



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Eldorado
National
Forest

Placerville Ranger District
4260 Eight Mile Road
Camino, CA 95709
(530) 644-2324

January 13, 2003

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Forest Service is proposing a series of fuels reduction activities on approximately 1700 acres in the vicinity of Grizzly Flat on the Placerville Ranger District. The name of the project is "Last Chance Fuels Reduction Project". This project area was selected because past history indicates a high likelihood of a major wildfire occurring within this general area. The configuration of vegetation, and location of residential areas constitute a very real threat to life, property, watershed, and wildlife habitat. The intent of this project is to provide defensible space, through vegetation treatments, where wildfire suppression activities can more safely and efficiently be conducted on National Forest System Lands. Our goal is to coordinate efforts with the community of Grizzly Flat and with local, state, and federal fire protection agencies to mitigate the hazards associated with wildfire.

The Last Chance proposal utilizes a combination of mechanical and hand treatments, and prescribed understory burning, to thin and remove surface and ladder fuels in the treatment units. The proposed treatments include tree removal with ground based logging systems, machine mastication, tractor piling, hand felling and piling, pile burning, and controlled burning.

Attached are a map and a more specific description of the Purpose and Need, and Proposed Action developed by my interdisciplinary team. If you have any questions about this proposal, or would like more information, please contact Laura Hierholzer at (530) 642-5187.

In August 2002, President Bush announced the Healthy Forests Initiative, directing the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to develop administrative and legislative measures that will help reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire to America's forests and rangelands. One of the proposed steps to restore forest and rangeland health is to improve the environmental assessment process. The Last Chance Fuels Reduction Project is one of seven demonstration projects that have been identified to highlight implementation of the CEQ guidance clarifying policy on the preparation of environmental assessments. For further information on the Healthy Forests Initiative please see the enclosure.

At this time a decision has not been made regarding this project. If you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of, or you feel you have issues (points of dispute, debate, or disagreement) regarding potential effects of the Proposed Action, please send these in writing to Laura Hierholzer at the Placerville Ranger District Office (4260 Eight Mile Road, Camino, CA, 95709) on or before February 7, 2003. We will use significant issues that are identified to develop alternatives to the Proposed Action.



Caring for the Land and Serving People

A public meeting is scheduled for 1:00 to 3:00 pm on Saturday, February 1, 2003, at the Grizzly Flat Community Church. The church is located at 5061 Sciaroni Road, in Grizzly Flat. The topics will include a discussion of the Last Chance Fuels Reduction Project and its relationship to the Healthy Forests Initiative, and information about fire protection programs available to private land owners through the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council.

I hope you can join us at this meeting to learn more about the project, and to share your thoughts about the treatment of fuels in the Grizzly Flat area.

Sincerely,

KATHRYN D. HARDY
District Ranger

Enclosures:

- Purpose and Need/Proposed Action
- Healthy Forest Initiative: Environmental Assessment Demonstration Projects
- Project Area Map