



September 30, 2004

Dear Planning Participant:

The Mount Pinos Ranger District is proposing the Pine Mountain Club Project located just east of the Pine Mountain Club Subdivision, and approximately 14 miles east of Frazier Park, California. The legal location of the project is T9N, R22 W, Sections 13, 14, 15, and 22-27 (*see enclosed map*).

The purpose of the project is to maintain health of the mature conifers, reduce the risk of mortality due to insects, disease, and catastrophic fire, and protect communities and high value recreation areas.

The forested stands in the project area are mainly comprised of mature stands of the Jeffrey pine forest type. With the exclusion of fire as a natural process, these stands have increased in understory stand density and surface fuel loading. This has resulted in an increased risk of mortality from insects and disease to the larger diameter trees, as well as reduced recruitment for future large diameter trees. In addition, heavy tree mortalities would result during wildfire events due to crown fire conditions that would develop based on current stand densities. The following treatments are proposed:

- Thin dense stands of Jeffrey and pinyon pine to reduce tree competition and tree crown densities. Borax (*presently registered as SPORAX*) would be applied to freshly cut stumps for control of annosus root rot disease (*Hertobasidium annosum*).
- Retain large trees.
- Thin smaller/younger Jeffrey and pinyon pine adjacent to larger trees to reduce inter tree competition, and decrease ladder fuels (*fuels which provide vertical continuity between strata*) to reduce fire intensities during a wildfire.
- Thin understory vegetation (*small conifers and hardwood brush*) to reduce tree competition, decrease ladder fuels, surface fuels (*all materials lying immediately above the ground including needles, leaves, grass, large limbs, low brush, stumps, etc.*) and ground fuels (*all combustible fuels lying at the ground surface, such as duff and other woody debris*). Create shaded fuelbreaks and safety zones adjacent to Pine Mountain Club by thinning dense stands of Jeffrey/pinyon pine, reducing heavy concentrations of brush, and pruning lower limbs on the larger diameter trees that will be left. The intent is to reduce ladder fuels and heavy concentrations of surface fuels within the understory. Such pre-treatment greatly increases firefighting abilities to protect structures and developments, and increases probability for more rapid fire suppression.
- Cut material will be made available for forest products where feasible. Limbs, branches, etc. will be piled and/or burned/chipped.
- Small scale underburning (*low-moderate intensity prescribed fire in which 50-75% of the area results in burned or black conditions to reduce quantities of "fine fuels" such as tree needlecast and ground surface vegetation*) may take place within the project area once cutting activities are completed or to maintain a desired condition.
- Mechanically treat some mature brush to break up fuels continuity and maintain with prescribed fire.
- If natural regeneration is inadequate due to stands losing the potential to continue as a result of insect/disease losses, inter-planting of native seedlings of the Jeffrey pine forest type would occur.



The environmental analysis for this project will be ongoing for the next few months. Your comments, suggestions, or concerns relative to this project are requested and will help us with analysis and project development. Your comments should be submitted by **November 12, 2004** to be most useful in the environmental analysis. Comments should be addressed to:

Project Leader
Pine Mountain Club Project
Mount Pinos Ranger District
34580 Lockwood Valley Road
Frazier Park, CA 93225
PH 661 245-3731, FAX 661 245-1526
EMAIL comments-pacificsouthwest-lospadres@fs.fed.us

For further information about the Pine Mountain Club project please contact John Kelly at 661 245-3731.

Sincerely,



THOMAS A. KUEKES
District Ranger

Enclosures

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including 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 anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 10 days.