.
Visuals	Any proposed activities should carefully preserve the scenic quality of the lake shoreline and scenic hillsides visible from Highway 57. We are very concerned about the impacts to visuals.	A complete scenery analysis will be performed for the Lakeview-Reeder project to both determine how certain activities in specific areas could affect the IPNF Visual Quality Objectives and also how to mitigate any potential negative effects.
Miscellaneous	We are concerned that the potential intensity of the project may have undesirable impacts to other resources.	This is a very broad statement. Each resource specialist will be performing analyses pertinent to potential impacts to "their" resource. Issues raised both through public collaboration and interdisciplinary team meetings will be considered and analyzed for those resources involved.