



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Inyo National Forest

Mt. Whitney Ranger Station  
P.O. Box 8  
Lone Pine, CA 93545  
(760) 876-6200  
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File Code: 5150, 1950

Date: September 18, 2008

Dear Interested Citizen or Cooperating Agency,

Inyo National Forest, Mount Whitney Ranger District is proposing to conduct a fuels reduction project in the vicinity of the Mt. Whitney trailhead, campgrounds, and recreational residences. The purpose of the project is to reduce the potential threat to these features and the forest surrounding them in the event of a wildfire. The **Portal Hazardous Fuels Project** would include mechanical treatments such as thinning and pruning of brush and trees and prescribed burning in order to reduce potential wildfire intensity, severity, and effects. This project will be consistent with the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1988), as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (2004), which provides direction to manage threats to communities and wildlife habitat from severe wildfire.

The project area encompasses approximately 500 acres, however not all of that area will be treated. Work will be strategically placed throughout the Portal project area in treatments at locations determined to be critical in modify wildfire behavior, with implementation distributed over several years. Work is expected to begin as early as spring of 2009 and will be scheduled to avoid conflicts with users, residents, and environmental concerns to the extent practical while still achieving the project objectives. Treatment areas would be subject to periodic maintenance to maintain their functional integrity. Enclosed with this letter you should find a copy of a memorandum describing the project proposal and the purpose and need for the project in greater detail, and a vicinity map of the project location.

Public scoping for the Portal Hazardous Fuels Reduction project began in October, 2007. Since that time the project proposal has been refined and I have decided to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the provisions of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA 2003) which will analyze and disclose environmental effects created by the project. I am now initiating an additional scoping period until **October 20, 2008** to provide an opportunity for you to submit specific written comments on the refined proposed action (enclosed). Your comments will be considered as part of the environmental analysis conducted by the Forest Service which is expected to be available for public review in the late fall, 2008 or winter, 2009. Prior to me making the final decision on the proposal, an objection period will take place for 30 days as part of the HFRA pre-decisional review process under 36 CFR 218. **Comments must be postmarked no later than October 20, 2008.** Only individuals and organizations who have submitted specific written comments during the opportunity for public comment provided during preparation of an EA or EIS for the proposed authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, as characterized in section 104(g) of the HFRA, may file an objection.



In particular, 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 this proposal, these issues will be used to design alternatives to the proposed action. Please mail them to: Beth Nabors, 798 N. Main Street, Bishop, CA, 93514. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to [comments-pacificsouthwest-inyo-white-mtn@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-pacificsouthwest-inyo-white-mtn@fs.fed.us).

Names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action, and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit only anonymous comments will not have standing to object under 36 CFR 218.8.

For more information about the proposed project, specific analysis requirements, or objection procedures under HFRA, **a public meeting will be held on October 2, 2008 at 6:30 pm at the Lone Pine Lion's Club Hall.** More details of the project proposal will be available including maps and photos of the current conditions in this project area and similar projects already completed elsewhere to illustrate the proposed outcome for this project. This is an opportunity for those interested in contributing to the development of this project to collaborate with the Forest Service. We hope to see you there.

If you have questions about this project, the environmental analysis process under HFRA, or the public meeting please contact Beth Nabors, Interagency Fuels Management Planner, at (760) 873-2462.

Sincerely,

MARGARET WOOD  
District Ranger  
Mt. Whitney & White Mtn. Districts  
Inyo National Forest