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# Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Perk-Grindstone Fuel Reduction Project

## Lincoln National Forest, Lincoln County, New Mexico



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## Lincoln National Forest Lincoln County, New Mexico

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**Abstract:** The Perk-Grindstone Fuel Reduction Project is designed to reduce hazardous fuels on National Forest System lands within a wildland-urban interface. It is proposed in accordance with the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and other applicable laws and regulations. The Village of Ruidoso and its municipal water supply lie adjacent to this project area and in the direction of prevailing winds that would carry a wildfire from the project area into the community. Thus, the purpose of the project is to modify forest characteristics to minimize the chance of a large-scale crown fire in this area, in order to protect life, property, and natural resources. Project objectives would be met with a combination of thinning and prescribed burning activities on 4,782 to 4,855 acres of forest land. Connected actions include constructing or reconstructing 14 to 20 miles of roads, which would be decommissioned or closed after implementing the project. The proposal includes an amendment to the “Lincoln National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan” that would exempt this project from adhering to specific direction associated with managing

Mexican spotted owl habitat, northern goshawk habitat, steep slopes, and sensitive visual quality areas. Alternatives considered in this analysis are: Alternative 1, the no action alternative, which includes scenarios with and without crown fire; Alternative 2, the helicopter emphasis alternative; and Alternative 3, the ground-based emphasis alternative. Alternative 3 is the forest supervisor's preferred alternative.

**Submitting Comments:** Reviewers should provide the Forest Service with their comments during the 45-day review period of the draft environmental impact statement. This will enable the Forest Service to analyze and respond to comments at one time and use information acquired in the preparation of the final environmental impact statement, thus avoiding undue delay in the decisionmaking process. Reviewers have an obligation to structure their participation in the National Environmental Policy Act process so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewer's position and contentions [*Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978)]. Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement [*City of Angoon v. Hodel* (9<sup>th</sup> Circuit, 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980)].

Comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be specific and should address the adequacy of the statement and the merits of the alternatives discussed (40 CFR 1503.3).