



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Mormon Lake  
Ranger District

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File Code: 1950-1

Date: January \_21\_, 2005

Dear Participant,

Enclosed is the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Mormon Lake Basin Fuels Reduction project. You are being sent a copy of this EA because you provided a letter of comment to the Proposed Action in May of 2002. The Mormon Lake Basin Fuels Reduction project will apply fuel reduction and forest health prescriptions to the 2,831-acre area. This will include thinning, burning, and some road management actions to meet the purpose and need.

Forest service and contract crews will thin-from-below much of the project area outside of the Mexican Spotted Owl Activity Center. Activity slash will be piled and burned. Forest service crews will conduct broadcast burning over the project area on a 5 to 10 year recurring cycle. Portions of the road and trail system will be temporarily affected during thinning and burning operations. The majority of roads and trails will remain open for public use throughout the course of the project operations. Operations will be timed to avoid disturbance of area wildlife in accordance with Biological Assessment and Evaluation.

Roadwork and thinning is anticipated to occur over a 3 to 5 year period, which could begin in 2006 (some sale preparation may begin in 2005). Pile burning is tied to thinning activities. Broadcast burning would begin after thinning slash is removed, with the initial entry occurring over a minimum 5-year period. Maintenance burning would occur at a 5 to 10 year frequency after the initial entry broadcast burns are completed.

This project area lies entirely on national forest lands of the Mormon Lake Ranger District, Coconino N.F. It is adjacent to private property along the southwest side of the community of Mormon Lake.

The EA considers 3 alternatives, Alternative B is the proposed action, Alternative A is the no-action alternative, and there is 1 additional action alternative, Alternatives C. Although any of the alternatives described in the enclosed EA may be chosen in a Final Decision, I would like you to know that I am considering Alternative C as the preferred alternative at this time. Please note, a decision will not be made or finalized until after comments received during the 30-day comment period, described below, have been considered.

A range of similar activities would occur under all of the action alternatives, including thinning of ponderosa pine. Slash generated from thinning will be piled and burned. All acres are proposed for broadcast burning every 5 to 10 years. Alternative C differs from Alternative B in that some acres are deferred from thinning for wildlife issues, some light thinning occurs within



eagle roost buffers, and slash islands for turkey cover are replaced with log structures.

All actions occur on National Forest Lands. The enclosed EA describes the location and extent of these activities and discloses the effects of these activities on the environment.

The Forest Service appeal regulations, 36 CFR 215 were updated on June 4, 2003 and per new regulations, only those who provide substantive comments during this comment period are eligible to appeal the decision. The comment period ends 30 calendar days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the Arizona Daily Sun. (Contact Walker Thornton if you have questions about the comment start and end date). The publication date in the newspaper is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Comments received with postmark within the 30 day required period will be accepted. The responsible official (deciding officer) is Terri Marceron, Mormon Lake District Ranger.

Written comments may be submitted by mail, Fax (928)-527-8288, or hand delivered to Terri Marceron, District Ranger at the Mormon Lake Ranger District Office, address listed above. Office hours are Monday through Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Comments may also be submitted electronically in MSWORD (doc.), rich text format (rtf), text, and hypertext markup language (.html) to [comments-southwestern-coconino-mormon-lake@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southwestern-coconino-mormon-lake@fs.fed.us). Comments may also be presented in person, or by phone at (928) 526-0866 by contacting Walker Thornton at the Peaks District office during business hours. Copies of the EA are available electronically at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/nepa>.

Please mail your comments to: District Ranger, Mormon Lake Ranger District, Mormon Lake Basin Fuels Reduction Project, 4373 S. Lake Mary Rd., Flagstaff, AZ 86001.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this project and will be available for public inspection. Pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any persons may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality might be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within seven days.

For questions contact Walker Thornton, Team Leader, at the Peaks District Office, (928) 526-0866 or e-mail at [walkerthornton@fs.fed.us](mailto:walkerthornton@fs.fed.us). I look forward to hearing from you regarding this project and thank you for your interest in the Mormon Lake Basin Fuels Reduction project.

Sincerely,

/S/ TERRI MARCERON

TERRI MARCERON  
Mormon Lake District Ranger