

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

**USDA Forest Service
Uinta National Forest
Heber Ranger District
Wasatch County, Utah**

Bryant's Fork Spruce Trap Tree Treatment #2

The Heber Ranger District of the Uinta National Forest is seeking public comment on the second proposed spruce bark beetle treatment on National Forest system lands in the Bryant's Fork area of the Heber Ranger District. The Bryant's Fork drainage is on the west side of Strawberry Reservoir approximately 25 miles south of Heber City, Utah.

A rapidly growing spruce beetle infestation was discovered in the Bryant's Fork drainage in 2003. In 2004 a "trap tree treatment" was implemented to reduce the spread of the spring beetle hatch in order to allow for time to complete a proposal and analysis for a longer term solution. The 2004 treatment involved dropping approximately 200 "trap trees" before the beetles flight to bait them into infecting the trap trees rather than infecting standing green trees. The trap trees were then debarked and hauled off the Forest through a stewardship contract. Cut trees are more attractive to beetles than standing green trees, and research has documented the effectiveness of using trap trees to concentrate emerging infestations and reduce the amount of live trees infested. The 2004 treatment was successful in reducing the infestation for 2005 and a proposal to treat the infestation for the long term with a salvage sale is in the process of being analyzed. It is now apparent that the analysis of a salvage sale to remove beetle infested trees will not be completed in time to contain the 2005 spring flight. It is therefore proposed that a second trap tree treatment be implemented to continue some containment of the infestation.

The proposed action is to fell about 100-150 spruce trap trees in May 2005, on approximately 200 acres in the Bryant's Fork drainage (same area treated in 2004). The trees would be debarked and left in place, or else removed in the fall of 2005 or early spring of 2006. The trees would be debarked on site or immediately after being transported to a mill in order to kill the spruce beetle larvae. Without treatment the spruce trees in this drainage, and potentially all spruce along Strawberry Ridge could be dead in a few years. Dead trees are susceptible to fire and the location of this stand could pose an extreme fire threat to the Bryant's Fork Summer Home owner's immediately adjacent if left untreated.

The public is invited to provide comments on this proposal. Comments should be as specific as possible and have a direct relationship to the proposal. Please send written comments to: Julie King, District Ranger, Heber Ranger District, P.O. Box 190, Heber City, UT 84032; phone: (435) 654-0470; FAX: (435) 435-654-5772; or e-mail: comments-intermtn-uinta-heber@fs.fed.us. Comments need to be postmarked or received within 15 days beginning the day following publication of this notice in the *Provo Daily Herald*. Comments may also be delivered to the above address during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays. Pursuant to 36 CFR 215, this legal notice provides an opportunity to comment on this proposal. If you would like additional information please contact Julie King at (435) 654-0470.