



SCOPING NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT
PROPOSED VEGETATION TREATMENT
SPENCER, BIGELOW, AND HUNTER'S RIDGE AREAS
SANTA CATALINA RANGER DISTRICT

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest:

I am writing today to let you know about a proposed vegetation management project in three areas of the Santa Catalina District: Spencer, Bigelow and Hunter's Ridge (see attached map). The legal coordinates of the project area are Sections 4 through 8, 31 and 32; Townships 11 and 12 South, Range 16 East, Pima County, Arizona. The three areas are near one another, but not contiguous.

The project area is a popular recreation destination on the Forest. It offers dispersed and developed camping, the latter of which includes summer residences in the Spencer Canyon and Hunter's Ridge locations. The area also comprises good-quality wildlife habitat. At present, there is a high risk of catastrophic wildfire in these areas because of a heavy concentration of ladder fuel and dead and dying vegetation.

We are about to begin a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of the proposed project by defining the scope of the impacts analysis. During scoping, we ask the public to help us identify issues and concerns related to the proposed action. Public input is vital because it is integrated into our environmental impacts analyses and often used in the development of mitigation and alternatives to the proposed action. Information on how you can comment on this proposal or obtain further information is provided below.



PROPOSED ACTION

The Forest proposes to thin about 723 acres of vegetation across the area shown on the map. All access to treatment areas would be on existing roads. Using hand tools and mechanical equipment, such as chainsaws, Forest crews would remove trees that are less than 9 inches in diameter at breast height. In order to encourage the re-establishment of native Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), treatment would focus on removal of white pine (*Pinus strobus*). Woody debris that remains after thinning would be piled and burned at a safe location away from other combustible resources. After mechanical treatment has been completed, a prescribed fire may be used to reduce any remaining dry brush and herbaceous vegetation.

If necessary, prescribed fire would be repeated in the same area over a 3- to 12-year period. The initial fire would be followed by two maintenance fires, one after 3 to 5 years, and another 8 to 12 years from the first, depending on the extent of the regrowth. Prior to implementation of a maintenance fire, the NEPA review of this proposed action will be reviewed, and additional impacts analysis conducted, if necessary.

HOW TO COMMENT

The Coronado National Forest values public input during the NEPA review process. Your comments about this proposal may be submitted to us in writing by U.S. mail, facsimile, or hand-delivery; electronically by email; and orally by telephone or in person at the District office. To be most useful in our NEPA review, comments should be submitted to us within 30 calendar days following your receipt of this notice.

Our mailing address is Santa Catalina Ranger District, 5700 N Sabino Canyon Rd., Tucson, AZ 85750. Facsimiles may be sent to (520) 749-7723. Please include your full name and address and project title (Spencer/Bigelow/Hunter's Ridge Veg Mgt) with your comments. Electronic (email) comments may be submitted to us at comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us. Please submit email comments in any of the following ways: text of your email, in a Microsoft Word (.doc) attachment, or in rich-text format (.rtf). Also please include "Spencer/Bigelow/Hunter's Ridge Veg Mgt" in the subject line.

Oral comments may be provided by telephoning me at (520) 749-8700, from 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays, or by making a visit to the Santa Catalina District Office.

For additional information about this project, please contact me at the number above. Questions about the NEPA review process may be directed to Forest NEPA Coordinator Andrea Campbell at (520) 388-8352 or awcampbell@fs.fed.us.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the activities of the Coronado National Forest.

Sincerely,

R. STAN HELIN
District Ranger