



SCOPING NOTICE AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT: PROPOSED VEGETATION TREATMENT IN LOWER MADERA CANYON

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest:

I am writing today to let you know about a vegetation management project proposed for Lower Madera Canyon on the Nogales Ranger District. The project area is located within Township 20 South, Range 14 East in Pima County, Arizona (see attached map). The Forest proposes to mechanically thin overgrown vegetation and apply prescribed fire in the areas shown on the attached map.

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

Lower Madera Canyon, a wildland-urban interface area on the northwest side of the Santa Rita Mountains, is a very popular Forest recreation destination for hiking, camping, and birding. There are private homes in area as well as developed recreation sites. In 2007, a wildfire caused significant damage to the area. Although dead trees and brush were destroyed by the fire, the vegetation remaining in the area continues to present a fire hazard.

As part of the proposed action, the Forest plans to thin about 50 acres of vegetation across the area shown on the map. All access to treatment and burn areas would be on existing roads. Using hand tools and mechanical equipment, such as chainsaws, Forest crews would remove oak, acacia and mesquite (*Quercus* spp. *Acacia* spp. and *Prosopis* spp., respectively) trees that are less than 9 inches in diameter at breast height. Woody debris that remains after thinning would either be piled and burned at a safe location away from other combustible resources or reduced in size in a wood chipper and dispersed in the immediate area. After mechanical treatment has been completed, prescribed fire would be applied, as needed, to those areas where dry brush and herbaceous vegetation are abundant.

As necessary, prescribed fire would be applied to the same area intermittently over a 3- to 12-year period. Plans are for the initial fire to be followed by two maintenance fires, one after 3 to 5 years, and another 8 to 12 years from the first prescribed fire, depending on the re-growth of vegetation.



Prior to implementation of a maintenance fire, NEPA documents will be reviewed, and additional impacts analysis conducted, if necessary.

Your Opportunity 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; 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 Nogales Ranger District, 303 Old Tucson Road, Nogales, AZ 85621. Facsimiles may be sent to (520) 281-2396. Please include your full name and address and project title (Lower Madera Canyon Vegetation Management Project) with your comments¹. 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). Please include “Lower Madera Canyon Vegetation Management” in the subject line.

Oral comments may be provided by telephoning Mr. Shane Lyman, at (520) 281-2296, from 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays, or by making a personal visit to the Nogales District Office.

For additional information about this project, please contact Mr. Lyman at the number above or at slyman@fs.fed.us. 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,

KENT C. ELLETT
NOGALES DISTRICT RANGER

¹ Comments and personal information associated with them, such as names and addresses, become part of the Administrative Record of this NEPA review. As such, they may be made available to a third-party upon request under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Personally identifying information is protected by the Privacy Act. If you do not wish for your personal information to be released under the FOIA, you may choose not to include it with your comments. Alternatively, you may request an exemption from FOIA with your comment submittal. Should you choose the latter, you will be informed by the Forest Service as to whether or not your request qualifies for an exemption. If it does not, you would be afforded the opportunity to resubmit your comments without personal information or to withhold them altogether.

