



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Idaho Panhandle
National Forests

Sandpoint Ranger District
1500 Highway 2, Suite 110
Sandpoint ID 83864-9509
(208) 263-5111

File Code: 1950- NEPA
Date: August 11, 2008

SUBJECT: Gold Crown Fuels Reduction Project

Dear Neighbors, Landowners, and Interested Citizens:

I am writing to inform you that Idaho Panhandle National Forests' Supervisor, Ranotta K. McNair, has given approval for the Gold Crown Fuels Reduction Project to be implemented, as described in the Environmental Assessment completed April 23, 2008. Supervisor McNair signed the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN/FONSI) today.

As with earlier documentation for this project, in an effort to improve efficiency and save costs associated with printing and mailing documents, you have three options to view or receive these documents. You may request either a hard copy or compact disc (CD) version of the Decision Notice from the Sandpoint Ranger District, or you may view the DN and all the associated reports online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/eco/manage/nepa>. Once you are at this website, scroll down to "Sandpoint Ranger District", "Gold Crown Fuels Reduction Project", and select the document you would like to review. Further information regarding the project may also be obtained from the project leader, Jennifer Costich-Thompson at 208-443-6811 or jcostichthompson@fs.fed.us.

As you may recall this project is focused on reducing hazardous forest fuel accumulations on National Forest System (NFS) lands in the area commonly referred to as Gold Hill (between Bottle Bay and Sagle Slough), located approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the City of Sandpoint.

The Gold Crown Fuels Reduction Project has three primary objectives:

- To reduce wildland fuels on NFS lands and lessen the risk of a landscape fire event in the area between Bottle Bay and Sagle Slough;
- To improve the health and resilience of the residual forest stands; and
- To enhance the effectiveness of future fire suppression tactics in the area.

In order to accomplish these objectives, fuel reduction treatments totaling approximately 573 acres, as well as approximately 2.0 miles of new, permanent road construction; 0.3 miles of road reconditioning/ reconstruction; 0.2 miles of new, temporary road construction; and 8.5 miles of road maintenance on existing NFS roads (necessary to access treatment areas) will be implemented. Treatments include a combination of thinning, group selection harvests, regeneration harvest and subsequent reforestation, overstory removal and precommercial thinning of the understory, hand slashing and piling, and special treatments for rock outcrop areas. The slash and fuels treatment would vary, depending upon site conditions and stand characteristics. Methods proposed include machine piling (grapple-piling) and burning; prescribed broadcast burning; hand piling and burning; or yarding of unmerchantable material, with piling and burning to take place at landings. (See the EA for further details.)

The Gold Crown Fuels Reduction Project is an authorized fuel reduction project as defined by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003, section 101(2), and the Responsible Official for the project is Ranotta McNair, Forest Supervisor of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

Again, if you would like further information regarding this project or would like to receive a hard copy or CD version of the DN, please contact the project leader, Jennifer Costich-Thompson (phone: 208-443-6811 or email: jcostichthompson@fs.fed.us). Thank you for your participation and continued interest in the management of our National Forests!

Sincerely,

RICHARD P. KRAMER
District Ranger

